

Welcome anyone! This is one of our unfinished episodes. The script is mostly unrevised, so any grammar check/sensitivity reading will have come after. You may see some highlighted parts, which are usually notes to check accuracy or pronunciation notes for our cast. Here, you get to see our writer's stream of thought, so please be kind and remember that what you see in the final product is never a first draft! With that, please enjoy!

EPISODE 14 - AXEL'S PARENTS

The sun is just starting to come up over the horizon. The beach was quiet, save for the sound of the calm waves lapping against the shore. There's nothing like a walk along the beach to start the day, at least that's what Doria thinks. Days like today, just as the dawn arrives and before anyone else in the house is up, Doria will slip away from their home and head down to the nearby beach; walk along the water for a little while and then head right back home.

This morning should have been like any other morning stroll along the sand as the sun rises... but it's not. Not when Doria finds someone washed up on the shore.

She first took notice when she caught sight of what looked like debris from something, maybe a ship, had washed up. It wasn't unusual for a storm to drag this stuff onto land, but she doesn't recall any storm happening last night. It wasn't too much further ahead that she spotted the prone form clinging to a large piece of wood.

Realizing that it was a person she was seeing, Doria takes off without a second thought. Had there been a shipwreck sometime in the night? How long has this person been here? Are they even still alive? When she reaches them, Doria pries them off the driftwood and onto the sand. She places her fingers at their neck, looking for a pulse. She finds one, telling her they're still alive.

As she draws her hand back, she notices that at some point, the stranger's eyes have opened. Doria freezes under the half-lidded gaze; they're looking right at her. They say nothing but stare up at her, and as he does, Doria takes in their features. How pale they look, their brown hair that sticks to their skin, the gash across their forehead of a recent injury, the color of their eyes.

The stranger attempts to speak, but they can't get any words out. Their eyes slip shut once again.

Doria looks down at them with sympathy, wondering what had happened to this person. Aside from pondering that question, she does happen to notice the clothes they are wearing. It would appear to be a sort of uniform, though it looks to have seen better days. They catch sight of a familiar symbol on the jacket and it takes her a few minutes to place the symbol and style of the uniform from a history text. They're wearing the uniform of an Empire soldier.

Doria is surprised by this realization. The Empire had decimated the Islands many years ago and now that they have been reclaimed, people from the Empire were often treated with suspicion. There was that history, and Doria is well aware of it. This only created more questions for her. What is a person from the Empire doing here? And how did they get here? A shipwreck was at the top of the list of possibilities, but Doria wouldn't know unless she asked.

However, the fact remained that this person was hurt, weak, and far from home. Empire soldier or not, Doria had to help them; no one else was around that would, and might not since they are of the Empire. And so, Doria did the only thing she could think of, even if she knew that it was probably a bad idea.

[TRANSITION]

INT. ASPHODEL'S OFFICE

[SOMEONE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.]

ASPHODEL. Ugh. What now?

AXEL. I was just stopping by to see if you'd like a coffee.

ASPHODEL. Yes, please. Thank goodness for coffee.

AXEL. Thank goodness for me thinking about you when I went on my lunch break.

ASPHODEL. That too.

[SHE TAKES A SIP.]

ASPHODEL. Ah!

AXEL. It's hot.

ASPHODEL. *(sarcastically)* Thank you, Miss Moore.

AXEL. No problem.

[AXEL SHUTS THE DOOR TO THE OFFICE.]

AXEL. Busy day, huh.

ASPHODEL. Tell me about it. My mother has been riling up the anti-immigration crowd more and more, but she's yet to actually implement any procedures. So now on top of the usual complaints from the pro-immigration activists, I've got piles of angry messages from the anti-immigration activists as well. If we could get the checkpoint policy past the council that'd be one thing, but they won't budge. And Mother's other plans are so far from being legislation-ready that it's not even funny.

[BEAT.]

Well?

AXEL. Well what?

ASPHODEL. Aren't you going to say something about how you disagree with the policies, or offer solutions that my mother wouldn't approve of?

AXEL. That's above my pay grade.

ASPHODEL. Then I'll speak to someone about getting you a raise. We need some different ideas right now.

[BEAT.]

Don't you dare tell Mother I said that.

