

STATION ARCADIA OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

SEASON 2 EPISODE 2: FROM OTHER SHORES

Eli: Hey listeners, this is Eli Allan, producer of Station Arcadia and Your gay best friend. I'm here to give a little disclaimer that, unfortunately, Station Arcadia stopped production midway through season 2. The following episode Was mostly finished before we were forced to halt production, but the show's cancellation is still reflected in minimal soundscaping in the second cutaway segment as well as other minor aspects of its production quality. That said- enjoy.

KASS. Welcome anyone. Join me in the present moment. You're listening to Station Arcadia.

[INTRO THEME]

Sorry about last time, folks. I forgot how draining it can be to tell these stories, especially when they hit a bit too close to home. Sometimes when I'm plugged into Arcadia I feel like I *become* the story, in a sense. It's less like I'm reciting phrases, and more like I'm being used as some sort of conduit for the words to pass through. I don't mind it - it's pretty cool, actually. I get to see or... sense things unfold, in a way I couldn't; even when I had bionics. It's engaging, to say the least! But it can also take a lot out of me.

Today though, I'm well-rested and ready to jump back into things. Let's see what's going on out there.

[KASS PLUGS IN]

KASS. Zavi0rGrey moved to Demetria almost a decade ago. Back then, he was the only Talsorian expat on Island 5, and maybe even any of

the Gannon Islands. He was certainly the first Talsorian most of his colleagues had ever met. He was never allowed to forget his outsider status, as with every misunderstood instance of Talsorian slang, every unfamiliar cultural celebration, and every bread-breaking meal they "forgot" to invite him to, there came a reminder spoken in tight-lipped smiles and terse "nevermind"s. That he was not from there. That he did not belong. Zave tried not to let it get to him, and spent his days upgrading the solar and wind turbines. He had almost forgotten his loneliness by the time Algernon arrived.

Algernon Brown had arrived on the islands after making the crossing all the way from Belvale. For a while, he was the talk of the Gannon Islands. Algernon; the man from Hardizan who had braved the choppy Tahmtu ocean alone on a raft so flimsy that it was laughable to even the island's children. He was rumoured to be reticent and solemn, refusing to speak to the doctors who treated him for hypothermia. So it surprised Zave to learn through the grapevine that Algernon had been asking after him. Zave sent word back inviting him to visit, and visit he did.

When Zave answered the sharp rap at his door, he met a man with a rigid frame and a stiff upper lip. They had tea, during which Zave asked if Algernon had escaped from Belvale's island prison (a joke that Algernon did not laugh at), and Zave offered him a job, more out of curiosity than any skills he had confessed to having.

Algernon accepted, and moved to the port village of Tradoon on Island 5, just a short walk away from Zave. The two became fast friends. They made an odd pair, since Algernon never spoke and Zave never shut up, but there was something unifying to being the odd ones out. The duo suited each other simply because they suited no one else. When their coworkers avoided discussing their plans for drinks in front of them, the two of them arranged to visit each other after work. Zave would go on drunken blue-sky rambles about hare-brained schemes, sometimes about ingratiating

themselves into the community through founding some sort of club for children or animals or child animals, sometimes about blowing every tiny mind in the Gannon Islands with some feat of engineering or artistry or brute strength. Algernon would nod enthusiastically until he nodded off to sleep. It wasn't always easy, but it was fun.

[long-suffering sigh:] And then Wardell arrived.

[this entire paragraph is brimming with contempt:]

No matter how much time he spent out of the water, Wardell Owen looked like a drowned rat. Every time he coughed, which was frequently, Zave could have sworn there was a touch of soot in it, like his lungs had never quite shaken loose the last of the Empire gunsmoke. He had wide eyes and a frail body that seemed to rattle with frenetic energy. It was hard to be calm in a room with Wardell. But Algernon began to invite him to their evenings together. And Wardell was a weepy drunk. While sober, at least, he did his best to keep his war stories to himself. When drunk, it came bursting out of him, as rapid as vomit and twice as foul. The things he said he'd seen, the things he claimed to have *done*... Zave had cut him off and sent him to bed earlier than even Algernon on more than one occasion. Each time he'd cast an eye-roll Algernon's way, as if to say "this guy, amirite?" and each time Algernon would offer only his usual stony face in reply. Even at work, where Zave and Algernon could talk privately, he maintained a stoic silence when Zave brought up Wardell's eccentricities.

[TRANSITION-TO-BUG]

[MORNING AMBIENCE. AN ALARM GOES OFF.]

AXEL. Ugh.

[SHE SLAPS A HAND ON IT A COUPLE TIMES AND IT TURNS OFF.]

