

## **EPISODE 3: SACRIFICE**

### EPISODE SCRIPT

**There you are. Welcome to 400 Words a Horror.**

*Welcome, welcome to my Horror Haven.*

Thank you, ma'am.

*Oh, wait. I have not seen you before, right? Are you one of Clarence's friends? Oh... They did not inform me about it. Oh, well, it is alright, we love newcomers here!*

Thank you, ma'am, I am honored.

*First things first, you have to remember that you are here by your own volition. These stories are here to spook you with fun. I would hate to create discomfort for you Listener discretion is advised. Feel free to leave if the story is not for you. Alright?*

*I am assuming you are staying with us. Just remember: it is allowed to go back now and never turn back. You can do that. But I am glad that you are here. Now, since it is your first time, let's go with a traditional field trip! You have to drink this, first. It is necessary for safety since umm... how do humans say? Ah, yes! Unconventional methods that will hurt your little bodies. Good gulp you have there. It is fun, though, isn't it? I am glad you didn't choke on that. That was a joke, haha.*

I am ready. Let's go.

*I have to warn you. You have to be dead silent. Just because we will become waves and people we are snooping on won't see us, doesn't mean they cannot hear. So, shhh.*

***Story: Boon & Bane by Just Jenah***

***Voiced by: Lyssa Jay and Neutron***

**CONTENT WARNING:**

***Story warnings: mentions of child sacrifice, extinction events, murder, depiction of violence, depiction of grief***

***SFX: choking, sobbing***

***Jo, Cas, and Desi are in a large rowboat. Jo is rowing and Desi is sleeping.***

**[Rowing sound effects, water lapping sound effects]**

**Jo**

You know what's strange? No matter how old I get, I always feel like a child playing at adulthood. Always thought that at some point I'd reach some magical age where I'd feel like a grown up.

**Cas**

**[snorting]**

Tell me about it. Nothing has prepared me for this bullshit.

**Jo**

I'm beginning to lose hope that such an age even exists.

**Cas**

Don't go getting morbid on me now. **[pause]** We're almost there. Here, let me take over.

**[sounds of Cas and Jo starting to swap places in the boat]**

**[Desi makes a small noise, and shifts a bit while Cas and Jo are swapping places]**

**Cas**

**[attempting to settle Desi]**

Shit, shh, shhh shh.

**Jo**

You know what it is?

**Cas**

*[interrupting]*

Jo shut up a second, she's stirring. Took me ages to get her to finally fall asleep finally.

*[Cas makes shushing noises and Desi sighs and settles]*

**Cas**

Thank goodness. If I had to get her back to sleep again-

**Jo**

No fury like that of a sleep deprived three-year-and-a-half-old.

*[Cas and Jo finish switching places and the rowing resumes with Cas at the oars now]*

**Jo**

You know what I think it is?

**Cas**

What is?

**Jo**

The "never feeling like an adult" thing.

**Cas**

*[laughs a little]*

Go on, tell me.

**Jo**

Just as you begin to acclimate to a situation, everything changes again, right? And then you need to relearn, all over again. The ground is ever-shifting beneath your feet.

**Cas**

How do you mean?

**Jo**

Think about it. Figured out school? Good, now go find a trade. Mastered that? Then it's high time you find a partner or three to settle down with, and figure out how to equitably live together. Happily cohabitating? Good luck with the next famine that rolls through the island.

**Cas**

Why do you think we do that?

**Jo**

What do you mean?

**Cas**

Well, there's no rule that says you *need* to do any of that.

**Jo**

Well, sure. But that's just one example. Even if you do not follow that specific path, whatever you do- whatever you choose- change *will* find you. It's inescapable. You still have to find a way to acclimate, all over again. You'd still need to make choices, based mostly on lived experience and intuition.

*[pause]*

**Cas**

Should be a rule book.

**Jo**

Even if there was one it'd be useless. It couldn't account for everything. You'd still have to figure it out on your own.

**Cas**

*[affectionate]*

Well. Not entirely on your own.

**Jo**

*[chuckling thoughtfully]*

Mmm, now there's a thought.

