

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA  
Chapter 3 Transcript  
© STUDIO5705 LLC

**\*\*Warning\*\***

**This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 3 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>

NARRATOR:

Dirt - An Audio Drama is a production of STUDIO5705. Chapter 3.

(Sound of being inside car while driving)

(Sound of calling someone on smartphone)

MEL:

(On phone, answering) Hello?

JOSEPH:

It's your favorite CEO who almost became road kill four hours ago.

MEL:

(Exhale) You're lucky, I don't usually pick up when Unknown Caller gives me a ring. You got a new phone?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I bought one in Yakima on the way. I got one of the larger phones, like the ones we use for our user tests? I gotta say, it's pretty sweet.

MEL:

So, you're about to say we should talk only on this phone now.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. For now.

MEL:

This must be some old friend you're visiting to leave right away like that...

JOSEPH:

I promise I'll explain more later. I just need to tend to some personal business, and I'd rather not—

MEL:

It's ok. You don't have to explain.

JOSEPH:

Okay.

MEL:

So, you're worried about your work phone being compromised? We can have IT wipe it clean from here if that would—

JOSEPH:

No. Let's not do that. Besides I need my work phone working.

MEL:

Right. On that note, Angela came by your office to ask you something. She seemed a little upset still. And Trudy has some numbers she wants you to see. It's probably all in email. I told the Inner 6 you'll be a little tough to reach until Wednesday. Said you have some personal things to address. And I just kept it to that.

JOSEPH:

Thank you, Mel. And thanks again for rescuing me from the bathroom. One more thing to add to your impressive resume.

Mel:

I aim to please.

JOSEPH:

Man, I can't believe I—

Mel:

So...an update on all that. Besides Twitter blowing up, there's now a Facebook page devoted to the Costumed Jaywalker with all the requisite memes being created and shared. And someone turned the crosswalk into a destination called Eyebrow Alley on Google Maps. It's getting four-star reviews. So, congratulations on that.

But fortunately, no mention of Joseph Elo or Motorpool Agency at all. I used three of my Twitter aliases to suggest some theories about who the costumed man is. People seem to be entertaining two of them at least.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) What was the third? Actually, never mind.

MEL:

I also checked all the videos and photos that people are posting, to look for that thing you mentioned. The videos and photos all start just *after* you almost got hit. I guess no one thought you were interesting enough to take pictures before that. You know, you really should be more careful crossing the street.

JOSEPH:

I know. It was stupid.

MEL:

Anyway, I don't see any sign of anyone dropping anything in the crosswalk. Not near you, or anywhere else. A couple of the videos were shot from above, probably from office windows. This really got everyone's attention. But you know how Seattle is. Honking, yelling—any loud noise. It's a shock to everyone.

JOSEPH:

OK. It must have been in the street before I got there then. It just seems way too coincidental that something belonging to someone I haven't seen in fifteen years is lying on the ground at the same place, and in the same moment, that I almost die a gruesome—yet may I say handsomely mustachioed—death. Don't you think?

MEL:

Are you trying to be funny?

JOSEPH:

I'll check in again later.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

As I hang up with Mel, I turn off of Interstate 82 at Union Gap, and head south on Highway 97. In more ways than one, I'm in a different place than I was four hours ago. Seattle was gray and misty. But here, on this side of the mountains, it's sunny. Crops of every kind, from orchards and vineyards to hops and vegetables and berries, fill up the wide floor of the Yakima Valley, as well as the lower reaches of the surrounding brown foothills. The late afternoon light gives everything a golden, autumn glow.

I send Kim a quick text—hands-free, don't worry—letting her know where I'm headed and that I'll check in with her from this number a little later. She writes back almost immediately. "New

phone? Hmmmm.... The plot thickens..." with a winking emoji. And then, "Please tell them hello, and call when you can. I think I have something."

(Begin background music)

Kim doesn't know this yet, but I think I have something too. Part of the letter makes sense to me now. And if I'm right, I hope to know for sure before I leave this place.

So, let's finally talk about the letter. I committed it to memory days ago. It's written as a poem, which is not surprising if Aimo truly is its author. Aimo was an admirer of Richard Hugo, Theodore Roethke, and Raymond Carver—the big three Pacific Northwest male poets of old. Aimo used to write to people in verse, sometimes rhyming, sometimes nonsensical, and sometimes with goofy drawings and stickers. It was his way. I'd always wished I'd gotten one of those letters from him. Now, it seems, I have.

The letter starts with my childhood nickname.

