

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA
Chapter 17 Transcript
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****Warning****

This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 17 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>

(Fade in sound of being on the farm at night)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Now that I'm back on the farm side of the fence, and with the strange lights that were hovering over the distant mountain no longer visible in the night sky, whatever spell I was under a moment ago is gone. But definitely *not* forgotten.

MARIA:

Yeah, the army takes credit for many of the lights in the sky. They say they they're part of the things they do over at the firing range.

JOSEPH:

You mean the place where Antonia's husband worked?

SALVADOR:

That's right. But a lot of them go unexplained.

JOSEPH:

Huh.

MARIA:

(Shivering sound) It's getting late.

SALVADOR:

Yeah let's head back. Gotta get my beauty sleep.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

MARIA:

Oh Joey. Will you stay with us?

JOSPEH:

Oh...yeah. If that's alright...

MARIA:

Oh yes.

JOSEPH:

(To Antonia) Hey.

SALVADOR:

(In background) My bed's waiting.

MARIA:

(Laughs)

JOSEPH:

Do you wanna walk back?

ANTONIA:

(Quietly, to Joseph) Sure. (To Salvador and Maria) Hey, I think we're gonna stretch our legs a little. See you in about fifteen minutes?

(Sound of Salvador and Maria walking to truck)

MARIA:

(In distance) Okay!

(Sound of Salvador and Maria getting in truck)

JOSEPH:

I wasn't sure how to answer your mom just now.

(Sound of truck starting and driving away)

JOSEPH:

About staying there? I mean, it feels like I should probably stay with them, since they know I'm here this time.

(Sound of Antonia and Joseph walking on dirt access road)

ANTONIA:

Oh it's fine. They know you stayed at my place the other night.

JOSEPH:

They do?

ANTONIA:

They do. Not much gets past those two on the farm.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Right. So, your dad knows someone might be spying on me...

ANTONIA:

Well he's super curious about what's happening with you. My mom too. You can't blame them. They *are* a part of all this.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. And this whole idea of the property up there causing bad feelings... (Scoffs)

(Sound of stopping walking)

ANTONIA:

Did you feel or notice anything?

JOSEPH:

You know, I did. It was pretty different from what the three of you described. It wasn't painful at all. It was like...I don't know. I wanted to take off running to see what was up there...or out there. Maybe it was just an adrenaline rush from being on the "forbidden" side of the fence. I guess it's kinda hard to explain. During dinner you said you feel something up there too?

ANTONIA:

Maybe not in the way my parents do. I mean, I grew up knowing that someone we don't know owns the land next to ours, for some unknown reason. And *that someone* could just show up one day and change what we have here—or maybe *never* show up.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

ANTONIA:

I guess for me it was always just a mystery.

JOSEPH:

But you don't think it's cursed...

ANTONIA:

I guess I do think that places can feel a certain way. But how much of that comes from what's inside a person already...maybe it's that more than anything.

JOSEPH:

Hmph.

ANTONIA:

By the way, I'm glad you caught yourself before blurting out anything about us maybe buying the land. I told you I'd look into it. And I am.

JOSEPH:

I know you are.

ANTONIA:

It's different here. You're not the CEO.

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) I know that. But what's stopping you from just asking him about it, directly?

ANTONIA:

If I bring it up like that, he'll wonder why I'm asking. Like how or where I got the information.

JOSEPH:

Is that so bad?

ANTONIA:

I just need to do it my way.

JOSEPH:

Okay.

ANTONIA:

So, are you leaving in the morning?

JOSEPH:

I am. Though probably not 'til I've been served a big breakfast. *Which*, I love by the way.

ANTONIA:

So you still want find to find the boxes...even though the last one was fake?

JOSEPH:

I do. Just to see where it all leads, I guess.

ANTONIA:
Even though people are following you.

JOSEPH:
Hmph.

ANTONIA:
And even though this whole thing could be a hoax. What if it isn't Aimo? What if someone is just trying to scam you?

JOSEPH:
You know, the other night—on Friday night—in the *middle* of the night...the detector told me something.

ANTONIA:
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:
Yeah. (Laughs) I had to kind of decipher it the next morning. But I figured out what it was, right before you called me. Right *before* I discovered that the box was fake.