AXEL. My lips are sealed. Besides, I'm well informed of the situation, and if I had some viable solutions that fell within the realm of what your mother is trying to do, I'd voice them. The thing is, I don't agree with any of it, and my only solution would be to go back to the drawing board.

ASPHODEL. Who's been informing you?

AXEL. I've spoken to almost everyone over the phone that you have, they go through me to reach you.

ASPHODEL. *(teasing)* What, are you *fishing* for information? Tryna get that big catch?

AXEL. *(genuinely taken aback)* What?

ASPHODEL. *(beat)* You know... because you like fishing. It's like your whole thing?

AXEL. Oh! *(really awkward laugh)* Right! That's really funny.

ASPHODEL. Are you actually fishing for information?

AXEL. Hmm, I might be.

ASPHODEL. Oh?

AXEL. Yeah. I've actually been *really* curious if you still play the violin.

ASPHODEL. Ah, changing the subject, I see.

AXEL. It's good to have casual conversations in the workplace. It makes the environment more positive.

ASPHODEL. What book did you read that in?

AXEL. Can't remember. So? Do you?

[BEAT]

ASPHODEL. Sometimes.

AXEL. It's been a while since I've heard you play.

ASPHODEL. That's because we haven't spent time together since we were *kids*. I'm much better now.

AXEL. I expect an incredible performance one day, then. After work.

ASPHODEL. Are you inviting yourself over so you can watch me play violin?

AXEL. Yeah, I am.

ASPHODEL. I'm not sure whether to accept or to scold you for being impolite.

AXEL. (*chipper*) The first one sounds good to me. What about next Tuesday?

ASPHODEL. I'll have to check my schedule.

AXEL. That's my job, actually. Let me see... yep, it says you've got the evening off! Lucky me.

ASPHODEL. (*holding back laughter*) You're reprehensible.

AXEL. (*grinning*) I'd like to think I'm just persistent.

ASPHODEL. That too. (*dramatic sigh*) Alright Miss Moore, I'll extend you a formal invitation to come watch me play a few pieces this coming Tuesday.

AXEL. Why thank you, Miss Russel. That's very kind of you.

ASPHODEL. Don't you have work to be doing?

AXEL. I'm pretty sure talking to you is part of my job.

ASPHODEL. And I'm pretty sure those dam people are on the phone again.

AXEL. *(smiling)* I'll take care of it.

ASPHODEL. Please do.

[TRANSITION]

The best hiding spot Doria could think of was the boathouse her family owned. No one would be there at this early in the day.

Doria leaves the soldier and runs back to the house to fetch a couple pillows, a blanket, and a med kit. She also fills up her canteen with water while she's getting those supplies. She puts everything into a basket and gets ready to head back to the boathouse. When she hears the sounds of movement from upstairs, meaning her family is up. Doria hurries back to her own room to hide the basket before returning to the kitchen. The soldier will have to wait.

Her mother asks if she found anything interesting while out on the beach, and Doria shrugs in response. Her family was aware that Doria liked to go out on the beach in the morning, but she can't just tell them she found a washed up empire soldier. All she can do is act like nothing out of the ordinary happened, and once breakfast is over, she'll go check on the soldier again. While she might be commended for wanting to help a poor shipwrecked soul, she doesn't know how her family would respond to that person being someone from the Empire.

Once breakfast is over, Doria tells her parents she's going to work in the boathouse for a bit. Technically it's not a lie, as she does keep a boat there she uses for fishing and it does need to be worked on. Making sure to grab the basket from her room first, she returns to the boathouse.

The soldier is still here, and still unconscious like she left them. She gets the pillows under them and puts the blanket over them as

well. Taking the med kit from the basket, Doria takes out some bandages and starts to wrap them around the soldier's head. It's as she's finishing bandaging their wound that they stir.

She stops, drawn to them as their eyes open once again. They look exhausted, but also confused. Meeting her gaze, they manage to speak out one word. "Where". Doria takes the canteen of water from the basket and opens it, lifting their head up and holding the canteen to their lips.

"My name is Doria Moore." She tells them as they drink. "You're in the Gannon Islands. I found you washed up on the beach not far from my family's home."

They blink at her when she takes back the canteen, and after a moment they whisper a name; Pat. They don't stay conscious for very long after, still weakened by whatever he had gone through before she found him.