Dear Little Joey,

(If I) leave too soon to tell you this  
What blossoms in the east is bliss  
A plot awaits for you to pen  
A wealth of golden fruit to kiss

Begin your search where flowers grow  
Familiar yet the father knows  
Not what the gift to grant to you  
Until you ask where we first sowed

Search there for knowledge in the ground  
Then follow down the trail laid out  
In silent words determine more  
Of places where I heard the sounds

Three more clues about your quest  
The year your grandmother and I wed  
The dough boy statue in the park  
The quiet place where Rose homestead

Keep practicing your piano. And seek with care.

- Aimo

(Background music ends)

(Sound of turning off highway onto smaller road)

I'm nervous for what I'm about to do. More nervous than anything at work or on social media right now. I'm about to cold visit a place I haven't been in more than 15 years.

I head west on Kays Road. It's a familiar drive, one I took many times as a teenager. I drive slowly, passing one orchard after another. I drive past quaint and rundown farmhouses set off the road down winding dirt driveways. I drive past irrigation canals, some still flowing at the end of the growing season. I drive past fruit and vegetable stands—closed today but ready for the weekend.

So much is the same. But there are new things too. New buildings, and new plantings. Twelve-thousand-foot-tall Mt. Adams, or *Pahto* as many here still call it, watches over everything. The surrounding hillsides, formed by lava flows and rounded by erosion eons ago, are bathed in orange and yellow.

I pass a tractor on the left and wave to the driver. Almost every other vehicle I see is a truck, a reminder of how different the two halves of Washington—the western half and the eastern half—can be.

(Sound of car pulling onto and stopping on shoulder)

I get to a driveway that has an artsy metal sign out front: Flores Farms. I check my work phone. Fourteen new texts. Three from Angela, offering to talk to the client about the delay in user testing. Two from DeShawn, our project lead who's producing Conjoin this year. Four from Rebekah, our CTO, about the hackathon we're sponsoring next week. Five from Trudy, our CFO.

I'm overdue for reviewing Trudy's numbers for the meeting with Molecular on Friday.

(Begin background music, sound of car driving up driveway)

I should respond to them all.

(Sound of car continuing to drive then slowing and stopping at gate)

JOSEPH:

Huh, this is new.

(Sound of window opening, punching buttons on keypad)

(Sound of rejected keycode attempt)

Hmmm...

(Sound of punching buttons, sound of rejected keycode)

Okay, well, maybe this.

(Sound of punching buttons, sound of rejected keycode)

(Sudden sound of dial tone then phone dialing)

Wait, no, no, wait, hang on...

SECURITY GUARD:

(On phone speaker) What's your passcode?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I don't have one? I'm just here visiting.

SECURITY GUARD:

We don't accept solicitors.

JOSEPH:

No I'm not...I'm not here to sell anything, I'm just paying a visit.

SECURITY GUARD:

We don't have any visitors on the schedule today.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I get it, I-I didn't call ahead of time. I just—

SECURITY GUARD:

You'll need to call and schedule your visit for another day.

JOSEPH:

Well, is it possible that I could just speak to—

SECURITY GUARD:

Do you have a keyword?

JOSEPH:

A keyword. No, I don't think so...

SECURITY GUARD:

I'm sorry sir but you'll have to—

JOSEPH:

Wait, just wait a second. How about, uh...farm.

SECURITY GUARD:

That's not a registered keyword.

JOSEPH:

Uh, orchard?

Okay wait. Wait, wait. How about umm...Lucila? Lucila.

(Sound of phone hanging up on speaker)

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) Crap.

(Sound of Joseph tapping on steering wheel, then sound of bright electronic chime from keypad)

(Sound of metal gate opening)

(Sound of window going up and car proceeding)

Hmm, well that's interesting.

(Sound of car parking and Joseph getting out of car)

(Sound of Joseph walking up to front porch, then knocking on wooden door)

WOMAN'S VOICE (MARIA):

(Yelling from inside house) You can just leave the package on the porch.

JOSEPH:

*Mrs. Flores?*

(Sound of woman gasping inside the house, then sound of footsteps approaching door from inside, and door opening)

MARIA:

*Joey?*

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I'm not surprised by the surprise in her voice. I'm here unannounced, *and* I've done a poor job of staying in touch. But the surprise in *my* voice? Well, last I'd heard, Mrs. Flores, or Maria, was

bedridden and battling stage three stomach cancer. Yet here she is, on her feet and looking healthy. She's noticeably older, though, grandmotherly in appearance, and wearing an apron.

MARIA:

Oh! Last time I saw you, you were so skinny. You must work out a lot? Are you hungry?

