

TFEO No Return Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Ravi, W. Keith Tims, Kier Zhou, Adrastia, Peko

W. Keith Tims 00:10

Hello, and welcome to The First Episode Of, a podcast about audio drama and the creative process. I'm W Keith Tims, audio drama producer and podcaster. In this show, I listen to the first episode of an audio drama, then have a discussion with the creators about their show their methods and struggles and successes. Today, we're discussing the first episode of No Return.

W. Keith Tims 00:39

[No Return's theme plays.] A fantasy epic stretching across multiple locations and characters. No Return is created by Kier Zhou, set in the fictional world of Erset La Tari, the stories of No Return explore themes of morality, power, and survival in a dying world. Zhou currently has eight stories or seasons in simultaneous progress. listeners can follow a particular story, or jump from one to another. The first episode is set in the Nymphaeum storyline, a comedy adventure about two monks, Ravi and Adrastia who journey to the afterlife to seek help from the gods, only to discover that things are not as they expected. I spoke to Kier remotely.

W. Keith Tims 01:33

Tell us a little bit about yourself as an artist or creator, writer, all that kind of good stuff.

Kier Zhou 01:39

I only really got into this very, very recently, I did a little bit of writing back when I was when I was younger. And I say that in the sense that I wrote a short story in about 2006 that I really thoroughly enjoyed, enjoy writing, and then didn't do anything creatively for very, very many years. That wasn't directly related to some sort of academic assignment at least. And it was only really during the lockdown when suddenly having to live very, very differently and find different ways to occupy myself. I revisited writing. And I did this pretty much inspired through just engagement with with TTRPG I was writing stories about characters we were playing and a world we were playing in. Until I started building a world of my own and started writing little flash fiction stories in it, started getting quite excited and passionate about that. And then stumbled accidentally into the world of audio drama by networking with

other creators, started making a few audio drama episodes myself. And next thing I knew I was creating No Return, which at this point, I think is eight concurrently running stories. So (laughter) it spirals pretty quickly. And it did quite honestly make me very, very happy. But I was supposed to do something else. And so I chased this other thing for a very, very long time. And I sometimes make a joke that I was doing, doing some sort of violence to my spirits, you know, like trying to try to fit myself into into a different sort of category around a square peg in a round hole sort of situation.

W. Keith Tims 03:05

Can I ask what that other thing was, if it's not too personal?

Kier Zhou 03:07

No it's an it's not too personal at all, I've always had a very, very strong sense of, of service, and whether that's been through a variety of different roles that I've had in the UK. So former police service and work in various roles in government. That's where I've always felt that I wanted to do and then it didn't give me what I wanted. (laughter) Coming back to it and rediscovering my passion for writing. And I don't get as much time to play music these days, and not in a not in a band anymore. But getting the opportunity to really dig in to writing and exploring fiction. It's been such a joy. And I'm so glad that that I managed to come back to it. And you know, it only took the world ending for it to happen. So.

W. Keith Tims 03:47

So tell me, how did you then get into audio drama from not doing much in the way of arts at all

Kier Zhou 03:54

the progression basically went from I went from writing the flash fiction stories to turning those into, into like mini audio books. And that was pretty much for the purpose of those people who I was who I was gaming with at the time, it was a way to make the world and stories we were telling through TTRPG more immersive. So you know, if a character that they'd met when we were playing, would create little flash flash fiction stories of flesh on them and their world. That was very much that the project was called Tales of Sada Emedu. And, and that's what that was all about. It's just about little stories to build to build up this world, easiest way or the way to make it most accessible for the players because obviously, they're busy themselves. They don't want to sit there and read reams and reams of text when they're trying to eat their dinner or look after their families. It's like well, how can I make this accessible? I'll make it in the audio format. And then by the sort of end of the project, I'd picked up enough skills and started getting other people involved to start doing the voices. And I'd even started playing around with actually making some pure radio play format episodes or sections to share and as I was doing that, that's when I started interacting with other people online so the likes of Skyler from Omega Star 7, we were doing a little bit of work work with one another. He asked me to do a bit of lines for him. I asked him to do a bit of music for me. And then next thing I knew I was creating an audio drama. I was like, Well, I enjoy that more. And I had so many stories I wanted to tell and they were bigger than these flash fiction stories I was telling. And I felt like I could do more with that. And I was doing with the with the audiobook format.