ANTONIA:
(Scoffs) What did it tell you?

JOSEPH:
It spelled out the word, "believe."

ANTONIA:
Maybe you should have that thing checked out.

JOSEPH:
(Laughs) I did. Apparently, all the parts and wires and everything are all normal.

ANTONIA:
Why is there so much weird stuff happening?

JOSEPH:
(Chuckles) Good question.

ANTONIA:
Well, while you're out and about tomorrow, maybe just let me know where you are?

JOSEPH:
So you're saying you'll be thinking about me tomorrow?

(Sound of stopping walking)

ANTONIA:

I'm saying that I think you're being super impulsive. All last week you were *obsessed* with finding boxes. And now it's the property. And then today, you had me drive all over Seattle following someone!

JOSEPH:

Heh, yeah.

ANTONIA:

I mean, I get why you wanted to do that. But again, you have to admit, it was pretty ridiculous.

JOSEPH:

I know. And yes, I'll stay in touch tomorrow. I want to, anyway.

(Sound of walking on dirt access road)

ANTONIA:

You know, maybe you just had me over to Seattle so I could see your fancy bachelor pad.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) (Sigh) You know, the truth is, I feel a lot more at home here than I do at my home.

(Fade out all sounds)

(End scene)

(Fade in windy dream background sound)

(Fade in sound of ocean waves on beach, and seagulls nearby)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

This time, the beach is empty. And the water appears clearer and cleaner than before. The trees in the forest, off in the distance, look thicker and taller.

(Sound of chanting or shouting in distance)

JOSEPH:

Oh.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Out beyond the surf, near where the ocean meets the horizon, I can barely make out what appears to be five or six people, paddling a narrow wooden boat.

(Sound of being in the forest)

(Sound of walking through the forest)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Suddenly, I'm back in the forest. The dense canopy overhead blocks most of the sky from view.

JOSEPH:

(Gasp) You're alive.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The giant tree isn't broken off at its base, but instead stands fully upright and even more imposing.

(Sound of walking closer to tree)

Its tangled roots weave amongst each other before diving down into the damp soil.

JOSEPH:

(Breathing) Hello?

(Sound of drum beat)

(Sound of detector beeping in rhythmic cadence)

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) Are you underground?

(Sound of digging with shovel)

JOSEPH:

Hang on. I'll get you out!

(Sound of waking up in farmhouse bedroom)

JOSEPH:

(Breathing)

(Sound of cuckoo clock ticking, followed by two chimes, then ticking again)

(Sound of reaching for phone)

(Sound of setting phone down)

JOSEPH:

2am...

(Sound of detector making rhythmic clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

Woah.

(Sound of walking over and stopping at detector)

JOSEPH:

I don't remember turning switching you on.

JOSEPH:

(Groan) I need something to...write on.

(Sound of opening and closing drawers)

JOSEPH:

Nothing. Okay we can do this.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I Google "binary to text translator" on my phone, and tap on the link to visit the same website I used before, when I was at home.

JOSEPH:

Okay.

(Sound of detector making rhythmic clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

O

S

E

E

G

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I keep listening, and the same five letters continue to repeat, in the same sequence.

(Sound of turning off detector)

JOSEPH:

O
S
E
E
G

Oseeg. Wait... Maybe I just started in the wrong place...

(Sound of tapping on phone)

JOSEPH:

(Gasp) *Go see*.

(Sound of quickly getting dressed)

JOSEPH:

Okay. If you say so.

(Sound of grabbing the detector and opening bedroom door)

(Sound of quietly walking through the farm house)

(Sound of opening front door)

(Sound of being outside on the farm)

(Sound of quietly closing door)

(Sound of walking softly on gravel)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The night sky, that was full of puffy clouds earlier, is totally clear now. And the full moon is high overhead, casting aluminum shadows all around.

JOSEPH:

Wow that's a lot of stars.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Just as Maria predicted, frost is beginning to form on the grasses and plants on both sides of the access road.

(Sound of walking on gravel)

JOSEPH:

(Shivering) I should have brought a warmer jacket. And maybe some gloves...

(Sound of stopping)

JOSEPH:

Wait. (Exhale) No. That wouldn't be right.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I know I shouldn't enter any building on this farm without permission. I am just a guest here, after all.