JOSEPH:

No, no, I'm not... Well, actually, I am a little hungry, now that you mention it. But *wow*. Mrs. Flores! You look *amazing*.

MARIA:

Mmmm.

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry, I—I just didn't expect *you* to answer the door.

MARIA:

Well it *is* my house, Joey. Just as it was your house once too, for a short while.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

MARIA:

My goodness. Come inside!

(Sound of walking inside house and door closing)

(Sound of TV news on in background)

(Exhale) I was just watching the news. They were just showing a video of someone who almost got run over by a car today, in Seattle.

JOSEPH:

Oh. Oh yeah?

MARIA:

He was in a costume and I guess it got everyone excited on their phones. I don't know how anyone lives over there. So many people. And the traffic...ugh.

JOSEPH:

Huh. Did they say on the news who they think it was?

MARIA:

No, everyone is talking about it on Twitter I guess, trying to figure it out.



JOSEPH:

(Nervous laughter) Yeah.

Wow, it's hardly changed here. I mean, it's...it's just nice to see that it's the same.

MARIA:

I know. I keep asking Salvador to fix the place up. But you know how it is. There's *always* something else to do, always something else comes up.

(Sound of Maria walking to kitchen)

I have some food almost ready in the oven. Some store-bought lasagna.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I was soooo hoping she was going to say tamales. Maria's tamales are legendary.

MARIA:

You have to stay and eat. Ah Joseph, there must be a lot to catch up on.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

(Sound of Maria walking closer again)

MARIA:

And oh! I haven't even asked you why you are here. Would you like some water?

JOSEPH:

Some water would be great, thank you—

MARIA:

Oh! Here's Salvador now.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

It's nearly five o'clock and I remember now that the family always eats at five. One more thing that hasn't changed.

(Sound of approaching footsteps on gravel outside front door, then front door opening)

In walks one of the friendliest faces, and people, I've ever known. Salvador Flores.

SALVADOR:

I was wondering who drove their big city car here and was fraternizing with my wife.

JOSEPH:

Mr. Flores. Hi.

SALVADOR:

Hmph. Joseph Elo. Well, isn't this something. Is it a full moon, Maria? Or Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>?

MARIA:

Umm, no. It's just Monday.

SALVADOR:

Well, so much for that.

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry, I'm here unannounced. And I just got here.

SALVADOR:

Yeah, just in time for dinner too. How convenient. (Laughs)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

As we're talking, Salvador takes off his hat and puts it on a hook by the door, and then sits in a chair—*his* chair—and takes off his boots, one at a time. His evening ritual, just before dinner.

MARIA:

OK, go wash up, both of you. The lasagna is telling me it's ready.

(Sound of Joseph walking into bathroom and closing door)

JOSEPH:

Wow.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

This bathroom, like the rest of the farmhouse, is frozen in time—right down to the barn-themed wallpaper. The sink, the cabinets, the fixtures, even the towels are the same. I relieve myself and wash my hands. I wash my face too, and try to come up with dinnertime conversation ideas, as well as a convincing way of explaining why I'm here.

(Sound of drying hands then opening bathroom door and walking out)

JOSEPH:

Woah!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And there she is, standing in the kitchen. I immediately get that old high school crush feeling. She turns to me and I don't know what to say—and I probably look like it because she makes a face like she's embarrassed for me. We're both in our late thirties now, but I can still see the girl I knew when I was seventeen.

ANTONIA:  
Joseph? What are you doing here?

JOSEPH:  
Antonia. Well...it looks like I'm having dinner.

SALVADOR:  
(From the table) If you kids want some food you better get here quick, before I eat it all.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
It's amazing what being here does to my psyche. I really do feel like a teenager right now. We sit down and Maria places a huge rectangle of lasagna on each of our plates.

(Sounds of plates, glasses, and utensils being used at dinner table)

SALVADOR:  
So how's life in the big city?

JOSEPH:  
Uh, it's good! Things are good. I have my own company so I work pretty much every day, even weekends. But, it's ok, I like what I do.

MARIA:  
And what is it that you do?

JOSEPH:  
We work with a lot of big brands doing interface testing and optimization. Basically, making digital experiences more integrated and seamless for consumers.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
By the looks on their faces, I might be from another galaxy, and I know it's on me. It's not easy to describe what our company does without sounding like a jargon-riddled encyclopedia.

JOSEPH:  
It's not quite pruning trees or fixing sprinklers like I used to do here. But it's important stuff, I guess.

MARIA:  
Well, it must be, if you have your own company.

SALVADOR:

What's the company called?

JOSEPH:

It's called Motorpool. It's just a goofy name. A lot of companies like ours have goofy names.