W. Keith Tims 05:24

So Tales of Sada Emedu, who is your was sort of your first audio drama, I guess?

Kier Zhou 05:29

Yeah. In a sense. Yeah.

W. Keith Tims 05:30

And then of course, you were a sort of a major player in Omega Star 7. You want to tell me about your character?

Kier Zhou 05:37

Yeah, absolutely loved playing it. And I'm so pleased that I ended up in a position to do it as well. So I played the I played Vax Arden, and who was the big bad in series one of Omega Star 7. And I'm still rooting for him, I think, I think I think he was the real hero of the story. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 05:58

What was the spark that started out your creation of No Return?

Kier Zhou 06:02

So it came off the back of a real frustration that I was having with with Tales of Sada Emedu and again, relates to some of the interactions that I was having with with Skyler and the Omega Star 7 team were one of the big issues I felt that I was having as a writer was because I'd spent so much time and effort building this world, and of course, the world that I built was built before the story was told, and I am obsessive about detail. So, you know, from the the history of individual institutions to the cosmogony of the universe, I have lore for that. And the problem is, is that the audience doesn't necessarily want to hear it. (laughter) But I still want to show it. And so I was fine, trying to find ways that were either entertaining ways to tell the story and to and to tell these aspects of the law, or to just cut it out. And I was really, really struggling with it. And I'm a Patreon for Omega Star 7, because I love everything they do. And so I started listening to some of their additional content, which had funny little additional ads and things for some of the lore in their world. I was listening to, to a lot of it. And I was thinking, You know what, I wish I could do something like this, I wish you could make it funny. I wish I could make the stuff that I'm doing that I think is interesting about the world. I wish I could make that something that would also make people laugh, so they could at least forgive me for lore dumping all the time. And that's where episode one of No Return came from the Nymphaeum. But it was just designed to get some really big stuff that I wanted to tell told in a really, really silly and funny way.

W. Keith Tims 07:30

Well, since we're talking about it, why don't you tell me a bit about No Return in your own words? What do you think of when you think about this show?

Kier Zhou 07:37

I think I think I describe it in one of the adverts as a creative hubris. (laughter) I very often when I think about I just think about the sheer volume of work that I've created for myself. But it's but I love it. Because it's so many different stories, No Return, it's at the minute, it's eight different stories, which

sorts of different styles and genres, and that are all running concurrently. It's almost location based storytelling. I'm telling different stories from different perspectives at different locations in this in this world. And, you know, I don't want to pretend that I have some sort of higher calling for that for the story. But I'm also trying to find ways to grapple with some pretty heavy philosophical themes. And we're trying to do it in a way that's that's entertaining, and not and not too exhausting for me or the audience.

W. Keith Tims 08:29

The stuff that I've listened to so far involving the Nymphaeum series, you're definitely trying for comedy here, right? It's sort of a comedy fantasy?

Kier Zhou 08:36

The Nymphaeum is. Yes. But that being said, there's a there's a reason that that particular story is being told through it through through a comedic lens. One because it's got so much of the lore in it, but also because some of the stuff that if you live, you know, if you're if you listen to what the characters are talking about some of the state of the world's in, it's really harrowing. And so you're having this sort of really absurd setup, where it's almost an almost an idiot plot in some in some aspects with the characters or just being swept along by either poor decisions or random chance. It's funny because there's nothing they can do about it. And again, that's more for me than I think for the audience where I want. What I'm going to try to get the audience to do is just chuckle. But yeah, it's my opportunity to deal with some some of that stuff as well.

