

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA  
Chapter 11 Transcript  
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**\*\*Warning\*\***

**This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 11 audio file and is full of spoilers from start to finish. To avoid ruining surprises, read along as you listen—but don't read ahead!**

Link to audio files: <https://www.dirtaudiodrama.com/#listen>

(Sound of Joseph gasping)

(Sound of dreamy wind chime noise)

(Sound of being inside a house at nighttime, after bedtime)

(Sound of someone using tools, doing woodwork, from elsewhere in the house)

(Sound of getting out of bed)

(Sound of walking on carpet)

(Sound of opening bedroom door)

(Sound of walking down wooden stairs)

(Sound of woodworking growing louder as approaching)

(Sound of breathing heavily)

(Sound of opening door open and walking in)

(Sound of footsteps)

OLDER MALE VOICE:  
Joseph? What are you doing awake?

(Sound of transistor radio turning on)

(Sound of violin playing)

(Sound of cuckoo clock)

JOSEPH:

(Gasps)

(Sound of clock, violin, wind noise, and radio all getting louder then suddenly stopping)

(Sound of cuckoo clock ticking and sound of metal detector buzzing)

OLDER MALE VOICE:

(As if from far away or filtered, dreamy) Joseph!

(Sudden sound of coffee maker percolating in distance, in Antonia's kitchen)

(Sound of Joseph waking up, breathing, rustling in bed)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

It's 6 am, and the sound and smell of an automatic coffee maker is all my body needs to be wide awake. I can hear Antonia's footsteps on the floor above me as I dress.

(Sound of walking into kitchen)

And by the time she gets downstairs I have two mugs ready for us on the kitchen counter.

(Sound of coffee being poured)

(Sound of Antonia approaching)

ANTONIA:

If you want a full breakfast, that's over at the other house.

(Sound of putting coffee pot back)

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles) I gotta get going.

ANTONIA:

So, big day.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

ANTONIA:

Think it'll top yesterday?

JOSEPH:

It might. I don't really know what's waiting for me on that side of the mountains.

ANTONIA:

Well if you get bored, just think of me over here ordering PVC pipe and chicken feed.

JOSEPH:

That sounds kind of nice, actually.

No? (Laughs)

(Sound of Joseph grabbing car keys)

ANTONIA:

Joseph, I'll see if I can find out what my dad is up to.

JOSEPH:

You don't have to do that...

ANTONIA:

I do. I want to.

JOSEPH:

Okay.

ANTONIA:

Let me know how it goes?

JOSEPH:

If I get one call from jail, I'll make sure it's to you.

ANTONIA:

(Laughs)

(Sound of Joseph starting to walk to the door)

(From slight distance)

ANTONIA:

Wait!

(Sound of Joseph stopping)

JOSEPH:  
Yeah?

(From distance, sound of Antonia opening drawer and getting something out)

(Sound of Antonia walking closer)

Here. You might need these.

JOSEPH:  
Aw, extra batteries. You really know the way to a guy's heart.

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

(Fade out all sounds)

(End scene)

(Fade in sound of being in Joseph's car while driving)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
Light is just coming into the sky as I drive through Yakima again on my way home. But instead of continuing north on Interstate 82 to I-90, I take Highway 12 west to the small farming town of Naches, and then turn west again onto Highway 410. In Washington, there are several ways to cross over the Cascade Mountains. Today I decide to go over Chinook Pass.

The two-lane road climbs steadily for many miles in elevation alongside the Naches River, until the highway turns left along the Bumping River, and then finally to go alongside the American River. Pine trees give way to cedar, hemlock, and then sub-alpine fir as the road makes a long, final ascent up the side of a majestic, U-shaped valley.

At the summit, the two-lane highway folds on itself in slow, twisting arcs, passing through verdant alpine meadows and alongside small reflective lakes, beneath rocky peaks. This is the Washington you see in postcards. In a month, this pass will close down for winter beneath an accumulating snowpack that is regularly among the deepest in North America.