JOSEPH:

(Groan) But it *would* be a good way to find out if all of this is true. (Inhale/exhale) Hmm...

(Sound of turning on detector)

(Sound of detector making faint buzzing noise)

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) Okay. Where is the key to the tractor located?

(Sound of detector making faint buzzing noise)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Sorry. I knew that was a sketchy idea. (Laughs) Wait, what am I apologizing to?

(Sound of detector going silent)

(Sound of detector making clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

Holy crap!

(Sound of setting down detector)

(Sound of taking phone out of pocket)

JOSEPH:

Come on fingers, don't freeze on me now.

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

JOSEPH:

Okay.

O

F

F

I

C

(Sound of turning off detector)

Office.

(Scoffs)

JOSEPH:

Why would you say that if it wasn't...okay? (Groan)

(Sound of picking up detector)

JOSEPH:

Okay.

(Sound of walking on gravel)

JOSEPH:

We're doing this.

(Sound of walking on dried grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I leave the access road and head to my left, through what I think are the Galactic Crunch apple trees.

JOSEPH:

Ouch. Ugh, lots of sticks in here.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Fortunately, I remember where the office is from years ago when I worked on the farm. Assuming, of course, that the office is still in the same building today.

(Sound of walking on dried grass)

JOSEPH:

(Shivers) It's cold.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

After a couple minutes, I arrive at what is basically a mobile home. A double-wide that was Ernesto and Lucila's original residence, that was later converted into the office and main operations center for the farm.

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of setting down detector)

(Sound of blowing warm air into hands)

JOSEPH:

Okay.

(Sound of trying to turn door knob)

JOSEPH:

(laughs) *Of course* it's locked.

(Sound of picking up detector)

(Sound of walking on dried grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

At the back of the building...

JOSEPH:

Yes.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I see a window that's barely cracked open, with a screen in front of it.

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of setting down detector)

(Sound of removing the screen with some effort, and setting it down)

JOSEPH:
Nice.

(Sound of pushing the window open)

(Sound of Joseph hoisting himself up into window frame and then dropping down into the office)

JOSEPH:
Here. We. Go.

(Sound of landing inside the office, footsteps on floor)

(Sound of being inside office)

(Sound of closing the window)

JOSEPH:
(Sigh)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
It's dark inside the office, but gray moonlight shines in through two large front windows. A few colored lights also glow dimly, probably from computers or other electronic equipment.

JOSEPH:
(Exhale) (Rubbing hands together)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
Fortunately, the heat is on in here, and I can feel my hands and feet starting to come back to life.

(Sound of taking phone out of pocket)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
I turn on my phone's flashlight and slowly wave it around to see better.

JOSEPH:
Hmm.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I see three desks in what is basically an open room with a vaulted ceiling. There's a faint smell of motor oil in the air. Some areas are clean and tidy, but other areas are cluttered, with papers and periodicals and spare parts stacked on shelves or on top of metal filing cabinets.

JOSEPH:

Pretty much the way I remember it.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I also see numerous framed photos—some current and some dated—hanging on the walls.

(Sound of walking then stopping)

JOSEPH:

Hmm, what's this?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I walk toward one photo in particular that I don't recall seeing before. It's a black and white framed picture of four men dressed in work clothing, standing in front of what looks like an open field, each holding a musical instrument.

JOSEPH:

Oh!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

It takes me a moment to realize that one of them is a young Ernesto, and one of them is a young Aimo.

JOSEPH:

Huh.

(Sound of walking around room)

(Sound of stopping)

(Sound of moving or flexing an office chair)

JOSEPH:

Nice ergonomic chair, clean workspace. This must be Antonia's desk...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There are two large computer monitors on the desk, positioned side by side, with cables coming off of each of them that probably plug in to a laptop that isn't there. The wall next to the desk has photographs pinned to it—mostly pictures of small children and...

JOSEPH:

Oh. Hey Cooper.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I also see sticky notes in various colors on the desk, with notes scribbled on them in what I recognize as Antonia's handwriting, from the letters that I received from her years ago after I lived and worked on the farm for two summers.