W. Keith Tims 09:25

So I'm guessing... I definitely get like a Douglas Adams vibe, or Terry Pratchett vibe, from some of the writing in the Nymphaeum story. Is that fair to say that you were influenced by them?

Kier Zhou 09:36

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, I think they're probably my primary fantasy influences. Certainly, Pratchett and there's there's more than a couple of I call them homages because I can't admit to ripping him off. Plenty of homages to Pratchett in the world, including the names of some characters and locations.

W. Keith Tims 09:54

What do you like about that particular style of writing?

Kier Zhou 09:56

Do you know? I don't know if there's a word for it. There's this constant delay of climax that happens in it, where it feels like there's going to be this major conflict that's going to go into appear. But it actually just results in a gag. It's almost constantly subverting your expectations. Yeah, I really, really enjoy that. But I also really enjoy the being really high stakes. (laughter) And so trying to trying to balance that where the characters are having this constant delay of resolution or constant delay of climax in the story, which is something that I think recurs quite a lot in the Nymphaeum, where it'll build up to think this thing is really serious, and actually, it's not that bad in the end, but then it only gets worse.

W. Keith Tims 10:37

The Nymphaeum Saga is one of a series of stories that is being told in your podcast and the Nymphaeum is about two monks Ravi and Adrastia who are living in a world where the gods are absent and the people are suffering. One day Ravi discovers a portal to the Celestial Plane or what he thinks is the celestial plane, which is where the gods live and Adrastia and Ravi go through, but discover they're not in the Celestial Plane, they're in the afterlife or the Endless Sea, which is rather boring and shabby. And just nothing like what they expect. (laughter)

Ravi 11:15

[Begin clip from No Return.] (sound of a portal shimmering. Adrastia and Ravi pick themselves up off of the ground.) Are you okay?

Adrastia 11:20

Yeah, yes. My face broke my fall, mostly.

Ravi 11:26

(Portal fades. Desolate wind.) Where... where are we?

Adrastia 11:32

The Celestial Plane you said, right?

Ravi 11:38

Yes, yes, of course. It's just, it's a little darker than I expected and barren.

Adrastia 11:50

This is probably just the foyer, or something.

Ravi 11:54

You'd think of foyer of the hall of the gods would be a little less... empty?

Adrastia 12:01

Maybe it's the road to it. You know, like the carriage track to the Nymphaeum, old dusty track that leads to the glorious halls of the temple.

Ravi 12:11

... Yes, yes. Maybe that's it.

Adrastia 12:19

Oh, I think I can see some movement up ahead. Perhaps it's the welcoming committee!

Ravi 12:24

I really rather think we should stick close to the p... where's the portal? [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 12:32

Talk to me about why you wanted to start off your series, No Return with this particular story?

Kier Zhou 12:37

There is an overarching narrative that's that's supposed to stretch across all of the stories which, which this story is supposed to is supposed to set up. The purpose of telling this story first was to establish a couple of really, really key facts, one that the gods are absent, and that the bureaucracy and mechanics that hold the universe together are essentially breaking down, and the breaking down just from atrophy because no one's maintaining them. Everything that people believe or want to believe about the world is wrong. And that's that's the starting point that I wanted that I wanted for the story. But of course, I wanted to tell it in a way that wasn't just depressing. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 13:20

Ravi and Adrastia, they arrive in the afterlife, and they find themselves among the Lost which are the souls that have just been there so long in the afterlife, that they've kind of given up that they've lost their mental capacity, but they also meet someone named Peko. And I want to point out that you do the voice of Robbie and Peko...

Kier Zhou 13:37

I do, yeah.

W. Keith Tims 13:38

Yeah, so they meet Peko who is a resident of the afterlife who's been there for a while but hasn't hasn't given up yet like the others. And he kind of leads them along and fills them in and but he's a very chill kind of guy. He just you know, he's just kind of rolls with the punches.