The road is frosty, but with the heat on I'm treated to a spectacular early morning view of massively glaciated Mt. Rainier, just a couple of ridges away. Almost all of its fourteen thousand four hundred and eleven feet are on display. The golden sun beams behind me, and for a brief moment, everything that's weighing me down moves to the background, and this view is all that matters.

Before long the highway begins to descend into the richly forested White River Valley, with views of Mt. Rainier continuing to tantalize out my driver's side window. With each passing mile, as I drive out of the mountains and closer to Seattle's outlying suburbs, I start to weigh options. I can go straight home and shower and head to work in time to huddle with my team before the meeting with Molecular. Or, I can make a small detour.

(Sound of Joseph tapping on steering wheel)

JOSEPH:

What would you do, Coinmaster...

(Sound of Joseph's phone ringing)

(To self, under breath) Kim...

(Answers phone)

Hey.

KIM:

Joseph! You finally answered! I've been worried since I saw the news and didn't hear from you yesterday. You're...where are you? Are you ok?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I'm okay.

KIM:

So what happened with Antonia? Is she still with you?

JOSEPH:

No. I left Wapato this morning.

KIM:

So you're driving back to Seattle now...

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

KIM:

You don't sound okay.

JOSEPH:

Well there's kind of a lot going on.

KIM:  
Joseph, they're saying the police are after you.

JOSEPH:  
I know.

KIM:  
What are you gonna do?

JOSEPH:  
I don't know yet.

KIM:  
Oh Joseph, I—

JOSEPH:  
Do you know someone named R. A. Hastings?

KIM:  
Yeah. Why do you ask?

JOSEPH:  
Like, how well do you know him?

KIM:  
(Sounds of thinking what to say)

JOSEPH:  
Kim, I need you to level with me.

KIM:  
Uh, about what exactly?

JOSEPH:  
How was it that Carl the Fish and Wildlife guy found me, when I was driving away from Pe Ell?

KIM:  
Um... I don't know. Maybe because there's like one main road out of Pe Ell?

JOSEPH:  
He came right up behind me while when you and I were on the phone. Only one person knew where I was at that moment.

KIM:

Yeah. Carl the Fish and Wildlife guy.

JOSEPH:

So you probably already know I found another box, and where...

KIM:

Um, no...? But I presume in Maryhill?

JOSEPH:

Right! I mean, now that you know "The Places I've Been" is basically the treasure map...

KIM:

Hey dummy! You *told* me you were there! I didn't guess that or divine it from some old story...

JOSEPH:

So where am I going next? It's all there in the story. What's the next stop on the Aimo treasure hunt train? Let me guess... Somebody with a drone is already there, waiting for me...

KIM:

What the hell, Joseph?

JOSEPH:

Got any friends who drive an old Datsun?

KIM:

Holy shit Joseph! Stop it.

JOSEPH:

Stop what.

KIM:

Stop...being a little prick!

JOSEPH:

Oooo. Good one.

KIM:

Why would you ask about R. A. Hastings? That came out of nowhere.

JOSEPH:

Actually... it didn't.

KIM:  
Yes it did.

JOSEPH:  
No it didn't.

KIM:  
*Yes, it did.*

JOSEPH:  
It *definitely* didn't.

KIM  
Yes it... *Ugh, Joseph! What's wrong with you?*

JOSEPH:  
(Exhales) You know what's wrong with me? (Exhales) Two weeks ago I'm just a regular guy, going about my business...

KIM:  
(Laughs) Regular?

JOSEPH:  
Well you know what? Sometimes I like taking my friends on vacation halfway around the world. So what! I'm not hurting anybody. But two weeks ago, I didn't have the police after me. I wasn't being followed or pulled over by *anyone*. Two weeks ago, I cared about my job. Two weeks ago, I definitely didn't have some...frickin'...haunted...metal detector...as a BFF! Two weeks ago I could explain most everything that was happening in my life. And two weeks ago, I didn't have to wonder if you were part of some strange plot to ruin my life!