**Cas**

What?

**Jo**

Maybe the answer isn't making an informed choice, it's just trusting your instincts.

**Cas**

Hmm, seems risky if you ask me.

**Jo**

You tell me then. When you hid me and Desi in your back room three years ago, was that an informed choice? Or was that instinct?

**Cas**

Please, that's a terrible example.

**Jo**

It's a perfect example. You saved her life, probably both our lives that day. You didn't even know my name at the time, never mind love me. All you knew was that I'd rudely -

**Cas**

*[interrupting]*

- And violently -

**Jo**

- and - yes, and violently - interrupted a child sacrifice.

**Cas**

You've gotta admit it's one of the more exciting meet-cutes. Every time we tell the story of how we met everyone wants to buy us a round just so they can toast us.

**Jo**

*[fondly]*

You were brilliant. I thought for sure you were going to give the whole game away when those damn pirates pounded on your door looking for me and Desi.

**Cas**

Well, I can be quite charming when I want to be.

**Jo**

I certainly think so. The pirates must've thought so too. I was so impressed with you that night, convincing a bunch of pirates you hadn't clapped eyes on a child all day- meanwhile, you had us stowed away with your potatoes.

**Cas**

I thought they'd never leave. One of them nearly talked my ear off about how important the sacrifice was. Bored me to tears, that one.

**Jo**

You're the bravest barkeep I know.

**Cas**

Well, I was hiding a hot dockhand and an adorable stolen baby in my backroom, I was highly motivated.

**Jo**

I wonder what those pirates ended up doing that night. You think they ended up sacrificing a goat or something instead?

**Cas**

Probably. I wonder what they're up to now.

**Jo**

Cas, it was three years ago and they're pirates. It's not exactly the safest of professions. Most of them are probably dead.

**Cas**

Gosh, that's bleak.

*[pause]*

**Jo**

I remember thinking what monsters they must've been - Drowning a baby for what? I assumed it was for a chance at fair winds. I was horrified at the time-

**Cas**

Well, like you said it's a nasty profession and in their eyes, the sacrifice was probably a matter of survival-

**Jo**

*[sharp]*

Well exactly.

*[pause]*

**Jo**

My hands are torn to ribbons from all that rowing.

**Cas**

I offered to take over earlier-

**Jo**

I know-

**Cas**

Several times

**Jo**

You're better at wrangling Desi-

**Cas**

Not true

**Jo**

You're better at getting Desi to *sleep*.

**Cas**

Okay well that's true. But it doesn't account for the better part of the day when we were all wide awake. I still think we could've gotten passage on one of the trading vessels instead of buying this dingy old row boat at the last island. It would've taken us maybe 3? 4? hours to get to the next island on a proper ship [pause and the and then interjecting like they'd just had the idea]- and we could've just slept the whole way in a cabin. Caught our breath.

**Jo**

And left even more of a trail. Bad enough we're already on the manifest of the ship that took us from home but it couldn't be helped. Leaving quickly was more important than leaving without a trace at that point.

**Cas**

[pausing rowing]

God it reeks.

**Jo**

I barely smell it anymore to be honest.

**Cas**

How is that even possible?

**Jo**

Just don't. It's been like this the whole way, Cas. It's been almost two weeks since it started. Everywhere we go. More dead fish clogging the surface, stinking up the air.

*[pause]*

**Cas**

You know they started calling it The Bane.

**Jo**

*[snorting]*

Took 'em long enough to turn around on that. When it first happened the whole island- all the fisherfolk even- were calling it The Boon.

**Cas**

Can you blame them? All that food just there for the picking-

**Jo**

Well sure, maybe not the first day. All those fish, floating up to the surface, not a mark on 'em. The easiest meal most of us have ever caught. No casting a line, no waiting with nets. Just go to shore and pluck however many fish you wanted. Hell, when has anyone ever been able to catch so many so close to land?

**Cas**

Pickle or salt 'em and you've got food for months, years maybe.

**Jo**

But after the first couple of days you'd think they'd have spotted the problem.

**Cas**

Well it's human nature to overlook inconvenient truths.