Doria regards them for a moment, brushing their wet hair back from where it was sticking to their forehead. She shouldn't be doing this, but they're hurt. She couldn't just leave them on the beach like that.

They pull the blanket back up to his chest, saying softly to him "Don't worry; I'll keep an eye on you."

[TRANSITION]

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE PATIO

SORREN. I'm glad to hear you're enjoying it. You look well.

AXEL. Thanks. I honestly didn't expect to like it, but it's nice to be working again. It's not a bad job in general.

SORREN. And you've been gathering information?

AXEL. Yep. I actually talked to the company working on the dam. They're calling often enough that it's catching Hayyacynth's attention now. A lot of the workers are thinking about boycotting the project. The union might even get involved.

SORREN. How about the public?

AXEL. I've been working with Caden on the side trying to get them as many public appearances as possible to talk about their research. On top of that, there are some people in the office who've begun to gossip about Hayyacynth's immigration plans. I've fueled that as much as I can, and some of it is making it into the media. I've also been getting closer to Asphodel.

SORREN. Oh yeah?

AXEL. *(a bit wistfully)* Yeah. It's... it's *really* nice to reconnect with her again. I don't feel like we're on opposite sides anymore.

SORREN. Huh.

AXEL. She has to talk to me because it's part of my job to communicate with her, but even beyond that, we've found an even ground recently. I'm going to her place next week, actually.

SORREN. I'm happy for you, Axel. I am. But maybe it's not the best time to get too close to Asphodel? As friends, I mean, outside of the job. You are currently attempting to take her mother down.

AXEL. I know, but she's not Hayyacynth. She's... different.

SORREN. *(sigh)* I don't think this is a good idea. This just doesn't end well.

AXEL. Why can't it?

SORREN. Axel...

AXEL. Look, Sorren, if you want a better reason, I can give you one. If she likes me, and trusts me, I might be able to access more classified information. She might have me work more with other people in upper management, or network more with constituents. I could get further in the organization.

SORREN. *(sarcastic)* So your plan is to manipulate her and use her to further your goals. That's a *great* way to rekindle an old friendship.

AXEL. Or I could just be friends with her, Sorren. She knows I don't like her mother, it's not like that's a secret. She chose to hire me knowing full well I might be planning something and she's still being... *(realizes something)* nice to me.

SORREN. Uh oh. You've got that look on your face. What is it?

AXEL. Well, I was thinking... what if I just showed you?

SORREN. What?

AXEL. Well, you and Finn are having that dinner-

SORREN. Oh boy.

AXEL. What if I invited her? Then you could talk to her outside of politics and work. You'd see a different side of her.

SORREN. Axel, I want you to know that I still think this is a bad idea.

AXEL. I know.

SORREN. But I'm also your friend, and you look brighter than you have for a while.

AXEL. So... I can invite her, then?

[BEAT.]

AXEL. ...Please, Sorren?

SORREN. *(relenting)* Fine. Invite her to dinner.

AXEL. Are you actually ok with this? We don't have to do it.

SORREN. Yeah, Axel, it's fine. I admit, I'm kind of interested to see what sort of person Asphodel Russel is in an informal setting. I can't imagine her without that fancy cape thing.

AXEL. You're going to like her, Sorren. She's really funny.

SORREN. I'll look forward to it.

[TRANSITION]

Doria falls into a sort of routine while she cares for Pat in secret. After breakfast she'll say she's going to do work in the boathouse so she can go check on Pat. He's a bit confused the first few days while he recovers. When he eventually becomes more clear-headed, Doria learns more about this stranger she dragged off the shore.

The soldier's name is Pat Buxton, although he was originally born under a different name that he said didn't suit the person he felt he was. He had been stationed on an Empire ship until it got destroyed in a battle. He'd managed to cling to a large piece of debris after the ship was destroyed, but didn't remember much after that... until waking up on the beach and seeing Doria's face.

Doria also gets to know more about who Pat was as a person, and his life in the Empire. Slowly, she starts to see that while the Islands had their history with the Empire, it didn't mean that Pat embodied it. He was just a person that lived there. He had nothing to do with the wrongs the Empire had wrought upon the Islands long ago.