MARIA:

Oh! Like Google. Who thought of *that* name?

SALVADOR:

Huh. Motorpool. I like it!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

All of this safe small talk feels nice, but I can feel Antonia staring impatiently, like she wants to cut to the chase. Sure enough—

ANTONIA:

So *really*, Joseph. What brings you over here?

JOSEPH:

Well, earlier today...

(Sound of getting something out of pocket)

I found this. You probably need it to drive and all?

ANTONIA:

You...you found this. In Seattle?

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Were you there recently?

ANTONIA:

No. I haven't been there in probably a year? But my purse was stolen a few weeks ago in Toppenish. They got all of my credit cards, too. I had to cancel everything.

SALVADOR:

And it's a good thing you *did* cancel them all right away.

ANTONIA:

Yes, I know, *just like you told me to*. He still treats me like I'm little.

SALVADOR:

I do?

ANTONIA AND MARIA TOGETHER:

You do.

SALVADOR:

It's because you're my Tonita.

ANTONIA:

(Soft chuckle) I got a new license right away, so I've been okay without this.

MARIA:

*But...* it was very thoughtful of you to bring it over here so quickly.

ANTONIA:

Oh, yes. Yes, it was. Thank you.

JOSEPH:

Sure. I mean, that sucks that it was stolen. Did you report? If it was stolen here and your license turned up in Seattle, I mean, maybe that's a clue that might help connect something?

ANTONIA:

I did. But the police said there isn't much they can do. Apparently, petty theft like this is the hardest to track down. Whoever did it... they knew what they were doing.

SALVADOR:

Yeah, crime is getting bad. You have to watch everything these days. People take whatever they want.

(Begin background music)

Not so much out here, but we still lock up everything at night.

JOSEPH:

Hmm.

(Sounds of two different smartphone text alerts at same time)

ANTONIA:

Wow, two phones. Somebody's pretty important.

JOSEPH:

Ooph, sorry about that.

(Sound of Joseph getting up from table)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I mute both phones and return to the table. Even though I'm still reeling on the inside from everything...

JOSEPH:

Where were we?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

...the letter, the dreams, almost getting run over, potentially embarrassing my company at the worst possible time—I feel calmer here. I ask where Antonia's three older brothers are, and what they're up to. We *all* take turns asking and answering questions, about family, about our livelihoods, about Maria's cancer, about workers on the farm who've been deported, about pets and farm animals who've come and gone. I learn that the brothers are all living in different towns in the Yakima valley, each overseeing their own business ventures, as well as their own young families. Salvador and Maria have seven grandchildren so far.

I learn that Antonia lives here on the farm and helps manage the finances, but she has her own residence on the other side of the hop fields. I tell them about Kim and Eric, that Eric is getting married this summer. We talk about what Kim does in Santa Monica. We even talk about the drama surrounding the Wapato city government. I tell them that it's made the news all the way over in Seattle.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) See? It goes both ways.

(Sound of everyone laughing)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I learn that besides hops and peaches, the farm now produces nectarines, apricots, and chardonnay grapes. We talk about how they've updated their growing and irrigation techniques, and how three years ago they made room for their latest crop—the Galactic Crunch apple—the new variety that farmers all over Washington are banking on. Salvador says he managed to score five thousand trees in the initial lottery. It doesn't surprise me at all that Flores Farms is an early adopter. The Flores family has always been a leader in this part of the valley.

(End background music)

SALVADOR:

I don't suppose all this farming talk is rekindling your feelings about making a go of it yourself, Joseph.

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs)

SALVADOR:  
Now hold on. You had a knack for fixing things as I recall. And driving tractors, too. That was maybe your favorite part of your two summers here. You picked it up real quick. Your father was very proud of you. And you would have made your grandfather proud, too.

JOSEPH:  
Yeah, I do remember years ago thinking this was a life that I could live. That feels like a long time ago now.

ANTONIA:  
It *was* a long time ago.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
I steal a quick glance at Antonia. She quickly lowers her gaze to her plate.

SALVADOR:  
Your grandfather was many things in one person, just like you. He was a school teacher. A fiddler. A philosopher. A harvester. I never heard *anyone* play the violin like he did. He understood a lot about this kind of life, as did your grandmother...seeing as she grew up here.

You know, when Aimo and my father started this farm together, in 1951, it was something new. But your grandfather and my father—they did it. Together. It wasn't easy, but they made it work. And *we*...we all benefitted it.

MARIA:  
Mmm. Mmm hmm.

JOSEPH:  
Yes sir.