(Sound of opening a desk drawer)

(Sound of poking around in drawer)

(Sound of closing drawer)

(Sound of opening another desk drawer)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I don't see a tractor key in any of the drawers.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

But I do see, among other things, an Ichiro Suzuki bobblehead doll.

JOSEPH:

Nice. You're a Mariners fan too...

(Sound of walking across room)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The second desk belongs to someone named Rita, based on the "Hello my name is Rita" nameplate on the desk that faces out toward the office entrance. Yet as with Antonia's desk...

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) No keys.

(Sound of walking through office)

(Sound of stopping walking)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Salvador's desk looks the same, and is in the same place it's always been—in the back corner of the room.

JOSEPH:

Hmph.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There's a simple, unfolded metal chair with a foam seat that has a large tear in it.

JOSEPH:

Once again, some things never change.

(Sound of walking a few steps)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I walk to the wall *behind* the chair. And just as I remember, there are small metal hooks protruding from the wall with various handy things either set on, or hanging, from each one. Screwdrivers, a large wrench, a well-worn Farmall hat, a pair of safety glasses, some dirty work gloves, and...

(Sound of grabbing key ring)

JOSEPH:

Hmph.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I shine my phone's flashlight directly onto the lone key on the key ring. In Sharpie pen ink, is written the word...

JOSEPH:

Tractor. (Scoffs) Amazing.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There are a *lot* of tractors in use on the farm.

JOSEPH:

But you said it was here... (Inhale, exhale) Okay, time to go find out.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I turn to walk back toward the window, and as I do...

JOSEPH:

Woah.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The light from my phone's flashlight blazes across Salvador's desk.

(Sound of handling sticky note)

JOSEPH:

What is that doing here?

NARRATOR (Joseph):

There's a bright blue sticky note half-hidden beneath a roll of paper towels, with a name written on it.

JOSEPH:

Marlon Mason.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

On the sticky note is a phone number with a 206 area code, which is the area code for Seattle.

JOSEPH:

Marlon. Why is *your* name on a sticky note...*here*?

(Sound of Joseph handling phone)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I aim my phone at the note to take a picture of it.

(Sound of taking photo with smartphone)

JOSPEH:

Oh! Crap!

(Sound of Joseph cowering or taking cover)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The camera's flash goes off unexpectedly, and briefly lights up my body and face, and the entire office.

JOSEPH:

(Breathing)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I instinctively duck down behind Salvador's desk, as if I've been discovered.

JOSEPH:

(Breathing) (Chuckles) It's 2:30 in the morning, dummy. Nobody knows I'm here. (Exhales)

(Sound of walking through the office)

(Sound of sliding the window open)

(Sound of climbing through the open window and landing outside)

(Sound of picking up the detector and walking on dried grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I leave the window as I found it, slightly open. And I leave the screen on the ground for now, knowing I'll be back before too long.

(Sound of jogging on dried grass)

(Sound of jogging on gravel)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

After a couple of minutes, I arrive back at the access road, and continue up the slope, passing a few structures along the way, until I see the fence and the gate, shining brightly in the moonlight.

(Sound of walking on gravel)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And just above and beyond the gate, in the same place it was before, the Farmall A tractor.

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of catching breath)

(Sound of pushing on the metal gate, twice)

JOSEPH:

Go see...

(Sound of turning on metal detector)

JOSEPH:

Let's find out if you work over there.

(Sound of trying to maneuver disc through fence)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

To the left of the gate, from the farm side of the fence, I maneuver the detector arm and disc through the parallel barbed wires, as close to the ground as I can.

JOSEPH:

Come on, get through there.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Once it's on the other side...

(Sound of detector buzzing getting louder)

JOSEPH:

Woah. (Chuckles) Wait, you're *detecting* something over there...

(Sound of pulling detector pack over to farm side of the fence)

(Sound of detector buzzing getting quieter)

JOSEPH:

But not over here. Hmm.

(Sound of walking on gravel then on dried grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I walk about 30 feet to my left, along the fence...

(Sound of stopping walking)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And I maneuver the detector arm and disc through it again.

(Sound of detector buzzing getting louder)

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles)

(Sound of pulling the detector back through fence)

(Sound of detector buzzing getting quieter)

JOSEPH:

Same as at the gate.

