

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA
Chapter 4 Transcript
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****Warning****

This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 4 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 4.

(Sound of Joseph walking to car and getting inside, closing door, and putting key in ignition)

(Sound of plugging cable into personal smart phone)

(Sound of smartphone personal assistant being engaged)

JOSEPH:

Text Mel.

Hi Mel, I'm gonna stay here tonight. (Exhale) I'm pretty wiped out, and driving late at night feels like a bad idea. So, right now my plan is to be back sometime in the morning. I'll text you when I'm on my way. If you need anything and I don't answer my phone, just text. Even if I don't respond right away, I'll get it. Thanks Mel. Talk soon.

(Smartphone sound of text being sent)

(Sound of plugging work smartphone into cable)

(Sound of smartphone personal assistant being engaged)

Text Trudy.

Hey Trudy. Thanks for emailing the spreadsheet. I took a quick look and everything looks great except for column F. Just feels like we might be underestimating our field expenses, especially with the staff-aug placements over the last six months. Jingwei can help out if you need all the records. Otherwise, this is looking really good for Friday. (Sniff) I'll be out of the office again a bit tomorrow, but I'll monitor my inbox. Thanks again Trudy.

Argh, autocorrect.

(Sound of typing on phone screen)

Jingwei, not subway.

(Sound of text being sent)

(Sound of smartphone personal assistant being engaged)

Text DeShawn.

Okay let's go with "Yes" to extending speaker invites to Boris and Lauren. But I think hold off on Jerry Stoll for now. He's headlined a few conferences already this year. Also, I know I usually write my keynotes, but it'd be good to go ahead and get a writer going. I don't want to hold things up. Avery might be good for this, let me know what you think. Thanks DeShawn.

(Sound of text being sent)

(Sound of Joseph imitating sound of text being sent)

(Sound of smartphone personal assistant being engaged)

Text Angela.

(Clears throat) Angela, good to hear we can speed up the timetable for the next round. And yes, if you can reach out to the client for me, I'd appreciate it. And I'm sorry about our blow up, too. Just keep pushing the team to do good work, but make sure they feel supported, okay? This will be a great account if we land it. Looks like I'll be out for a bit tomorrow still, but I'll check in later in the day. Thanks Angela.

(Sound of text being sent)

(Sound of plugging personal smartphone into cable)

(Sound of smartphone personal assistant being engaged)

Call Kim.

(Sound of phone dialing)

KIM:

(Answering phone) Hi!

JOSEPH:

Whoa, you sound chipper for this late at night.

KIM:

Well, the kids are asleep. Kenji too, I think. So this is when mom gets her second wind to do *her* stuff.

JOSEPH:

(Sleepy laugh)

KIM:

Are you at the farm?

JOSEPH:

I am. Everyone's in bed now. (Laughs) I'm calling you from my car out in front of the house, so I don't make a lot of noise. I told them I needed to do some work before going to sleep. It's been quite the day.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I catch her up on the news from here—what's changed, what hasn't. Kim spent a summer living and working on the farm when *she* was young, too. Then I tell her about finding Antonia's license in the crosswalk, after almost getting plastered by a car.

KIM:

Wait, that was *you*??

JOSEPH:

Huh?

KIM:

Do you know there's a viral video going around?

KIM:

(Gasp) You mean I know who the Costumed Jaywalker is, and no else does?

JOSEPH:

Well, Mel knows. So just the two of you, I guess. I *hope*...?

KIM:

(Laughs hard for a while) I'm sorry, (laughs some more) I'm so sorry Joseph. I don't mean to... (laughs some more) I'm just, I just... The part where you put your eyebrow back on... (laughs some more)

JOSEPH:

(Kim still laughing in background) Are you done yet?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

When she *is* done, I tell her that I came here immediately after finding the license, to try to sort some things out. Kim took a photo of the letter when I was visiting her, so she knows its contents pretty well by now. She asks if I think there's any connection to the Flores family and the parts of the letter that talk about "Begin your search where flowers grow," and "What blossoms in the east is bliss."

JOSEPH:

I mean, Flores basically translates to flowers. So, it seems to me that the letter is saying I'm supposed to find something here, something that begins some kind of search? But how I got the license, or maybe *who* made sure I found it...

KIM:

Yeah. Yeah, that's weird Joseph. Seems way too coincidental.