(Exhales) If you're playing a part in this Kim... *Any part...*

KIM:  
Uh... Did you say *haunted*?

JOSEPH:  
(Exhales) No.

KIM:  
You *did* say haunted.

Holy crap, Joseph! What is happening?

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) I don't know...

(Breathing)

KIM:  
Okay...

Hey!

Hey, Joseph...

JOSEPH:  
(Breathing heavily)

KIM:  
Come back to the light...

JOSEPH:  
(Breathing sounds) (Coming back to light)

KIM:  
You're going to be okay...

Do you need to pull over for a sec?

JOSEPH:  
Just, tell me you're not in on all of this, Kim.

Tell me. I need to hear you say it.

KIM:  
Do you mean in on the helping-you part, or the-your-life-is-falling apart, part?

JOSEPH:  
I need to know you're not hiding things from me. Not *you*.

KIM:  
Joseph, I don't know how I can say it any clearer. I am not hiding things from you. And I am not part of any conspiracy to ruin you.

JOSEPH:  
(Exhales)

KIM:

So take it down a notch, ok?

Geez. What *happened* since I last spoke to you? You're all like...

JOSEPH:

Okay.

KIM:

(Exhales)

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry.

KIM:

Well look, you're not quite off the hook. I still want to know why you brought up R. A. Hastings.

*And*, since you asked, *no*, I don't know anyone who drives an old Datsun.

JOSEPH:

I brought it up because somebody with that name, who happens to be on the board of your company, is the trustee of the property...right next to Flores Farms. And, not to mention, I have one of their drones...in my car! Which, I have a sneaking suspicion, was spying on me!

KIM:

So why ask me about it?

JOSEPH:

That's quite the coincidence, isn't it?

KIM:

How did you make the connection?

JOSEPH:

From Mel. She did some digging.

KIM:

Right. She's a resourceful one. Glad she's on your side.

JOSEPH:

My side... What does that mean?

KIM:

I'm *kidding!* I'm kidding. It's a joke. Geez. Sorry. Just trying to lighten the mood.

JOSEPH:

So what's the connection? Why would this guy, who sits on your board manage a land trust, in Wapato?

KIM:

It's not...a guy. Not exactly. It's a corporation.

JOSEPH:

A corporation as a board member...?

KIM:

The actual board member is a woman from R. A. Hastings named Dagmar. Nice gal. You'd love her. She's sings Scorpions songs at karaoke night.

JOSEPH:

Dagmar?

KIM:

Yeah. Dagmar Scholz. It's... German...

JOSEPH:

German...

KIM:

What... Oh! Your Berlin...buyout...company thing...

(Chuckles) Joseph, there are a lot of Germans in the world, in case you hadn't noticed. Most of them quite lovely.

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) So, what does R. A. Hastings do?

KIM:

(Scoffs) You've never heard of them?

JOSEPH:

Kim, up until this week, you're pretty much my only connection to the ag industry—outside of the Laurelhurst farmer's market.

KIM:

It's basically a giant agriculture holding company.

JOSEPH:

So they must be interested in the neural research you do.

KIM:

Yeah. But they invest in all kinds of stuff. Traditional farming, sure, but also animal science, ethanol, GMO, even IoT monitoring devices for big farms.

JOSEPH:

Like...drones?

KIM:

Yeah. A lot of farms use stuff like that these days.

JOSEPH:

So I hear.

So besides all that, R.A. Hastings likes to buy and sell land too, apparently.

KIM:

Well, real estate *is* booming...

JOSEPH:

(Exhales)

KIM:

So, what's your next move? Or are you worried that if you tell, me I'll send Carl what's-his-buttt after you again?

JOSEPH:

(Wearily laughs)

KIM:

The police don't know costumed jaywalker is you, right?