**Jo**

But when thousands- hundreds of thousands of dead fish just kept coming up for days on end- too many for even the entire island to keep up with- how do you process and preserve that many fish? Where do you even store them once you do? They clogged the harbors- the ports- some of those fish were massive. Hell, there were fish I'd never even seen before and I've been a dockhand on that island almost my whole life, Cas. They kept calling it The Boon even as panic set in. Idiots, the lot of them.

**Cas**

How were they supposed to know it wasn't going to stop?

**Jo**

They didn't have to know it wasn't going to stop to know something like that doesn't bode well. All those bloodless white bodies glistening in the water all around them? By the third day, it smelled like the entire ocean had surfaced and died- all those rotting fish- disgusting and inedible. And more floating up every day. Pretty sure it only slowed down because there weren't many fish left in the area.

*[pause]*

**Cas**

You were right. We should've left that first day. I didn't want to worry you but I heard a few people talking at the market about how these events seemed to happen every year at the same time. And then the day before we left, one of the neighbours asked me what year it was that we stopped those pirates from sacrificing Desi. It might have been a coincidence but I was- it made me nervous.

**Jo**

Well. *[pause]* I didn't think it'd follow us like it did so I dunno. Maybe it's pointless. Fish seem to be dying everywhere we go. Maybe it's- Cas, do you think-

**Cas**

*[hurrying to cut Jo off]*

Maybe the Bane is everywhere. But we have to keep trying.

[pause]

**Jo**

How many times are we gonna do this, Cas?

**Cas**

Don't start-

**Jo**

This is the third time something like this has happened in as many years and each year it gets worse.

**Cas**

We're not discussing this-

**Jo**

First it was the crabs- at least those never got out of hand because so many of them were buried in the sand and it wasn't nearly as widespread.

**Cas**

We don't know if that was actually an event. It only seemed to affect our side of the island and it could've been related to anything.

**Jo**

Okay, what about the next year? With the birds?

**Cas**

That could've been from anything. I heard about a whole flock of gulls - scores of them, Jo - just falling from the sky on another island years ago.

**Jo**

Yeah well when it happened on our island it wasn't \*scores\* Cas, it was hundreds.

[silence]

**Cas**

These past three years have been the happiest of my life, you know?

*[silence]*

**Cas**

Remember when you took that transport job and half your pay ended up being in all those different colored silks and you draped them around Desi and taught her to say “A lady of fine taste”? I nearly died laughing at her tottering around the bungalow like a rich old lady dressed in finery saying “A lady of fine taste” over and over again.

**Jo**

Made a killing off those silks in the end. One of the best jobs I ever took.

*[silence]*

**Jo**

Nearly there. I can just see the shore.

**Cas**

A fresh start.

**Jo**

Are we really not going to talk about it?

**Cas**

*[nervous, warning]*

Jo-

**Jo**

I don't- it's not like I want to-

**Cas**

We can't- I can't talk about this. I can't believe you're even considering it.

**Jo**

I thought it was nonsense. You know I did- but- Cas it's not stopping. Look around us, does the entire ocean need to die-

**Cas**

*[firm]*

We're not. Talking about this.

*[beat]*

**Jo**

*[Defensive]* Okay. *[Calmer/Gentler]* Okay. Let's just get to shore and find a place to stay. Figure out what's next in the morning.

**Cas**

Good. Switch with me? I'll never be able to maneuver us to that dock without crashing into it.

*[Sounds of the two beginning to shift around]*

**Jo**

Need your big strong dockhand to guide you safely to- *[chokes and splutters as Cas draws a knife across Jo's throat as soon as Cas move behind Jo - it's messy and there's a bit of a struggle - thumping on wood sounds as Jo makes bloody gurgling sounds]*

**Cas**

*[panting and weepy]*

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. But you're right. We can't outrun this. I just hope this is enough.

*[Cas grunts as they dump Jo's body in the water and there's a large splash]*

*[Cas panting and crying as they try to pull themselves together eventually taking deep breaths]*

[sounds of Desi stirring]

**Cas**

Shh shh shhh- it's okay. I got you, Des. Almost there. We're almost there.