JOSEPH:

Mmm hmm.

KIM:

The "father" who's mentioned in the letter—what does it say? Hold on, I'm pulling it up... Okay. "Familiar yet the father knows/Not what the gift to grant to you/Until you ask where we first sowed..." I'm thinking the father refers to—

KIM AND JOSEPH TOGETHER:

Salvador.

JOSEPH:

Hmmph. I've got a feeling I'll find out for sure in the morning. Salvador dropped a pretty big bomb tonight before they went to bed. (Chuckles) I was in my car about to leave, and then he shouted that he knew that Aimo *sent* me here.

KIM:

Ummm what.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. And I hadn't said *anything* about the letter up to that point. Salvador brought it up

himself. It was almost like he was waiting for *me* to say something first, and when I didn't, *he* did.

KIM:
Woah.

JOSEPH:
And now, I mean, if I'm in the right place, and if this letter *is* real, then I guess Salvador has something for me here. Something...he doesn't know about yet.

KIM:
Hmmm. Who do you think the "we" refers to?

JOSEPH:
My guess is Aimo and Ernesto.

KIM:
Right. Salvador's father. Geez. That is *wild*. (Laughs) And then everyone went to bed? Just like that?

JOSEPH:
(Laughs) I know. Salvador said it was too much to get into and we'd talk about it in the morning.

KIM:
Man, the plot *really* thickens.

JOSEPH:
Is that going to be your catch phrase throughout all of this? "The plot thickens"?

KIM:
(Laughs) It might be. You'll have to stay tuned, I guess.

JOSEPH:
(Yawns) I should get some sleep.

KIM:
Okay. Oh! But wait. Before you do, I wanted to tell you a couple things. First, I re-watched the reels that we looked at together. I wasn't ready to accept the whole (mocking voice) "Saying something cryptic to the camera thing" when you first brought it up, but... I'm on the conspiracy train now.

JOSEPH:
Ha, I figured you would be.

KIM:

(Laughs) Right. So, in those moments right after Aimo finds something with his beeper, I'm almost 100% sure he's saying the same phrase each time, even though he's at different locations.

JOSEPH:

Huh. Any guesses what it is?

KIM:

Not yet. I took some close-up videos of a few of them. I sent you a link. Take a look, maybe you'll have better luck.

JOSEPH:

Nice. Thanks for doing that.

KIM:

Sure. But also...I have a friend down here who works at a start-up. It's kind of a think tank where they work on a bunch of new stuff—AI, things like that. Anyway, one of the things they developed is a lip-reading app.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Yeah, I've heard of that. I saw an article about it. The software is supposed to be something like 90% accurate now.

KIM:

Right! So I *could* send *her* the same videos I sent you. Maybe she can run a test on them. I mean, if you're ok with that. This is kind of your show here...

JOSEPH:

(Taps on steering wheel) Might as well. Maybe just don't give a lot of details?

(Yawns again)

KIM:

(Yawns) Okay, I'll let you get to sleep.

(Sound of train horn in distance)

JOSEPH:

Hey, do you want to hear the crickets?

(Sound of lowering window, train noise and crickets become louder)

KIM:

Ohhhhh. I miss that. Mostly just sirens and helicopters down here.

This is all so *crazy* little brother.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, crazy's a good word for it.

KIM:

Oh but Joe? One more thing.

JOSEPH:

Yeah?

KIM:

Be more careful in crosswalks.

JOSEPH:

Ohhh. Right. I'll try to remember that.

* *

(Sound of small ocean waves and dreamy wind in background)

(Sound of old boat engine)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

This time, the man and the woman speak even *more* of their strange language. I hear him say, "Lopetamme sen jälkeen, kun olemme saaneet kolmekymmentä lohta." His wife nods. Somehow, I know they're talking about the number of fish they hope to catch that day. She serves him a breakfast of rye bread with butter and jam. When they're done eating, he turns to work on the engine. Then he lights his pipe, and he stares ahead at the sea and blows blue smoke into salty air.

This time, I see it first. The small canoe is behind us now, bobbing on tiny waves. The woman hasn't noticed it yet. It's close enough to the stern of the trawler that I can see something inside of it, but I can't make out what it is.