[SHE GETS OUT OF BED AND TRODS ACROSS THE ROOM.]

[A DOOR OPENS. MORE FOOTSTEPS, THEN THE SOUND OF AN EGG CRACKING, AND FRYING. A PHONE RINGS. AXEL PICKS IT UP.]

AXEL. Hey mom.

DORIA. *(over the phone:)* Good morning Axel! How did you sleep?

AXEL. Well enough. I'm just making breakfast.

DORIA. What are you making?

AXEL. Eggs. Not as good as when Dad makes them, though.

PAT. I'll make you some when you come to visit again!

AXEL. Oh, hey dad! I'll look forward to it!

DORIA. And maybe he'll teach you his secret to making them.

PAT. I absolutely will not! You'll just have to come visit more often.

AXEL. Oh no... twist my arm...

DORIA. Anyways, we just wanted to check on you, see how you were doing.

AXEL. Uh, better. A lot better. Thanks.

PAT. Remember not to watch too much of the news. And go for some walks!

DORIA. And keep meeting up with Sorren. He's a good influence on you.

AXEL. I know. I will.

PAT. Well, we need to head off to work. I promised I wouldn't make your mom late again.

DORIA. We love you so much. Have a good day, Axel.

AXEL. Love you too! Thanks for calling, talk soon.

[AXEL HANGS UP. FRYING SOUNDS STOP, SHE SCOOPS BREAKFAST ONTO A PLATE, AND WALKS TO THE SITTING ROOM. AXEL SWITCHES ON THE TELEVISION.]

HAYYACYNTH. -systems in place if we're going to properly regulate and limit immigration. There's still so much work to be done.

AXEL. Ugh.

INTERVIEWER. And can you tell us a little more about-

[AXEL CLICKS OFF THE TELEVISION. HER RADIO WALKIE TALKIE THING CRACKLES WITH STATIC TO INDICATE SOMEONE'S ON THE OTHER END.]

CHARLIE. Um, hello?

[BEAT.]

PEACHES. I told you she wasn't awake yet.

[AXEL CHUCKLES A LITTLE.]

AXEL. I am, don't worry.

CHARLIE. Oh, hi! It's hard to gauge what time it is there.

AXEL. Well, I'm eating breakfast. It's not super early, I slept in a little.

PEACHES. Charlie and I are about to head home from work. I think Papa is cooking dinner tonight!

AXEL. Well, I don't want to keep you too long, then. What's up?

CHARLIE. Oh, don't worry. We're the ones who called. We just wanted to run an idea by you?

AXEL. Go for it.

CHARLIE. Okay, so Peaches proposed the idea of giving flyers to people face to face, instead of leaving them around, you know? And that might be a more effective way to get people on our side. It gives them a point of contact.

AXEL. That sounds fine.

PEACHES. The issue is, they'd be able to connect me, and eventually Charlie, to the flyers pretty quickly, if someone ratted us out.

AXEL. Yeah, that's a risk. And sometimes it's really hard to know who to give a chance. You can do your best to vet out every person you consider, or you can go with your gut instinct, but at the end of the day you have to do *something*. Otherwise you're never going to get anywhere further than where you are right now. You just... have to trust yourselves and your judgement. (*Joking:*) And please don't make me regret saying that.

PEACHES. (*chuckling*) Yeah, ok. That does make sense.

CHARLIE. Thanks Axel. You're always a big help.

AXEL. Of course, guys. Did you need anything else?

CHARLIE. Not on our end. How are you faring?

AXEL. I'm... (*she considers lying*) I can honestly say I'm doing a bit better than I was.

CHARLIE. If you need anything, or anyone to talk to... I know we're not your go-to, but we're here to listen.

PEACHES. Just let us know! Friendship goes both ways.

AXEL. Thanks, seriously. I appreciate it. I'm alright for now, but I'll talk to you guys soon. Enjoy your dinner!

PEACHES. We will!

CHARLIE. Bye, Axel.

[THE RADIO BEEPS. AXEL SIGHS. SHE CLICKS THE TELEVISION ON AGAIN.]

HAYYACYNTH. ...a bright future is ahead, and I'm proud to be the one paving the path.

NEWS ANCHOR. That was Hayyacynth Russel with us today, thank you for joining us, Ms. Russel.

HAYYACYNTH. Of course.

NEWS ANCHOR. Next up, a look into the Russel Administration's proposal for a new school curriculum.

[AXEL SIGHS. TURNS OFF TV AND SITS FOR A MOMENT. SHE CALLS SORREN: PHONE DIALLING BEEPS. RINGING.]