[Sounds of water]

-end of the story-

***Story: Drown by Lyssa Jay***

***Voiced by: Prax Killawatt***

**CONTENT WARNING:**

**Story warnings: panic attacks, claustrophobia, allusions to cults, drowning, brief mention of being drugged, mentions of kidnapping**

**SFX: choking, depiction of panic attacks, ambiance of an enclosed space, high pitched ear ringing**

[Tone should be panicked and scared, panic builds through the story but eventually fades to acceptance of death]

[sounds of running water filling up a small space] AHH! Jesus fuck that's cold. What the... where am I? It's so dark. Ok... I'm sitting- can I move ... ok no. No I can't. Well [exasperated] God maybe the tiniest bit? Maybe... Can I move my arms? No. Legs? Also no. Um... It seems like I can at least turn my head. Maybe if I... [gentle thump aga. inst metal] a small shift... I think that was. [Moaning sounds] Agh, my head. I feel groggy.

Ok ok okokok ok OK! Ok. Focus. Step one of the training, orientation. Where am I? I can feel... something [wondering what they're feeling] solid... against my back? Fuck that's cold. AH! Wet! Cold! Is this-? [sploosh noises] ok so it's a liquid. It's ... water. Water? Yeah I think... I think it's water. What the... Am I in a - I think I am. Is this a metal box? Wait, I think I can... [straining voice like one would strain their eyes] see - just a tiny bit. Eyes adjust in the dark - good. Ugh, my head - focus. Ok uh... that's what my knees are touching... it's cramped in here. I'm curled up- can't move. [panic rising again] Ok uh I can't move, holy... and there's - water. Is it- that's- it's rising. Oh my god...

Holy shit. HOOOOLY shit ok fuck. Uh. FUCK! No NO we're not gonna do that. Ok rule two of training, don't panic. Yeah no. We're not gonna panic - we're gonna. Fuck I really can't move. Are there... chains? No. What IS this? Why can't I - was I... drugged? Holy fuck um. Uh. Ok water's rising- holy shit it's up past my waist. I'm- holy- ok, no panicking. Uh. My knees are tucked up to my chest. I can feel - ok so... uh I'm sitting upright. Which means... WHICH MEANS NOTHING - I'm still trapped. My limbs. They're definitely numb and I- [gentle thumping noises] I still can't move them. Can I? No. I can't build up enough momentum. Fuck... uh... ok. So- no busting out. Um... then what.

[Angry panic rising] WHY CAN'T I FUCKING MOVE!?! I knew coming here was a bad idea. Stupid idiot motherfucker- I fucking knew it! "Oh just infiltrate the cult," they said, "it'll be fine!" Jesus fucking christ. Why'd-? It's not fine! WHY THE HELL DID I AGREE- IT ISN'T FUCKING FINE. I'M GONNA- [panicked and labored breathing, bordering on a panic attack] I'M GONNA FUCKING DIE. [more thump noises followed by a deep breath as if to steady themselves] holy fuck ok- so what am I going to do? What the FUCK am I-?! I'm not gonna die. I refuse. Can I even- I... am I going to die? No. NO! no nonono... [shaky breathing]

[Softer, coming to terms with reality] I can't- I don't know- how? What am I supposed to do? Oh my god... the water is up to my shoulders now. All the way- it's so high. And cold. [slower] I can't believe I failed. It wasn't supposed to go this way. I... I can't believe it. All that training. And I knew their rituals. I should have- I should've seen it coming. Coulda left. I can't bel- so cold. Ok. Fuck. But now I'm here. And... and I'm gonna die like this. It wasn't supposed to be me. How'd I end up being the sacrifice? I don't understand. What... went wrong? [we hear one final deep breath as the box fills up]

**-end of the story-**

*A CULT? I- A CULT? Did they just call me a cult? Why do humans always think of these things as if we are humans? You saw me, I was twice a human size in front of them, yet they still thought I was a cult? Humans truly love to cover things they don't understand with bullshit. Well, I did tell them that they could leave. Some dumb people they were. Let's just throw this one away. Hmm... What do you think we should do?*