I cry out to the man and his wife in words that sound like their language, but they don't hear me. I call out once more, to turn the boat around. But my words are muffled and foreign. I call out again. And *again*. But the man and the woman stare out at the sea in the opposite direction. When I turn back to look at the canoe....

It's gone.

(Sound of faint pulsing noise getting louder, then sound of wake-up alarm)

(Sound of Joseph suddenly waking up, then getting out of bed)

* *

(Sound of Joseph walking up to breakfast table)

MARIA:

Buenos dias, Joey.

JOSEPH:

Hi, good morning.

MARIA:

Did you sleep ok?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I wish I could say yes. I stayed up late thinking about everything and viewing as much Costumed Jaywalker footage as I could find. I'm not sure I slept more than a couple of hours.

Maria has scrambled eggs and bacon on my plate, and coffee in my cup, before I can even think about refusing. She tells me that Salvador is outside working, but he wants to know when I'm awake. It's only 7:30, but I know the day gets going much, much earlier than that around here.

(Sounds of eating breakfast at table)

MARIA:

I'm so glad you stayed overnight.

JOSEPH:

Mmm. Mmm hmm.

MARIA:

The thought of you driving so far in the dark like that. I don't like it.

JOSEPH:

It's not a bad drive. Plus, it's almost all freeway, lots of street lights.

MARIA:

Well, all the same, we have you a little longer.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Yeah.

MARIA:

I just texted Salvador. He should be here in a few minutes.

JOSEPH:

Thank you, Mrs. Flores. It's nice to have breakfast here again. It's delicious, like always.

MARIA:

Ahhh.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

MARIA:

You know, seeing you at the door last night when you got here, it was such a surprise. But in some ways, it wasn't a surprise at all. I always figured someday...someday you would come see us. Salvador feels that way too. Although I know it's not really your kind of life here. It's a long way from all the stuff you do.

JOSEPH:

This place will always mean a lot to me, Mrs. Flores.

MARIA:

Oh Joey, I'm glad you think so.

We saw you on TV a few months ago.

JOSEPH:

Oh yeah?

MARIA:

We were just clicking through all the channels and you were on some news show, I forget what it was. But there you were talking about your company.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I have to do that more often these days.

MARIA:

Seeing you on TV, you were so far from the world that we knew you in. But we were so proud of you. We *are* so proud of you. I mean look at you! You're doing so well!

JOSEPH:

You know, I learned a lot of things here. *Right* here. Like what it means to work hard and care about others. You and Mr. Flores taught me a lot about those things. No matter what happens, I've never forgotten what I learned here.

(Sound of smartphone text alert)

(Sound of Maria getting up from table and walking over to her phone)

MARIA:

(From distance) Okay, Salvador says for both of us to come to the blue barn when you're done eating. He says...Antonia is with him. I think he has something he wants to show you. But you don't have to hurry. Do you want some more?

JOSEPH:

No, this is plenty, thank you.

(Sound of Maria walking back to table)

JOSEPH:

So...does Antonia live alone here, on the farm? Has she always?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I try not to sound *too* curious when I ask. Like asking how many farm hands work year-round, or when they last paved Kays Road.

MARIA:

No, not always. Yes, she lives alone now, in her own house a short walk from here. She's with us most nights for dinner. And she is very involved with everything here on the farm. We couldn't do it without her.

But...she *was* married, you know. For a short time.

JOSEPH:

Oh. No, I didn't know.

MARIA:

Her husband didn't come back from Afghanistan. He wasn't even in combat. He was on his way to another station and his helicopter crashed. It was...very sad.

JOSEPH:

So they didn't have children?

MARIA:

Well they were going to start a family after his deployment. It has been very hard for her. But she has a lot of life to live still. For now, her home is here on the farm. It seems to be what she wants.

JOSEPH:

I see.

* *

(Sound of walking on grass outside, with farm noises in background)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Maria and I walk behind the farmhouse and down a trail that goes past the chicken coop I used to clean and collect eggs from. The air is cold, being so early in the day still, and there's hardly a cloud in the sky. A few farm workers are running equipment somewhere far away, probably making preparations for winter. A month or two ago the farm would have been a cacophony of harvesting activity. Maria says starting next year it'll be busy all the way through October, due to the Galactic Crunches.

After a few minutes we arrive at the blue barn. It looks the same as I remember: basically, a storage shed for tools and equipment. Salvador and Antonia are standing outside the barn talking.