Ravi 13:50

[Begin clip.] Who in the hells are you, man?

Peko 13:54

Sorry, bud. Didn't realize you will hard of hearing. I. am. Peko. Pe-ko.

Adrastia 14:04

You will have to excuse my friend. We're both a little disoriented by the journey here and a little lost.

Peko 14:15

Now that is the nicest way I've heard it put yet. Usually people are like running around screaming freaking out. Coming to terms with their gruesome and untimely death. You guys. You guys are like really chill about it. Disoriented. I guess so yeah! You must have been like, died in your sleep or something? Or like, just been really really, ready for the passing. Was it a long illness?

Ravi 14:43

Excuse me? Did you say death? [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 14:47

What's it like doing the voices for two different characters?

Kier Zhou 14:50

I have to say that Peko is my favorite character to voice. He is a voice that I've made up playing computer games with my son to make my son giggle. And so it's really nice to bring that really silly voice into the show. And because it's almost the polar opposite of what Ravi is, of Ravi is playing is very, very stuck up and serious and easily irritated. And then Peko on the other hand, who is completely out of his mind, and absolutely not taking anything that happens seriously. And so trying to bounce between these, those two characters, it's quite difficult to find the right energy. And so I tend to record them on different days. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 15:29

So you have multiple stories that are ongoing, you called them multiple seasons, but it sounds like you did the Nymphaeum story. And then you did like, I don't know, eight or 10 episodes, and then you stop and you finished it. And then you picked up on season two was the next. You're doing all these stories concurrently, and they're not finished yet. So you'll you'll release a few episodes of one particular story, and then you'll drop another one from another story, then you'll go back to a third story and so forth, right? Talk to me about why you wanted to structure your storytelling this way.

Kier Zhou 16:00

So there's, there's a few reasons for it, I think it's only really possible in Act One of of No Return where the stories only lightly intersect. As the stories start to converge in act two, it won't be possible to tell them in quite in quite the same way. But the rationalization for doing it the way that I did it, there's a couple of reasons. Because I'm insane. (laughter) And I'm a glutton for punishment. But it's mostly just to keep my self motivated and focused on on the show, I had all these stories and had them ready to go. But there are all kinds of things that can get in the way of production. This is an amateur production, it's been done by some fantastically talented people. And I'm so glad to have the support. And boy, I wish I could pay him. But you know, there's people's people's lives and my life as well gets in gets in the way of production. And so we can end up with a hard stop on what we're doing. And that then leaves me with nothing to work on. And so I would just shift to go and work on another part of the project. And then I could do that until the other part was ready to go again, or I have yet fingers crossed to experience writer's block. And I think my reason for this is because I just changed what I'm doing. Yeah, if I run out of steam over here, I move over there. And I start working over there until the energy is back to move over there. Now, each one of the stories does have its own sort of RSS feed that you can go with, you know, if you're not interested in your stories, you can just go and listen to that one. And I've tried to structure it in such a way that it's clear that episodes will be releasing concurrently. But some people still get a little bit confused by it and has caused caused a couple of problems. But the main reason has been motivation and focus. And because well, no one stopped me. (laughter) I should have just done one story at a time. But I didn't.

W. Keith Tims 17:50

Do you have all these stories already plotted out and finished and or at least written down or in your head or something like that?

Kier Zhou 17:56

So act one, which is the eight existing stories that we have, almost all of them are completely written, whereas act two and act three of the story predominantly are just in note format at the point at this point. So it's ... Yeah, yeah. And that's something that once actor ones finished, and maybe after a palate cleanser, I'll start actually putting the work behind that and getting those getting those finished.

W. Keith Tims 18:18

No Return is a story about existential issues. It's about trying to find out the truth about the world and our place in it where the gods seem to be absent, and things are not as they seem, is this coming from a place that's personal to you? What is motivating you to sort of tackle this particular theme.