[TRANSITION-TO-RADIO]

KASS. It's so nice to see Axel talking with Charlie and Peaches! This is exactly what I was hoping for when I put them in touch, but I wasn't sure it would go this smoothly. And it's so nice to see people from different parts of the world connecting with each other.

Which, speaking of, I admit I've never thought much about how refugees on the Gannon Islands might have a tough time of it. I mean, I know that there are tensions between the Islands and the Empire, naturally, but it seems like Zave and Algernon weren't exactly welcomed to island 5 either. [*slightly louder:*] But hey, Lyssel, when you move on to the Gannon islands you could be friends with these three.

LYSSEL. [*through vent:*] Maybe. We'll see.

KASS. Well, I guess we can see how their story pans out here before you make any friendship decisions!

KASS. The three of them observed the election for Premier with varying levels of attention. To Zave, it was the closest thing to Talsorian entertainment he'd seen in his eight years in the Gannon Islands and he watched it jovially, theorising about how it might play out and wishing that Hayyacynth Russel would address any of the various rumours he had started about her. Algernon knew enough to share trivia during small talk at work without much enthusiasm. But Wardell followed it religiously. The day that Axel Moore announced that she was in favour of immigration from the Empire

was the first time Zave had ever seen Wardell smile with genuine warmth. He met them outside of Algernon's house and hugged both of them, rambling something about getting to see his daughter again. This made Zave raise his eyebrows since Wardell could not have been more than 25 years old. He tried to convey his disbelief to Algernon with a look, who replied only with his ever-present stony expression.

[long suffering sigh] And then, there was that hullabaloo on Island 6...

Since they were so close, Islands 4, 5 and 9 went into precautionary lockdowns until they could be sure the danger had passed. The only people allowed to leave their immediate vicinity were essential workers, which Zave was not. Neighbours were encouraged to check in on each other, and Zave's loneliness crystalised as he heard the sounds of friendliness outside his door, directed at everyone but him. He ached to be asked how his day was going, to be acknowledged. He missed his coworker's polite chuckles at his jokes, he missed the face Algernon made whenever he'd managed to impress him, and, after a while, he even missed Wardell's awkward whistling. He had spent so long in the company of others he had forgotten how to be alone with only his gadgets to entertain him. It was almost a month before Algernon appeared on his doorstep.

Zave was excited to see him without Wardell, as he had not gotten much one-on-one time with Algernon over the last six months, but Wardell seemed to be exactly what he had come to discuss.

"Sir, I don't know if you are aware, but our mutual friend has been... missing in action." At Zave's expression, he pressed on. "He's been let go from his position at the port and no one has seen him in weeks." Algernon's voice was quiet, his tone even. His eyes pierced into Zave's, leaving his concern unvoiced.

"What a virus," Zave joked. "Ghosts, he's probably swimming across the straits to join his comrades in the jungle!"

Algernon's usual stony expression was disturbed by a hard squint. He stormed off. And after a moment, Zave followed.

KASS. I'd like to state, for the record, that Zave's prejudice here is not just "a Talsoria thing". There are plenty of us who would be much kinder in his position, and Talsoria's admittedly terrible education about foreign countries is no excuse.

[TRANSITION-TO-BUG]

[OUTDOOR NOISES. MAYBE A CAFE PATIO! THAT'S CUTE.]

[note: the soundscaping didn't happen but u can imagine]

SORREN. Talk to me. What's going on?

AXEL. I've been really, really bored.

SORREN. *(short, amused laugh)* I know you're used to being busy.

AXEL. Yeah, exactly. I mean, I have been trying to help Peaches and Charlie. It's giving me *something* to do. But... I don't know. I'm... bothered.

SORREN. ...helping them is bothering you?

AXEL. No! Of course not. I'm just tired of sitting around giving other people advice and seeing and hearing the important things happen from my living room. I want to be a part of it again. I want to make a difference.

SORREN. You are making a difference. You're helping people across the world! That's huge!

AXEL. Right, but it's not enough. I spent so long thinking about all the ways we could improve the Gannon Islands, and now I'm supposed to just... be happy doing nothing? To just sit back and let Hayyacynth have her way?

SORREN. Of course not. I don't think you should, and I don't want to either. But we need to think of something different, since being Premier didn't work out.

AXEL. Maybe I have to think bigger.

SORREN. ...bigger than Premier?