## Cast and Crew:

The episode was sound designed by Gem Aydın (they/them)

### **Boon and Bane**

It was written by Just Jenah (they/them)

It was edited by Gem Aydın, Neutron, and Lyssa Jay

The voice of Cas was Neutron (they/them)

The voice of Jo was Lyssa Jay (she/they)

### **Drown**

It was written by Lyssa Jay (she/they)

It was edited by Gem Aydın, Neutron, Prax Killawatt, and Just Jenah

The voice of the New Visitor/Drowned was Prax Killawatt (he/they)

## The Sounds Used in This Episode:

There you are:

[Freesound - "Harpeggio" by Beetlemuse](#)

[Freesound - "Morning birds and cawing" by Froey\\_](#)

[Freesound - "Tumbling Through the Void.wav" by EgilSG](#)

[Freesound - "wood step.mp3" by saha213131](#)

[Freesound - "steps in the woods 01.wav" by borys\\_duque](#)

[Freesound - "Door closing. door closed" by steinhyrningur](#)

[Freesound - "DoorGate Squeak.MP3" by HewlettArtistry](#)

[Freesound - "Door Open 3\\_Creaky\\_Near\\_Mono" by \\_stubb](#)

[Freesound - "Owl Hoot" by Breviceps](#)

Inside the Haven:

[Freesound - "Paper Fold.MP3" by FunWithSound](#)

[Freesound - "Morning birds and cawing" by Froey\\_](#)

[Freesound - "Soft Tonal Wind\\_01" by janbezouska](#)

[Freesound - "Tumbling Through the Void.wav" by EgilSG](#)

[Freesound - "Clock\\_Old.wav" by taquion](#)

[Freesound - "heartbeat regular.wav" by zimm](#)

[Freesound - "High Heels on Wooden Floor" by mefrancis13](#)

[Freesound - "Walking on wooden floor.mp3" by davidsonfreedia](#)

[Freesound - "SLOW HEARTBEAT" by daandraait](#)

[Freesound - "Pouring a glass of fizzy lemonade" by IRF1010N](#)

[Freesound - "Footsteps with floor creak" by TheBuilder15](#)

Boon and Bane:

[Freesound - "Ocean Waves Sounds Of The Foam.wav" by davidgtr1](#)

[Freesound - "Seaside soft waves" by anraana](#)

[Freesound - "Paddles rowing on a calm water stream" by brunoboselli](#)

[Freesound - "boat footsteps soft.wav" by shatterstars](#)

[Freesound - "boat footsteps running hard\\_Current.wav" by shatterstars](#)

[Freesound - "2018 07 rocking chair.flac" by arseniiv](#)

[Freesound - "wood creak low sit down on loose park bench and get up.flac" by kyles](#)

[Freesound - "Toddler Voice Random Chatter" by Manim8](#)

[Freesound - "Baby Laugh.wav" by FunWithSound](#)

[Freesound - "Toddler wake up.WAV" by esperar](#)

[Freesound - "Person Knocked Down" by qubodup](#)

[Freesound - "Body fall\\_03.wav" by deleted\\_user\\_2104797](#)

[Freesound - "Large Splash" by roboroo](#)

[Freesound - "clothes suffling.m4a" by x. .Sircartier](#)

Drown:

[Freesound - "063015 Hydrophone water 1.wav" by thaighaudio](#)

[Freesound - "Trapped in Water Box.wav" by taman21](#)

[Freesound - "clothes suffling.m4a" by x. .Sircartier](#)

[Freesound - "Swirl Water in Cup" by Erbsland-Music](#)

[Freesound - "Small metal across mic stand metal.wav" by Wolf212](#)

Outro:

[Freesound - "Deep Kick + Tension" by bryanbulmer](#)

[Freesound - "Ethereality" by magnuswaker](#)

[Freesound - "ukulele + granulator" by muri\\_kuri](#)

[Freesound - "thinking.wav" by The\\_White\\_Cat](#)

[Freesound - "Harpeggio" by Beetlemuse](#)

[Freesound - "FX Impact" by DaveJf](#)