Kier Zhou 18:37

So it fundamentally comes and this this is why I've said I hate bringing everything back to philosophy all the time, but it is it is ultimate where it comes from as it was that was what I studied for undergraduate was, was philosophy. And I remember, I remember I was happy before I studied philosophy. (laughter) I remember I remember a time of blissful naivety, which, in which the nihilism had not yet gripped my heart. And I think there was a lot of the things that I that I studied, and of course, the time that you the age that you study, as well as the time at which you know, pop, not necessarily the most vulnerable time for you to study at but a time when you are grappling with frustrations and boredom, what is the meaning of life? And then you find out that, you know, these questions have been being asked for 1000s of years and the answer is God is dead and everything's permitted. (laughter) And then and the and it's kind of, for me, huge parts of the show are a catharsis where I get to play out different answers to the question, what's the point? You know, wherever that is, you know, your answer is, you know, the absurdist one. There is no point but it's fine. It's funny, or the answer is there's no point don't try or the answer is find meaning in the smallest of things because the forces beyond you are so great. And each one of the stories and they'll have particular characters who are who I have been the main focal point for this experience each of the stories and responding in different ways to the to these questions and on under different circumstances

Adrastia 20:11

[Begin clip.] Shouldn't they be doing? I don't know, spirit stuff?

Peko 20:15

Spirit stuff? Look around, dear. Do you see anything else here to do?

Adrastia 20:19

No, no, I suppose not. But I just rather thought that the afterlife would be a little more...

Peko 20:26

Significant?

Adrastia 20:27

Yeah. And a little less...

Peko 20:30

Bleak?

Adrastia 20:32

Yeah. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 20:34

You've talked a lot about your love of world building. Tell me about that. What appeals to you about world building? And then what are some of the struggles with conveying world building to an audience that you've wrestled with?

Kier Zhou 20:44

What do I love about the world building? I mean, I'd be lying if it wasn't, because it makes me feel like a god. (laughter) It's, I don't know what it is. But it is something that always resonated with me, even when I was younger. And I used to play computer games like the the Elder Scrolls series. Even when I was at that age I found it more interesting to find the tomes and like libraries in the world that told the stories that had nothing to do with the plot that were entirely to do with the larger world and what was going on. And I got obsessed with it. Once I figured out you could find that stuff on the internet, I didn't even have to play the game anymore. (laughter) And I've done that done that with a few things, anything that I that I come across where I find the world interesting and engaging, I probably spend more time learning about the world and I do actually engaging with the primary content. And one of the big things I enjoy about TTRPG. If you're looking to things like Dungeons and Dragons, or Pathfinder, the scope and size of these worlds are so large and so interesting. And I wanted to do something like that I wanted to create something akin to that. But that did something and achieve something a little bit differently, and reflected and mirrored certain aspects of our world or amplified certain aspects of our world, where it probably fundamentally comes down to is and I hate bringing it back to philosophy. But it's the tensions that exist in a world that the characters have to react to. And the forces that act on them fundamentally shape their decisions in in ways that very often they don't want, or they resent and resist, but they're still swept along by them. And I wanted to see what would happen if I created new and different tensions and and untold stories in that world or created characters in that world and see how they reacted to those those tensions and those difficulties, those trials, and even just silly institutional bureaucracy.

W. Keith Tims 22:37

There are some world builders who will design the clothes and write poetry. How much detail do you get into when you get into the world building zone?

