

Reservation Dogs: Season 3, Episode 3: “Deer Lady”

Directions: Before reading the *Deer Woman* anthology, it is important to understand who Deer Woman is and to hear the story directly from an Indigenous author. Today you will watch another episode from the award-winning Hulu series *Reservation Dogs*, which more fully develops her character and allows non-native people to see why she is a necessary protector of Indigenous women and children.

1. How characters are introduced is meaningful. This episode starts with Deer Woman walking into a convenience store.
 - a. How is she dressed?
 - b. How does she exude confidence?
 - c. How does the man at the register respond to her?
 - d. What does his action imply about his connection to her?
 - e. Why does she go into the bathroom?
 - f. What does this action imply about what she just did?
2. This show masterfully transitions between Deer Woman’s present and past.
 - a. When she breaks the deer antler in the sink, she remembers running as a child. What mood is immediately created about her childhood? Think about the action, lighting, etc.
 - b. As she is driving down the road and looks in the rearview mirror, she remembers being a child in the back of a truck? How does this scene contrast her current power against her childhood disempowerment?
3. When the truck stops, the Indigenous kids arrive at residential school – these were schools where kids were stolen from their Indigenous homes and placed in a Christian boarding school.
 - a. How do the creators play with sound and language in this scene?
 - b. How does the depiction of language help the audience to better understand the young Deer Woman’s experience and emotions in this moment?
4. Indigenous kids were abused and killed at these “schools”.
 - a. What is the first thing that happens to the kids here?
 - b. How do the kids respond to this action? Think about their body language.
5. In the present, Deer Woman orders two whole pies to eat, a cherry pie and an apple pie. After her order it flashes back to her experience eating at the residential school.
 - a. How is the food depicted?

- b. Why do the nuns yell and violently punish the girl?
 - c. What is the goal of these actions? What impact will the nun's actions probably have on the kids?
- 6. In the middle of the night, a nun removes an Indigenous boy from his bed and takes him to the priest.
 - a. What are the horrific implications of this scene?
- 7. Deer woman invites Bear to sit with her and shares her pie with him.
 - a. How is she depicted her. Think about adjectives you would use to her actions here.
 - b. After asking him about pie, what does she ask Bear?
 - c. Why does she drop her book on the ground?
 - d. How does Bear respond to this realization?
- 8. The creators juxtaposed the Indigenous children's forced singing of *Jesus Loves Me* in English to the sound and image of a man digging a grave. What is the symbolic meaning of this writing decision?
- 9. Did Bear believe in Deer Woman before meeting her? Why did he think she was just a story? What was the purpose of those stories?
- 10. Deer Woman helps Bear.
 - a. What is Bear's problem?
 - b. What does Deer Woman say she will do to help Bear?
 - c. How is her helping of Bear contrasted with her experience as a kid? Hint: both of the them are grounded in their relationship with home and the residential school doesn't count as her home.
- 11. While Bear is in her truck, Deer Woman stops at an old man's house.
 - a. What does she remember at this moment?
 - b. The old man says that all they leave behind is pictures. Why is he wrong? What are the actual implications of his actions?
- 12. Young Deer Woman escapes from the residential school when her friend Koda is taken to the priest in the middle of the night.
 - a. Who does she meet in the woods as she asks for help?
 - b. What does the figure say it can do to help her?
 - c. What happens to the nun?

13. What did Deer Woman do to the old man?
14. Who was the old man and how do the creators reveal his identity?
15. How do the twins respond to Deer Woman?
16. This episode is complex - haunting and healing.
 - a. Does the show depict Deer Woman as a hero or villain? Support your claim with evidence from the show.
 - b. Is she someone that is scary or comforting? Support your claim with evidence from the show.