JOSEPH:

As far as I know, they don't.

KIM:

So...do you wait it out? Oh! You're not getting off the hook about this haunted metal detector thing, either. What's up with that?

JOSEPH:

(Groans) I have no explanation for this...

KIM:

What?

JOSEPH:

It...it seems to know what I want, or need.

KIM:

What...

JOSEPH:

Yeah. And, it seems to know where things are. Beyond simple metal detecting, I mean.

KIM:

Okay, that doesn't make any sense.

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) Tell me about it.

KIM:

Well Joseph, the plot just keeps getting thicker.

JOSEPH:

I should go. I gotta figure out how to get through this day.

KIM:

Hey, having any more dreams?

JOSEPH:

(Inhales/exhales) Just ones where I'm back in our house, in Seattle, when we were kids. I keep dreaming about the workshop down in the basement, under our rooms.

ANTONIA:

Oh. I used to love listening to dad work down there at night. Something about it... It just made me feel safe, I guess.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, me too.

I'm sorry I got all crazy on you.

KIM:

Sorry I called you a prick. Even though you deserved it...

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

(Sound of phone hanging up)

(Fade out sound of being inside car while driving)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I'm lucky. Up to this point I've never had any reason to be suspicious of those around me—not even at work, where things can sometimes get heated or political. These feelings are new territory for me, and even though I'm well practiced at being tactical and reading people, I know I'm not handling my situation well, at all. Not with Kim, not with Salvador, not with Antonia. I try to remind myself that coincidences are actually a thing. That not every random connection is a conspiracy.

The next line in “The Places I’ve been,; after “Pe Ell, where my teaching career was first sparked,” and “Maryhill, a place of rest beneath the stones,” is “Cumberland, where *pikku sika* wore my t-shirt.”

It's a reference to one of Aimo's stories called A Tiny Surprise. It takes place when Aimo was young, less than ten years old. The Elo family had recently moved from Butte, Montana to tiny Cumberland, Washington, where Aimo's father was able to get temporary work at a nearby coal mine. This was right before the family permanently moved to Grays Harbor, on the Washington coast.

Aimo writes about a small wooden crate that his father brought home one day. With everyone gathered around and excited, he opened one end of the crate and out clamored *pikku sika*, a little pig. The children went wild, excited to have a pet, as did the piglet, running all around the kitchen looking for a place to hide. Aimo's mother and father announced to their giddy audience that everyone was responsible for feeding and caring for *pikku sika* so that it could quickly become an *iso sika*, or big pig, come winter, when there would be plenty of ham and bacon for everyone.

Their father built a pen behind the house and all was going well until one day when Aimo and Niilo were playing with the now medium-sized pig in the yard and *pikku sika* got loose. The two boys ran after it, chasing it through thick clusters of ferns and ivy and rotting cedar logs and stumps. Before long they, and the pig, reached the edge of a creek. As Niilo reached down to grab *pikku sika*, it leaped into the cold water, snorting and splashing for freedom. Aimo quickly waded in after it, and after some struggle carried *pikku sika* back to the creekbank.

The pig was shivering from cold or from fright or both, so Aimo took off his t-shirt and wrapped *pikku sika* up in it, and left it dressed that way for hours, even after they returned it safely to the pen.

(Fade in sound of being inside car while driving)

Mel's latest text reads: “I don't like this, but here you go.” She follows it up with the address of the old Elo residence in Cumberland, at my request, scoured from old King County records. She

adds: "Molecular is here, at the office. Only four hours until the meeting." And then, a scowling emoji. I thank her for the information, and assure her that I'll be there in time.

(Sound of parking car and getting out of car)

It's cloudy on this side of the mountains, and the air is cold and clammy.

(Sound of getting bag and Coinmaster out of car)

It's 10am, and the meeting is at 2.

(Sound of smartphone assistant being engaged)

JOSEPH:

Set the timer for 30 minutes.