Kier Zhou 22:46

There's poetry, there's books within the world that the characters refer to. And there's the whole famous theatre productions and folktales. When it comes down to the detail and clothing is something I haven't gotten particularly into food, I have gotten down to like what the preferred dishes of different different regions are. But I think I'm... usually what I'm more interested in are, how history has shaped the institutions that matter to people in the world. And then how those people then either interact or don't interact with those institutions. And that can be don't get me wrong, anybody who talks to me about it, I bore them to death about it. I really, really enjoy it. I have written the entire history of the guild system of the Emeduan Empire from its conception and its multiple reforms. And I find that really fascinating. But nobody else does. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 23:41

Well, that's a that's a problem when it comes to taking a world building and putting it into something that's to be consumed as ours, right? Have you come up with a solution? Have you figured out a way to sort of gauge when and where to put in world building elements?

Kier Zhou 23:55

my initial solution was to have my characters interrupt me. So that this happens, I think, I think it may happen in episode one, or episode two of the Nymphaeum in which somebody starts going off about like this, about the world lore and literally somebody just goes "Bor-ing. Nobody wants to know that let's move on.": That was my initial short term solution to it. My solution now is just being more rigorous with with my editing, and getting more and more feedback.

W. Keith Tims 24:20

Looking back on the first episode of No Return, how do you feel about it?

Kier Zhou 24:24

I'm still pretty proud of it. I still every now and again, will go back and listen to it and still get a little chuckle out of it myself and on that basis, you know if nobody else in the world enjoyed it, at least I did. Now there's things I would definitely change about it. There's things that I can do now that I wish I could have done then. You know, you're always gonna go back and be like, ah, the pace in between the lines isn't right and or God, why didn't I have a decent microphone God? Why does it sound like Ravi and Peko are in a different room to Adrastia? Those things will will always play out mouth A little bit, but you know, it's not long into the series until those little kinks get worked out. And then and if I can still go back and enjoy it. And you know, it's the first episode, it's the most, it's the one that people come to first. And I still get lots and lots of positive feedback from those people who are discovering it now. I'm really, really glad I did it.

W. Keith Tims 24:27

What do you struggle with?

Kier Zhou 25:20

Balance. I don't know if you can tell us about me. (laughter) I struggle with balance. I got very, very into this project, I got very, very excited about about this, this project, I threw myself fully into it to the point

where--shock-- I over committed to, to doing doing way, way too much. And of course, I have to unbalancing that alongside, you know, a demanding work life, a family who needs me as well. But surface level administratively, I do a good job. But I'm always beating myself up about not being able to give enough to one of those at a time. And it are the one I beat myself up most about is usually my family, especially when I'm you know, creating that I'm doing all this wonderful work. I'm really enjoying myself thinking that I have to go back away to work. And now I have enough time to spend with my family. And I think my biggest struggle is trying to find a balance where I can feel satisfied in all those different aspects of my life. And I think one of the discovered is that I can't do that. And so I just have to be satisfied with one at a time. And also need to very, very clear listen to my wife when she says stop. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 26:34

Always wise. (laughter)

Kier Zhou 26:35

Always wise. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 26:37

How do you measure success?

Kier Zhou 26:39

So my measure of success beyond the "do I enjoy listening to it?" which I actually think is quite an important metric? Because I will say the difference between Tales of Sada Emedu as a project and No Return as a project is i and this is so self indulgent. And I probably shouldn't be admitting this on something that's gonna go out and people might listen to. But I really enjoy listening to my show. My first metric is, Do I like the show? Do I like the episodes will I listened? Well, I listened again. And I'm, I'm already satisfied that that's been achieved. But my next metric, my next step up on the ladder of success is our other people talking about it. And I mean, this in a very, very literally just anyone is somebody without me, prompting them, or engineering, the situation is somebody talking about the show. And that has occurred on one occasion. And that was on Reddit, when someone said, "I don't understand the format of the show. (laughter) There's so many episodes, I can't tell what's going on." But that was that was very valuable feedback for one, but also somebody cared enough to go and start complaining about it, which was excellent.

W. Keith Tims 27:48

It sounds like you're very busy, not just with the show with 8 different storylines, and all the world building. But with everything else you're doing, how do you stay motivated to do this show with all the work, and then sometimes feeling like people don't even respond or give you feedback?

