

## STATION ARCADIA OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

### EPISODE #23: The Cans and Can'ts of Fish

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**J.R.STEELE.** On behalf of the Station Arcadia team, a big thank you to our patrons: Claws of Fenrir, Antigone Brickman, Natah the Ninja, Bronwyn, n13e86, CaraLee Rose, Azaana, Malik Strøm Hansen, HH, and Noel.

**BRONWYN.** Hey, Bronwyn here, the voice of Alice Harlow. We have just released a new, limited run, of "Vote Axel Moore" Station Arcadia merchandise! You can now show your support for the Gannon Islands mayoral candidate with buttons, stickers, T-shirts, and more. So head on over to [stationarcadia.com/merchandise](http://stationarcadia.com/merchandise) and grab yours now.

Thanks and enjoy episode 23 - The Cans and Can'ts of Fish

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#### INT. STATION ARCADIA

**KASS.** Welcome, anyone. Thank you for tuning in today. You're listening to Station Arcadia.

#### [THEME SONG PLAYS]

**KASS.** Before we start today's story, I wanted to provide an update on the garden.

As you may remember, I mentioned a while ago that Lyssel had found some mysterious seeds in the store room and we decided to plant them and see what happens. I also said I would provide any further updates, so I am pleased to announce that the mystery seeds have sprouted!

We're still unsure as to what they are, and if Arcadia knows, she's still not telling me, but it's exciting to see some progress. Jo's been updating me on the appearance of the sprouts daily, and hopefully in a few weeks we'll have an answer to that little mystery!

The rest of the garden is coming along nicely as well - it's still too early for most produce, but we've been doing a lot of planting. By

"we" I mean myself, Jo, and occasionally Lyssel. Z will occasionally show up to provide... moral support.

Now, with the garden update out of the way, let's get on to today's story.

### [TWO CLICKS]

A young man stands before a wooden building that looks like it's been here longer than he's been alive.

His name is Nathan, and today he is beginning his new job at a prominent fishery in the city of Sinclair, Hardizan.

Places like fisheries, canneries, and meat packing plants are a common sight in Sinclair, especially in the cannery district. It makes sense; fish and other seafood are the city's biggest export. Nathan thinks it's fitting for a city that seems sometimes to have its people packed together like a can of sardines.

Nathan eyes the building with something like trepidation. This place doesn't look very inviting, and he can smell the unpleasant stench of fish. This is not what Nathan imagined becoming of his life, and he'd rather be anywhere else. Unfortunately, he has no choice. The thing is, Nathan's family was never well off. In a place like Sinclair, where the separation between upper and lower class is so absolute, Nathan's hand was dealt the moment he was born. He had tried to escape it; doing odd jobs and trying to save for a trade school. But when his older brother had fallen sick, he had to find something more sustainable. His previous plan of odd jobs wasn't going to be enough anymore.

So there he is, taking up a job at a fishery. Out of necessity. It's all he can do, so he's hoping that this will be enough. No one would take him, no one except this place, and he needs the money.

Nathan enters the fishery and looks around; he's supposed to be meeting someone. He sees the automated machinery that keeps the production line going, and he sees the workers that are milling about. There's a lot of clockwork, of course, but people are still needed for the more mundane tasks, or in Nathan's case needed to assist with the processing and packaging of the fish that were brought in.

Eventually he's approached by someone and is asked why he's standing around. Why isn't he working? Nervously, Nathan explains that he's new here, that it's his first day. He says he's looking for Mr. Corin. The person looks at him as if pondering that question, and then says in a dull, almost empty tone, that yes they know who Nathan is talking about; the production floor supervisor.

They guide Nathan wordlessly over to a tall man who's talking to a few other workers. Mr. Corin turns to give them both a stern look, as if annoyed by this interruption. Nathan explains that he's here to start his new job and that he was looking for Corin. Corin relaxes at this, giving a nod.

He dismisses Nathan's makeshift guide and formally introduces himself. He instructs Nathan to follow him, and shows the new worker around the fishery. With the practiced air of someone who's given this tour many times, Corin explains all the different sections of the fishery to him, shows him to his station, and explains the duties of his position. Overall, it's a pretty standard first day at a new job. So far so good.

Once all the formalities and paperwork are out of the way, Corin sets Nathan to work. His first task is to assist with the process of filleting and freezing the fish, which will then go to the fishing retail and other outlets. Artie, another person at the same station as Nathan, helps him get settled. He proves invaluable in answering any questions Nathan has, as well as helping him learn the ins and outs of what he's supposed to be doing.

The day passes surprisingly quickly. Nathan focuses on getting used to his new job, and develops an easy camaraderie with Artie, as well as another worker named Lucinda. When Nathan leaves the fishery that day, he reflects that maybe this job isn't so bad after all. He stinks abominably of fish, but otherwise he isn't much worse for wear. This is something he could get used to in time, he thinks, despite any negative aspects.