Doria, in turn, tells Pat about the Gannon Islands, more specifically Island One, where she lives. She tells him about the environment of the island, how they're all like a community. To his credit, Pat seems very interested whenever she talks to him about the Islands and how it all sounds nice. He'd only heard of the Islands in passing back in the Empire.

Eventually, it did occur to her that she could not hide Pat forever. Her family had started to get very curious about why she was spending so much time at the boat house. Doria knew he had to leave, and once he was well enough to walk, she expressed this to him. Pat understood, saying he didn't want to cause her any trouble.

It was good he was understanding, but the problem with that was, over the course of caring for and getting to know Pat, Doria had grown attached to the former soldier. Part of her didn't want him to go.

She took Pat out on the boat that afternoon, just before sundown. She'd done so with him before, but never too far from shore, considering he ended up in the islands after the boat he was on was destroyed at sea. They talk for a while, share some fruit Doria had brought with her, and eventually she asks Pat if he wants to go back to the Empire.

After a moment, he shakes his head. He tells Doria that he likes it here, even if it's just going off what Doria has told him. He didn't really like living in the Empire to begin with. He tells her that maybe ending up here is a chance for him to start over, and on that note, he thanks Doria for finding him. He says her kindness means a lot to him, and that he will miss her.

Up till now, Doria told herself that it would be better if Pat left, even if she didn't want him to, but in this moment, out here on the water with him-

"Stay." She blurts out.

Pat gives her a puzzled look, and she further elaborates. She tells Pat she doesn't care if he's from the Empire. She likes having him around, talking to him. She likes that he's interested in learning about the Islands, her homeland. She likes his lopsided smile. She... She just likes him. She wants him to stay.

Pat's expression softens, and he takes her hand. He doesn't really want to go either. He wants to know Doria more. He wants to know more about the Gannon Islands. He wants to stay too.

So, once again, Doria makes a choice. She tells Pat to stay, and to meet her family. It would be awkward to explain, but it's a chance Doria is willing to take.

Pat agrees, and once they're back on shore they head back to the house together. Of course, by the time they get back it's just about time for dinner. The moment they walk into the house and find Doria's parents, questions ensue. Doria explains it all, and Pat tells how he got to the Islands. To her surprise, it all goes better than she would have expected. Doria's mother even tells Pat he can stay for dinner and that they can help him find someplace to get settled if staying in the Islands is what he wants.

He says that it is. At that, Doria looks over and smiles at Pat, and he smiles back.

[TRANSITION]

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

[EVERYONE IS PACKING UP AND LEAVING.]

AXEL. Do you need anything?

ASPHODEL. No. Thanks.

AXEL. Alright, I'll wait outside then.

ASPHODEL. Actually, would you stay a minute?

AXEL. Yeah. Sure.

[THEY WAIT UNTIL THE DOOR CLOSSES AND THE ROOM IS QUIET.]

ASPHODEL. That *really* did not go well.

AXEL. You can say that again. It wasn't your fault, though.

ASPHODEL. Obviously. No one else knew what they were talking about, and couldn't grasp any of the concepts I was trying to present.

AXEL. I thought it was well put together.

ASPHODEL. Well, you understand more complex subjects than they do.

AXEL. Thank you.

ASPHODEL. Mhm.

[A MOMENT OF QUIET. ASPHODEL STACKS SOME PAPERS.]

ASPHODEL. *(quietly)* Mother could have done that better.

AXEL. Doubtful.

ASPHODEL. Is it? She always seems to have the right words at the right time. I was... ungraceful when I was faced with a question I didn't have a practiced answer for.

AXEL. Well, she's got practiced answers for everything. It's hard to compete with that.

ASPHODEL. No, she doesn't. I know. I'm the one who sits and listens to her speak and asks her all the questions she expects to be asked. She still manages to answer ones we haven't rehearsed.

AXEL. That's not what I mean. Hayyacynth doesn't practice individual responses. She practices having a script. Half of politics you can just swap some words out for another and with the right vocabulary it's like you've come up with some groundbreaking idea when it's really just pulling a curtain over the core of the issue. She makes it seem like she's going into the niceties with big words and twisted phrases.

ASPHODEL. I don't understand why I can't do that.

AXEL. You're more honest with your approach, and you go in assuming everyone listening has a base level of knowledge on the topic you're talking about.

ASPHODEL. Which is why no one understands when I speak.