SALVADOR:  
And then Aimo deeded his portion to our family. I think that was his intent all along. He had other ambitions that tied him to the city. But him and Vivian would still visit often, and helped around here for years even as they got older. Your grandparents and my parents, that was some generation.

JOSEPH:  
They were.

SALVADOR:

We would like to say how sorry we are to hear about your parents.

JOSEPH:

Thank you.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I want to talk with them about these things. But it's not easy. I feel myself getting restless. A familiar sadness, emptiness. I've learned to keep these feelings hidden away—to live in spite of them, and remain productive. But it's different here. Here, I'm like a child, exposed and vulnerable. Feelings I am *not* comfortable with.

SALVADOR:

You look so much like your father...and your grandfather too. I remember when your dad stayed here with us when him and I were both teenagers. He was working on that fruit processing plant. Where was that, was that Zillah?

MARIA:

Yes, in Zillah.

Oh Joseph, it's getting late. What are your plans for the night? Will you stay with us?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I should get going actually, it's a long drive back.

(Sounds of everyone getting up from table)

SALVADOR:

Joseph, is this why you came here today? Just to return Antonia's license?

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry, Mr. Flores. What do you mean?

SALVADOR:

It just...it just seems like an awful long way to drive and show up unannounced. Not that you're not welcome here. You are, of course.

JOSEPH:

Right. I...I should have called first. I don't have your cell numbers, but thinking about it now, I guess I could have just looked up the business number easily enough and called that. It's just, when I saw the license...I had this sudden feeling that I needed to be here.



NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I want to tell them more. *SO* much more. I want to tell them about the letter, tell them how I think parts of it might reference them, this place. Tell them that bigger things are going on that I can't explain or piece together, and how deeply unsettled that makes me feel. I want them to know how much being in this house, even for only a few hours, wakes things up in me. That maybe I *do* want to quit everything I know. I want to tell them I might still have feelings for their daughter even though she's standing right here and would hear it too—and I know *nothing* about her life now and probably it's absurd to feel this way after all this time.

I want to tell them how much I miss their presence, that being here among them makes me miss my parents, and that I haven't allowed myself to sink into that feeling at all for fear that doing so would sink *me* and the career I've built and put everything into. A career that depends on me being strong and focused and dependable, not distracted by things like emotions and orchards and strange mysteries from the past.

MARIA:

I can make up the guest room. It would just take a moment.

JOSEPH:

Thank you, Mrs. Flores. I have lots of people waiting on me at work tomorrow, I really should get going.

SALVADOR:

Are you sure?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

It's a strange question to ask. I'm not at all sure. But I feel my body walking toward the door.

SALVADOR:

There's *nothing* else we can do for you...

JOSEPH:

Yes, I'm sure.

ANTONIA:

Thank you for returning my license, Joseph.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I do my best to preserve her voice in my memory. What she sounded like just now.

Maria grabs my hand and squeezes it, and then pulls me close.

(Sound of front door opening and closing, and Joseph walking to his car, getting inside, and putting keys in ignition)

The three of them stand together in the doorway, the porch light lighting up their faces in the darkness.

I glance at both phone screens. The messages are piling up. Yeah. I need to go.

(Sound of starting car engine, and putting car in reverse)

(Sound of footsteps approaching car from the side, then sound of hands pounding on the hood of the car)

JOSEPH:

Woah—

(Begin background music)

SALVADOR:

(Says something, unintelligible)

(Says same thing, but still unintelligible)

(Sound of Joseph opening door and getting out of car, then approaching Salvador while car engine is running)

SALVADOR:

I know why you're here!

JOSEPH:

What? How would you know that?

SALVADOR:

I just do. Now come back inside.

JOSEPH:

But that doesn't make any sense. Tell me, why am I here Mr. Flores?

SALVADOR:

Because your grandfather sent you. He sent you here!

JOSEPH:

How would you know that?!?

SALVADOR:

Because he told me he would!

END CREDITS:

Dirt - An Audio Drama is presented by STUDIO5705 and is written, directed, and produced by me, Kris Kaiyala. This chapter features the voice talents of Jessi Brown as Mel, Hernan Ramirez as the security guard on the phone, Ana Noval as Maria, Jhonattan Fuentes as Salvador, and Megan Morales as Antonia. I play the part of Joseph.

For more information about Dirt - An Audio Drama, please visit [dirtaudiodrama.com](https://www.dirtaudiodrama.com). If you like what you hear, please rate and review us on your favorite podcast app or platform. And please, spread the word. Thank you very much for listening.

© STUDIO5705 LLC

<https://www.dirtaudiodrama.com>