**KASS.** Well, he sounds optimistic, but I've yet to hear anything good about being working-class in Hardizan. Let's take a quick break from this story and see if I can patch into some live audio.

**[TRANSITION]**

**INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT, HARDIZAN**

**[A BUNCH OF TINY METAL PARTS HIT THE TABLE]**

**CHARLIE.** Uh, Peach, what's this?

**PEACHES.** *(Brightly:)* I have absolutely no idea, but you're going to help me fix it! You've got screwdrivers in your desk, right?

**CHARLIE.** Yes?

**PEACHES.** Amazing. You can start putting... *this* stuff together...

**[SOME OF THE PARTS SLIDE ACROSS THE TABLE]**

And I'll start sorting this stuff out into little piles for later.

**CHARLIE.** (*gently*) Peach, it's not that I don't appreciate the bonding time, but can this wait a little while?

**PEACHES.** No, look, Eshe found this stuff in some abandoned shack on the beach. No one's been in there for years, but Eshe thinks that this is some kind of communication device.

**CHARLIE.** But I've never seen anything like it.

**PEACHES.** Exactly. Because if we haven't seen anything like it, that probably means the government hasn't either, so...

**CHARLIE.** No intercepted communications.

**PEACHES.** Right on the money. Now do you want to help me fix this thing?

**CHARLIE.** Well, if it's all that it would be stupid of me to say no.

**[LITTLE CLINKING SOUNDS OCCASIONALLY AS THEY PUT STUFF TOGETHER]**

If this works it'll be much easier to get people their sick days without risk of getting them fired.

**PEACHES.** Or getting news across town for upcoming layoffs. I won't have to get into another bike accident.

**CHARLIE.** That would be very nice. Can't have my significant other breaking their neck now, can I?

**[BEAT]**

**PEACHES.** You know, we can't do this forever, right?

**CHARLIE.** Do... what, exactly?

**PEACHES.** Handing out pocket change to people when they get fired, scrounging up information in the hopes that we'll be able to stop someone's boss before they try to pull something shady. Eventually we'll run out of steam.

**CHARLIE.** There isn't anything else we can do, though. Unless you think you could afford to fund a campaign for office?

**PEACHES.** That'll be the day. My dads would lose their mind with worry about the debt I'd go into. Ma would just say no outright.

**CHARLIE.** That's what I thought. We're always trying to do the best that we can. No one could really ask any more from us.

**PEACHES.** I have no idea how you can deal with the responsibility of managing this kind of movement. If I was in your shoes I would have flown off the handle a long time ago.

**CHARLIE.** I'm not really all that. You're sweet, but I know if need be you'd step up to the plate.

**PEACHES.** No, Charlie, I don't think you get it. We're in this constant uphill battle, and even I feel helpless a lot. There's so much more I wish we could do, but you're the one who has to make the plan. I don't know how you get up each morning to do that. I'd just get crushed under the weight of it all.

... Or I'd go crazy and do something stupid. Either or, really. Where I was really trying to go with this is that we're close to a big breakthrough. Maybe we should be aiming a little higher than damage mitigation.

**CHARLIE.** We can try and figure something out.

**[TRANSITION]**

**INT. STATION ARCADIA**

**KASS.** Over the next few days, Nathan settles into a routine. The early mornings start to wear on him a bit, but he gets to complain about it with Artie and Lucinda and that softens the blow. He starts to learn where everything is located, and becomes more confident with his work. It's not exactly the life-fulfilling stuff he used to dream of, but it's not the nightmare he imagined either.

It's not until his fourth day on the job that Nathan sees his first big shipment come in.

Nathan goes with Artie to watch the crates of Sea Bass, Cod, and Salmon be brought in and unloaded. Artie tells him that this shipment is overdue - normally this is an event that happens every few days. The fish are offloaded from fishing boats, put into crates, and sent to the fishery via a transport truck. Once they arrive at the fishery, they are sorted among the different sectors for different production lines. Nathan wrinkles his nose at the smell of the fish, but it's to be expected from a place like this. He's gone home with his hands smelling of fish three times already and he's sure today won't be any different. Artie points out that, with the fresh shipment, today might get a bit hectic. That's not necessarily a bad thing; it will keep them busy.

But once it gets sorted and Nathan catches sight of the crates assigned to their section, he sees that there are some fish that are visibly rotting. Nathan frowns at the sight, not entirely sure what to do about it. He looks for his friends, but doesn't see them around. They must have gone back to their stations. He does, however, see Corin nearby, and decides to consult him instead. Nathan asks him what they're supposed to do with the rotting fish.

Corin gives him a look that screams 'why are you wasting my time with this'.

"Just throw it in with the rest." he answers casually.