(Sound of walking on dried grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I head back toward the gate, and this time continue to the right of the gate, along the fence, and I test the detector several more times in the same way, at intervals of 20 or 30 feet, with the exact same results.

(Sound of setting down the detector)

JOSEPH:

(Shivering) Okay, something is either buried underground here...along the entire fence? Which seems pretty unlikely. But that could explain maybe why the tractor stopped working?

(Sound of rubbing hands together and blowing into hands)

(Sound of coyote in distance)

JOSEPH:

(Gasps)

(Sound of coyote in distance again)

JOSEPH:

(Breathing)

(Sound of pushing on metal gate)

(Sound of pushing harder on metal gate)

(Sound of chain that holds the gate closed unraveling)

JOSEPH:

(Gasps)

(Sound of opening gate)

(Sound of walking on gravel then on dried grass)

JOSEPH:

(Sniffs) (Laughs)

(Sound of rubbing hands together)

(Sound of banging knuckles against metal frame of the tractor)

JOSEPH:
What is this place...

(Sound of climbing up into the tractor's seat)

(Sound of taking key out of pocket)

JOSEPH:
(Sniffs) Argh. (Laughs)

(Sound of blowing into hands and rubbing hands together)

JOSEPH:
If this thing starts... (Laughs) *Oh man* if this thing starts...

(Sound of putting key in ignition)

JOSEPH:
I am so taking this tractor for a joy ride. All over this hill! (Laughs) And maybe down to the farmhouse, too.

JOSEPH:
(Inhale/exhale) Okay.

(Sound of turning the key, then silence)

JOSEPH:
(Exhales) (Sniffs)

JOSEPH:
Alright Farmall, you got this...

(Sound of turning the key, then silence)

JOSEPH:
(Exhales) Third time's a charm?

(Sound of turning the key, then silence)

JOSEPH:
(Chuckles) (Sniffs) Shoot.

(Sound of starting to get out of tractor seat)

(Sound of coyote in distance)

JOSEPH:
(Gasps)

(Sound of sitting back down)

JOSEPH:
Come on.

(Sound of turning the key, then silence)

(Sound of turning the key again, then silence)

JOSEPH:
Come on...

(Sound of turning the key multiple times quickly and silence after each try)

JOSEPH:
Come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on!

(Sound of pounding fist on tractor frame)

JOSEPH:
(Exhales) (Chuckles)

(Sound of taking key out of ignition)

(Sound of leaving tractor seat and jumping onto ground)

(Sound of walking on dried grass)

(End scene)

(Sound of finishing up brushing teeth inside farmhouse bedroom bathroom)

(Sound of text message alert)

(Sound of zipping up toiletries bag)

(Sound of picking up phone)

JOSEPH:

Megan Kimura. Call me this morning please. It's urgent. Inner Six needs to hear from you.

(Sound of setting down phone)

JOSEPH:

(While yawning) Well happy Monday morning...

(Sound of walking into bedroom and opening bedroom door)

(Sound of walking in hallway)

(Sound of stopping walking)

(Sound of Salvador and Hernan speaking in Spanish, in nearby room)

(Sound of walking again in hallway)

JOSEPH:

Hmmm.

(Sound of walking into kitchen)

JOSEPH:

Good morning. Wow, everyone's here for breakfast. Hi, I'm Joseph.

HERNAN:

I'm Hernan.

JOSEPH:

Oh! Nice to meet you, Hernan.

SALVADOR:

Actually, we all ate already.

JOSEPH:

Oh.

MARIA:

I have some coffee and toast ready if you want some.

JOSEPH:

Ah, that sounds great. Thank you Mrs. Flores.

SALVADOR:
How about we all sit down.

JOSEPH:
Okay.

(Sound of everyone sitting at the table)

SALVADOR:
You look pretty tired.

JOSEPH:
(Chuckles) Yeah. Yeah I guess I didn't sleep much last night. Probably due to everything going on.

SALVADOR:
So it would seem.

JOSEPH:
What...

SALVADOR:
Who would like to start.

JOSEPH:
What's going on here?

HERNAN:
So Mr. Joseph, last night we—

ANTONIA:
I'll tell him.

JOSEPH:
Tell me what... *What?*

ANTONIA:
Why were you in our office last night?

SALVADOR:
And running all over the farm?