Kier Zhou 28:03

So I think I touched on a little bit of how the variety and quantity of work and in itself provides ways for me to mitigate against demotivation. So if I'm working on something, and I'm not feeling it, I've got something else to work on. Just enjoying what I'm doing is a really, really big part of it. But it's not

always enough, especially when you get tired. You know, there were times early on the times even doing Tales of Sada Emedu where I had people laughing at me online at four o'clock in the morning when I was about to go to work at five o'clock. And I'd still been up editing. And at those points where you completely exhausted like oh my God, why am I even doing this? For those moments I have an alter ego. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 28:45

Oh really?

Kier Zhou 28:46

Yeah. So I have an alter ego who is the fictional "real" creator of no return who is completely impervious to any form of self reflection whatsoever. And there's... he is a monster. He is a is a creation of mine that has made his way onto social media at this point. I think he's in some of the ads, the comedy ads for no return now as well. So K-Zhou, Master of Story and Song who is just who is just the most self indulgent, narcissistic and self obsessed human, and he takes over when I get tired. It gives people a chuckle on social media and he stops me from getting, he stops me from getting too demotivated, because if he believes that he's the greatest creator that ever lived, then maybe I can do. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 29:31

So what are some things you've learned about creating audio drama that you can share with us, especially for people who might want to create their own?

Kier Zhou 29:39

In terms if anybody's out there who's thinking, Shall I do it? The answer is yes. The only advice I really give people is just do it. What's the worst that can happen? You know, you make something that's not great, okay, well make something else and make it better. And keep doing that until you make something that's good and something that you satisfied with.

W. Keith Tims 29:56

People say, Well, what if I do it and I fail? My answer is always Yeah, but what if you do it and you succeed?

Kier Zhou 30:02

Yeah, exactly. And I'm sure it's different for everybody. Honestly, not everybody's got K-Zhou, Master of Story and Song to protect them from self reflection. But I mean, so what? So what if you fail? Just do it again.

Ravi 30:16

[Begin clip.] (Moans of the Lost milling about aimlessly. Desolate wind.) You can't seriously mean to follow this madman.

Adrastia 30:21

What else are we going to do? This lot isn't going to be much use. Maybe he can tell us something useful.

Ravi 30:30

We need to find another portal or, or make one. We can't stay in this place. I don't know what it is, but it's not the Celestial Plane.

Adrastia 30:40

He said as much and you know, as well as I, that the Endless Sea is a passageway to all the other realms. If this is, as Peko says, The Endless Sea, then he may be able to help us find a way to a Celestial Plane or home.

Ravi 30:59

I don't trust him. He is. He's very strange.

Adrastia 31:05

You jump through a portal to another plane of existence and expected to find, what? The familiar? Come on. Let's follow before we lose track of him.

Ravi 31:16

(muttering) I didn't jump through, you dragged me! ... (hurrying after) Sang- Sanga. How in La Tari... Sangha! [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 31:24

No Return's unusual structure can be confusing at first, but it allows Zhou and the listener to explore different perspectives and ideas in a shared world. It also allows for changes in style and genre from comedy to adventure to horror and mystery. No Return offers a little something for everyone. You can listen to No Return on most major podcast platforms, or see our show notes for more information. (theme music plays) The First Episode Of is written and produced by W. Keith Tims. All the opinions expressed in this show belong to the people who expressed them and not necessarily to anyone else. The theme song is "Mockingbird" by David Mumford. This show is a production of Alien Ghost Robot Creative Media. If you want more information, want to sign up for our newsletter or are an audio drama creator and would like to be on the show visit our website at thefirstepisodeof.com We're happy to be a part of the Audio Drama Lab, a Discord based resource for audio drama development and networking. Check it out at audiodramalab.com. Keep telling stories. It's the only way we're gonna get out of this mess. Until next time!

W. Keith Tims 32:41

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