Nathan blinks owlishly at him, not expecting that answer. He opens his mouth to protest, but Corin dismisses him and sends him back to his station. He finds Artie already at work, carrying on as if nothing is wrong. Between Corin's answer and how normal things seem to be proceeding, Nathan doesn't know what to do. Eventually, Artie coaxes him to get back to packing fish, and Nathan numbly follows along.

But that doesn't stop him from asking, "Are we really supposed to be packing this? It doesn't look right."

Artie just sighs, replying, "That's how it goes."

Lucinda adds, "It mixes in fine with the good stuff. Leave it be, or are you just asking to be fired?"

The incident sticks with Nathan, and as time goes on- the longer he works at this fishery- the more he starts to see beyond the initial facade. Shipments of seafood come in every few days, often with a significant percentage of rotting fish, and no one seems to care. It just gets thrown in with everything else. Nathan knows that it isn't safe. All the fish they pack get put in products that go to stores to

be consumed by the general public. Nothing about the situation sits right with him, and no one is doing anything about it.

That's not the end of it, either. A lot of the automated machinery around the fishery is old, and rusted, like it hadn't seen proper maintenance for a while. Sometimes things break down, and when he sees Artie almost lose a hand to one of the processing machines when a bolt comes loose, no one but Nathan asks if he's okay. They're both told to get back to work.

That is what Nathan *fully* realizes; this place, this company- it doesn't care about what's going into the products and it doesn't care about its workers.

It just gets worse from there.

Lucinda gets sick one day; food poisoning, he heard from Artie. She dies later in the week. No one is hired to replace her, and his and Artie's days get busier. A few days later there's an accident in another sector. He doesn't know the full details, but he knows it was bad.

Nathan takes up drinking after he gets off work, just to forget about the day. He still hasn't gotten used to the smell of fish, and it pervades every article of clothing he owns. He knows that everything at the fishery is wrong, from the fish to the machinery to the management. He hopes in vain for Corin and the other supervisors to step in and do something, or for anyone to even acknowledge the problems, but nothing happens. Nothing changes. Everyone just carries on like it's unquestionable. Nathan hates it; he hates it so much. How can this place still be operating? How hasn't someone shut it down yet? How can it be normal that he and everyone else who works at the fishery mean nothing to them? They're just cogs in the machine.

Is this how it's supposed to be? Is it like this in other fisheries? Other places in Sinclair? Has it always been like this?

Maybe it has, and it's only now he sees the truth.

And what can Nathan do? He took this job to support himself, and his family. He's sure that's true for most of the others there. He can be angry all he wants, but who would believe someone like him, a lowly fish worker in the lower working class, if he even dared to speak up? Or would they find some way to shut him up? He's stuck here; he's trapped.

One night when he's halfway through his second bottle, Artie shows up on his doorstep. He's confused about why his friend is there, but he's too drunk and tired to care. He lets Artie in without a word.

Artie says he wanted to stop by because he was worried about Nathan - they've already lost Lucinda - but also because he has something he

wants to tell him. Artie, who took the same job under the same circumstances as Nathan, has known about what's been going on at the fishery for a long time, and has been slowly and secretly gathering information about it all. He tells Nathan he's planning to expose the fishery, and soon. Artie's been playing along all this time, and Nathan feels like his prayers have been answered.

Nathan asks why Artie has chosen to share this information with him.

"Because I trust you." he says. "You've seen it too and I know you care. Because I want someone else to know in case something happens to me."

Nathan feels honored by this, and says he won't tell a soul.

Artie doesn't show up for work the following day, or the one after that. Nathan gets worried, especially since Artie was never one to miss a day of work. Worried he may have gotten sick like Lucinda did, Nathan manages to track down the location of Artie's house. There are no lights on and when Nathan knocks on the door he gets no response. He tries again the next day, but there's nothing. It's like Artie just vanished.

That's when it clicks that something else had happened; something worse than illness. It's not lost on him that Artie happened to disappear the day after he revealed his plan to Nathan. It also occurs to Nathan that if he keeps digging, he may end up disappearing too. He needs to stop.

Nathan never hears from Artie again.

Nothing happens with the fishery. Nothing changes. That small glimmer of hope is gone.

And so Nathan remains, carrying out the same job day after day. He still remembers what Artie told him, but he doesn't know what to do with it now. Should he quit and try to follow in Artie's footsteps? Should he just carry on and hope nothing horrible happens?

He does nothing.

He stays, waiting for the day when he'll be tossed away like trash too; replaced so easily by someone else who doesn't realize what they're getting into.

**KASS.** That was... something.

I wish it still surprised me, that some people couldn't care less about the lives of the people they're responsible for. No, they get to sit happily on their piles of money while their employees suffer, and



people like Nathan can't do anything about it because they literally have no other means of supporting themselves. Ugh!