AXEL. Right. Because you expect them to be at a more complex level of thinking than they actually are.

ASPHODEL. *(laughing a little)* That's mean.

AXEL. *(smiling)* It's blunt. There's a difference.

ASPHODEL. Mm. True enough.

[PAUSE. ASPHODEL ZIPS UP A BRIEF.]

AXEL. Your mom has been putting a lot on you.

ASPHODEL. Nothing I can't handle.

AXEL. No, you definitely can. But you've been comparing yourself to her a lot recently. Is there... anything I can do?

ASPHODEL. What do you mean?

AXEL. Is there anything I can do or say to convince you that you don't have to be just like her?

[A LONG PAUSE.]

ASPHODEL. No. It's not that.

[BEAT.]

ASPHODEL. This is stupid.

AXEL. Tell me.

ASPHODEL. Why?

AXEL. Because I want to know.

ASPHODEL. You want to know... about me? About this?

AXEL. (*genuinely, quietly*) Of course I do.

[PAUSE.]

ASPHODEL. I feel like... I feel- like I'm being used. Like I'm just a pawn in her chess game. Not a pawn. Maybe a knight. Maybe someone more important, but that she could sacrifice just as easily. I feel like I'm only as important to her as the other people in my pay grade. I wasn't even *in* politics before this, I was-

[BEAT.]

[DEEP BREATH]

I can't tell her that. She'll take it the wrong way.

AXEL. Mhm.

ASPHODEL. I love her. She's my mother.

AXEL. You don't have to convince me of that. I see that you love her every day. You do so much work for her beyond your role, with no complaints.

ASPHODEL. I want to do it. I want to show her. I've rearranged my entire *life* for her.

AXEL. I know.

ASPHODEL. (*quietly*) And I don't get anything back but a paycheck and a pat on the shoulder.

AXEL. That hurts.

ASPHODEL. Yeah.

[A LONG PAUSE. AXEL SHIFTS TOWARD ASPHODEL.]

ASPHODEL. Thanks. For listening. I don't really... uh... (*sigh*)

AXEL. Thank you for telling me. Are you alright to get back to work?

ASPHODEL. Yeah. I'll be fine.

[SHE SHIFTS TO GET UP.]

AXEL. I want you to come to dinner.

ASPHODEL. Dinner?

AXEL. Yeah. Sorren and his husband are having some people over, and I asked if I could bring a plus one.

ASPHODEL. When?

AXEL. In a few days. I put it in your calendar.

ASPHODEL. You scheduled me for a dinner I haven't accepted an invitation to?

AXEL. I was hoping you'd want to come.

[PAUSE.]

AXEL. It's in pencil-

ASPHODEL. Put it in pen, then.

AXEL. You'll come?

ASPHODEL. *(sincerely)* I'd love to. Thank you for the invitation.

AXEL. Yeah, for sure.

ASPHODEL. Is it... formal?

AXEL. Finn always overdresses to events, and Sorren always makes casual look fancy. Wear whatever's comfortable.

ASPHODEL. What colour are you wearing?

AXEL. Probably something green.

ASPHODEL. Then I'll come in red. Write that down on my calendar as well. "Wear something red."

AXEL. *(laughing a little)* Alright!

ASPHODEL. Well, go on. We've got a job to do, we can't just stand around chatting for the next hour.

AXEL. Aw, can't we?

ASPHODEL. Unfortunately not.

[FOOTSTEPS.]

ASPHODEL. *(farther away, smiling)* Come on Axel.

AXEL. Alright, wait up.

END OF SEGMENT

- ends on a happy note
- a love story
- steal from The Little Mermaid
- Pat [other last name] (axel's father) and Doria Moore (axel's mom)
 - they do not have to be cishet
 - Pat is from the Empire, Doria is from the Gannon Islands (small town on Island 1)
- Pat was a soldier, washes up on the shore. (was shipwrecked in a naval battle, managed to cling onto a part of the ship).
- Doria finds him passed out, injured on the beach, and secretly nurses him back to health even though empire people are regarded with suspicion. they fall in love
 - she realizes that people from the empire aren't crazy warmongering people, he is Just a Dude
 - he realizes that the gannon islands are really nice and it's much nicer to live there
- eventually she introduces him to her family and they live happily ever after (Doria lives with her parents)