JOSEPH:
(Reacts)

ANTONIA:

Joseph, our security system isn't just the gate on the driveway.

SALVADOR:

Hernan has it all in (sic) video. Ten minutes! For ten minutes you were in the office, looking in drawers, around all our desks. And that was just the *first* time you were there.

JOSEPH:

(Inhale/exhale)

ANTONIA:

Joseph, what were you doing?

JOSEPH:

(Reacts)

SALVADOR:

Just so I make myself clear. If it was anyone else, we would have called the police by now.

JOSEPH:

Were you watching me the whole time?

ANTONIA:

No! We saw it all this morning, on our security footage! We had no idea who it was until you took that photo with your camera!

SALVADOR:

Joseph, I know you know this place. And I know you feel like you belong here. And you should. Because of your grandpa, and since you stayed here years ago. But this is not your farm. You don't have permission to just do whatever you want here.

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) Look, the window was already cracked open.

SALVADOR:

That's an open invitation in your head?

JOSEPH:

That's not... I wasn't...

SALVADOR:

Plus Hernan tells us this morning that he saw you running around through the orchards—and up at the gate. With that metal detector.

JOSEPH:

You were out there?

HERNAN:

No. Not exactly. I stay up near the apple orchard. I woke up when I heard someone running on the road. And so I watched to see what they did.

SALVADOR:

Don't you think you should answer Antonia's question? Why were you in the office? *Why?*

JOSEPH:

(Inhale/exhale) I was getting the key. And then...putting it back.

SALVADOR:

The key to what?

JOSEPH:

They key to the tractor!

MARIA:

Why the key to the tractor?

JOSEPH:

I went up there to see if I could start it.

ANTONIA:

Start it?

SALVADOR:

How did you know the key was even in the office? It could have been anywhere!

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) It doesn't matter. It's a long story.

SALVADOR:

A long story? *That's* your answer? Well guess what, Joseph. We *should* be outside helping Jorge with the grapes. But we're not. We're in here with you, making time for your long story! And trying to understand why someone we love and trust is sneaking around behind our backs!

JOSEPH:

Oh. That's rich. *Me* sneaking around? Like you haven't been doing that yourself!

ANTONIA:
Joseph!

SALVADOR:
Eso que? What is that supposed to mean?

JOSEPH:
That land up there, that you think is cursed! Why haven't you told Antonia what your plans are?

(Sound of awkward silence)

JOSEPH:
So it's true! You are trying to buy it!

(Sound of more awkward silence)

SALVADOR:
How do you know about that.

JOSEPH:
You know, I'd rather know why *you* want to buy a piece of land that you think is cursed! Or is all that *cursed* talk just some...story you concocted? To get people to stay away from it? Maybe so you could be first in line to get it?

MARIA:
Joey!

SALVADOR:
I do not make up things. Not like that, or anything else.

ANTONIA:
We told you the tractor wouldn't start. Why didn't you believe us?

JOSEPH:
Because what I felt on that side of the fence didn't match *anything* that any of you described! I felt...excitement! Energy! Happiness! So yes, I tried to start the tractor to see if *that* story was made up too!

SALVADOR:
Let me guess, it didn't start.

JOSEPH:
(Exhale) No.

SALVADOR:

Joseph, I know you've been going through a lot lately. And it can't be easy. But hear me well. *None* of that excuses what you did last night. Or what you've said here. This is not your place, and you are *not* automatically entitled to know what goes on here.

JOSEPH:

(Inhale/exhale)

SALVADOR:

I think you should go.

JOSEPH:

What?

MARIA:

(Gasps)

SALVADOR:

Hernan, make sure you update the gate code after he leaves.

HERNAN:

Si señor.

JOSEPH:

Wait.

SALVADOR:

What.

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry. Something made me want to try. I shouldn't have done it. I know that.

SALVADOR:

I'm sorry is not gonna cut it. You should go learn some manners. Maybe then we can talk. Thank you for breakfast, *corazon*. *Gracias por avisarnos*, Hernan. Tonita. Please come with me, *mija*.

(Sound of people moving, leaving)

MARIA:

Oh Joey.

JOSEPH:

I'm so sorry, Mrs. Flores. I'll go pack my things.

(Fade out all sounds)

(End of chapter)

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