I don't want to think any more about that fishery. It gets tiring, sometimes, how hopeless everything is. Instead, why don't we go see if Peaches and Charlie managed to fix that device.

**[TRANSITION]**

**INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT**

**PEACHES.** Ughhhhhh

**CHARLIE.** Come on.

**PEACHES.** My brains are melting out of my ears, Charlie. It wasn't designed to think this much about unknown devices for extended periods of time.

**CHARLIE.** We're almost done, I think we just have to screw in these pieces here, and then...

**[SNAP]**

There. Would you like to do the honors?

**PEACHES.** Oh, such a gentleman.

**[CLICK]**

**KASS.** *(Echoing:)* He really is... wait, is this...?

**PEACHES.** *(Echoing:)* Charlie, it said something! It's working.

**CHARLIE.** *(Echoing:)* Sh, there might be more.

**KASS.** *(Echoing:)* Hold on, can you actually hear me?

**PEACHES.** *(Echoing:)* Uh, yes, can you hear us?

**KASS.** *(Echoing:)* Yes, I can, just give me a moment...

**[BUTTON CLICKS]**

*(No longer echoing, audio is coming from Charlie and Peaches's radio:)*

This is Canned Peaches and Charlie, right? From Hardizan?

**PEACHES.** *(Whispering:)* How do they know that?

**CHARLIE.** I'm not exactly comfortable confirming that information to someone I don't know.

**PEACHES.** *(Whispering:)* I think you just indirectly confirmed it.

**CHARLIE.** Peach.

**PEACHES.** Sorry.

**KASS.** No, look, I get it. My name is Kassandra, but just Kass is fine. I've been listening to you for a while now and-

**PEACHES.** Give us a second.

Charlie, I'm sure that we're probably on the same page, but this is really, really suspicious.

**KASS.** I can still hear you when you cover up the radio.

**PEACHES.** The what?

**KASS.** The device you fixed, it's called a radio.

**CHARLIE.** Well, if we're hearing you from the "radio", where are you hearing us from?

**KASS.** The Station, uh, she just shows me things by... well, I don't actually know where she gets the signal from, but I've heard about you guys through it. Well, really more like, heard you guys...

**PEACHES.** You're really not making yourself seem more trustworthy.

**KASS.** No, I'm on your side! I mean, I'm not from Hardizan, but I still get it.

**CHARLIE.** If you're on our side, you're going to need to do something to prove yourself.

**KASS.** Okay, okay, um... *(noises of frustration)* this is harder than I thought...

*(realization)* Oh! So, there's someone in the Gannon Islands, Axel Moore. She's going to be Premiere soon, so she's got access to things that can probably help you. If you can get in contact with her, I'm sure she'd be happy to help.

**CHARLIE.** Does she have a radio too?

**KASS.** Not exactly.

**CHARLIE.** Then what are we supposed to do? There isn't exactly a telegraph line running across the Nagabis ocean.

**KASS.** I can figure something out? For now, you need to focus on upgrading your radio to include a microphone. I'm only getting your audio from Arcadia's signal. I can get Lyssel on in a bit to help you, if you want.

**PEACHES.** Lyssel?

**KASS.** Uh, someone else at the station.

**CHARLIE.** I think we can figure it out.

**KASS.** Okay, you already know our frequency, so once you have that done you can call back anytime you want. We might not answer because there isn't always someone at the booth, but there's a pretty solid chance. But just... try and find a way to contact Axel as fast as you can. I'm sure she can help.

**CHARLIE.** Someone from the Gannon Islands would have more resources than we do...

**PEACHES.** Fine, we'll try. But you're not off the hook unless this works out.

**KASS.** I won't let you down.

**[TRANSITION]**

**INT. STATION ARCADIA**

**KASS.** ...Whoah.

Whoah, reload that, *what just happened?* I just... I just talked to Peaches and Charlie! Mother of boards. Wait, could they still be listening? Are you guys still listening?

I guess I have no way of knowing.

Ghosts in the machine this is crazy. I'm going to go take some time to process this, and think about how in the world to contact Axel Moore.

So, until next time, stay safe, stay moving, and stick close. You've been listening to Station Arcadia.

**[CLOSING THEME PLAYS]**

**C.V.V.M.** Station Arcadia is a podcast by Metal Steve Productions, and licensed under a creative commons attribution noncommercial share-alike 4.0 international license. It is produced by Eli Esdi and C.V.V.M., and directed by Tovah Brantner. Today's episode contained take selection by Eli Esdi, soundscaping by J.R. Steele, and music by Theo Goodwin. It was written by Shay Topaz, with scenes by Tovah Brantner and J.R. Steele. It featured Jade Virginia as Kass, CaraLee Rose Howe as Peaches, and Cory Repass as Charlie.

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Today's day of the week is tomorrow.