AXEL. Yeah. There's so *much* out there, Sorren, and we can't pretend it doesn't affect us. *All* of us. I mean, Hayyacynth is trying to limit immigration, which separates us from the rest of the world. That isolates us *and* them. We have to look at the bigger picture. It's not just about the islands. The empire is waging a constant war against *itself* and we're not making it any easier on the people who are trying to get out. We're not looking at the bigger picture. And I feel like I can make a difference.

I *need* to make a difference.

SORREN. There's the Axel I know. So, what's the plan?

AXEL. (*smiling*) I want you to schedule me an interview.

[TRANSITION-TO-RADIO]

KASS. Yes! Go Axel! I hope we get to hear that interview; I'm very interested in what Axel plans to say...

But, in the meantime, let's see how this whole business with the Gannon Island refugees shakes out.

KASS. Zave followed Algernon as he walked across the grassland, almost to the island's edge, where the Tahmtu ocean swirled in the passage between Islands 5 and 6, to a cluster of fishermen's shacks not far from the port. He could hear the clatter of boats, and workers yelling instructions. He tried to act natural; neither of them were supposed to be this far from their respective homes.

Algernon knocked on a door. The place looked so run down that Zave thought it must be abandoned. There were shards of roof tiles around it, and vines growing up the wall. But eventually, the door

opened, just a crack, to reveal a haggard eye, so bloodshot and ringed with bags it might have belonged to a corpse.

"Wardell," Algernon greeted softly.

Wardell nodded once, then stepped back from the door to let the two of them inside. There was a while where no one spoke. Wardell backed up against the wall, his eyes flicking to the windows and the corners of his lips pulling down as though by fishhooks. When the tears came, they pushed out hot and venomous and angry. Algernon seemed frozen, and uncertain.

Zave surprised himself by stepping forward and awkwardly embracing the smaller man.

"Save this," he muttered. "I've got you backed up, ok? I'm here, and I'm gonna be here."

Heaving a breath that caught in his throat, Wardell slumped against him.

Zave and Algernon carried him back to Zave's to stay there for a while, just until he could get back on his feet. On the way, their neighbours cast scowls and hurried past. Some even crossed the road to give them a wide berth. As Zave fumbled with the key to his front door, his next-door neighbour called to them from where she was tending the bushes that marked the border between their front gardens.

"Isn't that one from the Empire?"

"Yeah," Zave muttered, quiet enough that he hoped it was unintelligible. She didn't ask again.

The next morning, there was a basket of freshly baked bread rolls on Zave's doorstep. There was no note.

KASS. *[after a pause:]* So, what do you think, Lyssel? Still want to move to the Gannon Islands?

[VENT SCRAPES OPEN, LYSSEL HOPS DOWN]

LYSSEL. Sure. ...Not yet though. Need to get the Station bots in top mode first. You guys don't know how to fix them. And what if something else breaks?

KASS. Then we'd find a way to handle it. Look, Lyssel, if it was just about me I'd try and convince you to stay at the Station forever. You're one of my best friends. But that would be selfish. If you really want to carry on to the Gannon Islands, you shouldn't stay on our behalf.

LYSSEL. I need to finish that Sparks the Summoning game with Jo, too. We're playing to best of 75. He'd short-circuit if I left while in the lead 5-2.

KASS. Lyssel, if you want to stay at the Station you can just... stay. I like it here too.

LYSSEL. Hmm. ...After this episode, the Gannon Islands don't seem as friendly as I thought. It wouldn't hurt to wait a bit longer. Gather more data.

KASS. Sure, buddy. Love you too. Side note, I think "episode" is only for TV shows, not radio broadcasts?

LYSSEL. Same program.

KASS. We can debate it off-air. Listeners, thank you for joining us today.

Stay safe, stay moving, and stick-close. You've been listening to Station Arcadia.

[CLOSING THEME]

Eli: *Station Arcadia is a podcast by Metal Steve Productions, run by Eli Allen and J.R. Steele. It is produced by Eli Allan, with creative direction by Tovah Brantner, dialogue editing by Leo Zahn, and soundscaping by J.R. Steele.*

The radio story for this episode was written by Matty O.K. Smith, with cutaway segments by J.R. Steele, Arcadia segments by Eli Allen, and copy editing by Eli Allan. It featured theme and background music by Arps.

This episode featured Lady Renaissance as Kass, Olly Davis as Lyssel, Rae Cameron as Axel, Rowan Wright as Doria - Axel's mom, Finch as Pat - Axel's dad, Grace Loerstcher as Hayyacynth, Sam Lueke as the interviewer, Cory Repass as Charlie, CaraLee Rose Howe as Peaches, and Aakash S as Sorren.

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*Today's French word of the week is "cerveau". [in french:]
C-E-R-V-E-A-U. Cerveau.*