(Sound of smartphone assistant being disengaged)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I give myself half an hour to see if I can find whatever's here before I hit the road again...

(Sound of walking away from car on asphalt then dirt)

...despite having little to go off of besides an address, and a memory about a pig from Aimo's childhood.

(Sound of thunder in distance)

If Pe Ell is tiny, Cumberland is miniscule—a no-stoplight town surrounded by thick woods about 90 minutes southeast of Seattle.

(Sound of Joseph walking, birds in background)

I can make out a structure on the property behind a grove of Douglas fir trees. As I get closer, I can see that it's a utility building of some kind, not a house.

(Sound of Joseph stopping)

JOSEPH:

Well that's good.

(Sound of turning on detector)

Maybe no one's here.

(Sound of turning detector volume down)

Be nice to have some privacy for a change.

(Sounds of entering forest and walking)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I look over my shoulder, and then I walk right past a No Trespassing sign, leaving the short dirt driveway to enter the leafy ground cover.

(Sound of walking on leaves, entering forest)

It doesn't take very long until I'm fully in the forest. For thousands of years this land was the domain of the native peoples of this area. Old growth trees with their oversized trunks and canopies reached impossible heights. Today, the forest is mostly second- or third-growth timber.

(Sound of starting to rain)

(Sound of setting down Coinmaster)

(Sound of Joseph zipping up jacket, putting on hood)

JOSEPH:

I sure hope you're waterproof, Coinmaster.

(Sound of walking again)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The forest stretches on as far as I can see in this direction. I have no idea where the property boundary is, or if the boundary is even the same as the original property boundary.

(Sound of stopping)

(Sound of turning up detector volume, faint buzzing sound)

JOSEPH:

Well, let's see if you like *this* direction.

(Sound of walking)

(Sound of detector going quiet)

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

(Laughing) Okay. How about *this* way...

(Sound of changing direction)

(Sound of walking again)

(Sound of detector noise coming back on)

JOSEPH:

Alrighty then.

(Sound of continued walking)

(Sudden sound of commotion in forest ahead and to the left of Joseph)

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

(Gasp) Oh. (Nervous chuckle)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

A herd of deer, who I'm sure saw and smelled me long before I heard and saw them, sprint away through the thick underbrush ahead of me.

JOSEPH:

(Exhales)

Oh...

NARRATOR:

But the deer weren't running away from me, I now realize. To my left, maybe 30 feet or so, is the real reason.

(Sound of Joseph breathing heavier)

A coyote stares at me, totally still.

(Sound of coyote trotting away on leaves, then stopping)

It turns and trots 30 feet or so farther away to my left, and then stops and stares at me again.

JOSEPH:

Dude, all good with me if you go your way, and I go mine...

(Sound of Joseph walking again)

(Sound of detector going quiet)

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Okay, I guess we follow the coyote...

(Sound of walking again)

(Sound of detector noise starting again)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) I hope you know what you're doing.

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of coyote trotting on leaves ahead of Joseph then stopping)

(Sound of Joseph walking again)

(Laughs)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

This strange start-stop routine continues for minutes. I follow the coyote to the edge of an old dirt drive that clearly hasn't been used in years. I look and see that the coyote is now about 30 feet up the road, staring at me, panting.

(Sound of Joseph walking on dirt or gravel)

When I get near the spot it's at...

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of coyote trotting away in distance)

...it darts to the left, back into the underbrush.

JOSEPH:

Where are we going?

(Sound of walking on leafy ground again)

NARRATOR:

I look in the direction it went.

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

Woah.

(Sound of walking again)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There, among giant ferns and blackberry bushes trying to reclaim their territory, are the ruins of a wooden house, charred by fire some time ago.

(Sound of thunder in distance)

JOSEPH:

(Exhale)

(Sound of Joseph walking on leafy ground)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I walk all the way around the ruins, and peer inside of them where I can. Inside it's mostly charred walls and broken, decaying shelves and cabinets. Younger trees are growing up inside the house, between the broken floorboards.

There's nothing pretty about what remains here. Yet I feel overcome by an unexpected feeling. A feeling of deep connection to the people *I* came from. *My* ancestors.

(Sound of detector suddenly going silent)

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

Wait, you're gonna go quiet, here?

(Sounds of handling detector)

(Sounds of turning dials and switches on and off)

Oh no!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

No matter what I try, nothing works, including the battery indicator.

JOSEPH:

Oh man...

NARRATOR:

That's when I realize I left Antonia's spare batteries in the car.

JOSEPH:

Crap!

(Sound of smartphone alarm going off)

(Sound of setting down detector)

(Sound of finding phone)

(Sound of turning off alarm)

(Exhales) That was a fast half hour...

Shoot.

(Exhale) (Groan)

So now what?!?

(Breathing)

(Sound of coyote yelping in distance)

JOSEPH:

(Gasp)

NARRATION (JOSEPH)

I look in the direction the sound came from, but I don't see the coyote. I do, however, spy a clear path that leads into the woods, from what might have been the house's backyard.

JOSEPH:

Hmm. If I was *pikku sika*, or *pikka siku*, whatever it was... That's where I would have made a run for it...

(Sound of Joseph walking on leaves)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The path meanders for a bit through dense cedar and hemlock trees and giant ferns with their fronds extended to catch as much moisture as possible.

(Sound of creek growing louder as approaching)

(Sound of stopping walking)

When I get to the creek bank, I look to my right. The coyote is clawing at the dense sand, just above the bank. It briefly turns to me, and we get a good look at each other before it sprints across the creek...

(Sound of coyote splashing in water)

...and into dense woods on the other side, where I quickly lose sight of it.

(Sound of Joseph walking)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I walk over to the claw marks and set everything down.

(Sound of getting shovel out of bag and then digging)

(Sound of thunder in distance)

It only takes a few digs with the shovel...

(Sound of shovel hitting hard object)

...until I hear the familiar clank.

(Sounds of breathing, digging with hands)

JOSEPH:

What do you know. Another box. (Laughs)

(Sound of Joseph walking)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I sit on a large nearby cedar log that has small trees growing out of it, and that looks like it's been decomposing for centuries.

(Sound of opening box and handling plastic bag)

Just as with the rest, there's a plastic bag inside. I set the box down and open the bag and take out a familiar piece of stationery, and another coin. This time it's a quarter, dated [1932](#).

JOSEPH:

(Reading note) Joey, congratulations on finding another box. I hope your search is going well. If things are getting hard for you, don't despair. Where there is ruin, there is also renewal. Let this place be an example. Aimo.

(Exhales)

Hard... You mean like life turning upside-down hard?

NARRATOR:

Also written on the note is a big capital letter A. And then the word...

JOSEPH:

Lemmin...kah... Lemmin kai ee nen? Lemmin kay ainen?

NARRATOR:

Lemminkäinen.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, just like I said.

Man, what a language. Who invented Finnish anyway...

(Sound of Joseph's phone ringing)

JOSEPH:

Oh.

Oh crap!

(Sound of getting phone out of pocket)

(Sound of answering phone) Mel!

MEL:

Joseph...

JOSEPH:

I'm... W-what time is it?

MEL:  
Joseph, the police are here.

JOSEPH:  
What?

MEL:  
Two investigators.

JOSEPH:  
At...the office?

MEL:  
At the office.

They won't say why...

(Sound of thunder in distance)

JOSEPH:  
Okay...

MEL:  
But they're asking to see you.

JOSEPH:  
(Exhales) Crap.

(Sound of Joseph quickly gathering belongings, zipping bag)

I'm...on my way.

(Sound of phone hanging up)

(Sound of Joseph breathing, running on leafy ground)

(Fade out all sounds)

[End chapter]