SALVADOR:

Ah, there's our urban guest. *Y buenas dias a ti, corazon.*

MARIA:

Hola mi vida.

JOSEPH:

Good morning Mr. Flores. Hello Antonia.

ANTONIA:

Good morning Joseph. Hello mama.

SALVADOR:

I know you need to get going soon. And I know we have some unfinished conversation. But first, there is something I want to show you.

(Sound of walking on grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Instead of entering the nearby open doors, Salvador walks us around the back to where a newer addition was added. It looks more like a garage, with steel siding and roofing.

(Sound of metal garage door being opened)

When we're all looking, he pulls up the metal door and says...

SALVADOR:

Nice, ah?

MARIA:

Oh. The blue thing is still on.

SALVADOR:

Ugh. I asked Jorge to take that off. One moment please.

(Sound of tarp being removed)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I steal a quick glance at Antonia. She's wearing a long down coat with black rubber boots. Her thick black hair is tied up in a bun with a few strands falling down across her forehead.

SALVADOR:

(From inside of garage) Okay, *now* look!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

When I look back at the garage...

JOSEPH:

Woah!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

...I can hardly believe my eyes.

SALVADOR:

You like it?

MARIA:

It looks so nice!

SALVADOR:

It's a 1948 International Harvester Farmall, Model A.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) That's amazing!

SALVADOR:

I know, isn't it?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

As he walks back toward us, Salvador's demeanor changes, like he has some serious news to share.

SALVADOR:

(Clears throat) Joseph, you are all grown up now. I mean, pretty soon you'll be middle aged.

MARIA:

(Laughs) Salvador...

ANTONIA:

(Laughs)

SALVADOR:

You too, Antonia.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

ANTONIA:

Gracias por esto, papa.

SALVADOR:

But you, Maria, you are *ageless*.

ANTONIA:

(Laughs)

SALVADOR:

The point is, Joseph, you're about the age that Aimo and Ernesto were when *they* founded the farm. And this...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

He proudly points at the tractor with some flair.

SALVADOR:

...this is the very first tractor they used here.

JOSEPH:

Woah.

MARIA:

So it's finally all done?

SALVADOR:

It is. Fully restored with, well, *mostly* all original parts. And some cheating in places, but I'm not saying where.

JOSEPH:

Can we take a closer look?

(Sound of group stepping into garage)

It's...incredible.

(Sound of knocking knuckles on tractor)

How long did it take to restore and repaint it?

SALVADOR:

Well, Antonia here sourced all the parts and hired the mechanics—

ANTONIA:

Three years, three months, and about seven days.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I send her a quick "I'm impressed" glance.

JOSEPH:

Where was this hiding years ago, when I was here?

SALVADOR:

In fact, it *was* hiding. We found it on its side up the hill from here, just across the property line. We figure somebody must have left it there when it wasn't needed anymore. It was half buried in a wash. Its final resting place, I guess.

MARIA:

We compared its serial number to farm records, so we know it's the one.

JOSEPH:
Huh.

SALVADOR:
I just knew we had to bring it back to life. Not only because people love old tractors...

MARIA:
He means *he* loves old tractors...

SALVADOR:
But because of what it *represents*. And I guess what this *farm* represents.

The chamber people said they may want to put it on display in their building, with a plaque on it. But I don't know...

ANTONIA:
He wants to keep it.

MARIA:
We don't have much use for it, he just likes looking at it.

SALVADOR:
I do?

ANTONIA AND MARIA TOGETHER:
You do.

JOSEPH:
Does it run?

SALVADOR:
Tonita?

(Sound of Antonia climbing up onto tractor seat and starting engine)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
It sounds just like an old tractor should, even when restored. When I realize I've been staring at Antonia with my mouth open for too long, I quickly turn away.

Salvador and Maria are watching her too. I pretend to look around the rest of the garage. It's full of tools, metal parts, hoses, rags, cardboard boxes. A truly used work space. But something catches my eye, near the back wall. Something I've seen before. I blink twice to make sure it's what I think it is.

(Sound of Joseph walking toward the back wall of garage, engine sound getting quieter as he moves away)

(Sound of Joseph stopping at back wall)

JOSEPH:

Hmm.

(Sound of tractor engine being turned off)

(Sound of footsteps approaching)

MARIA:

Joey, what is it?

(Begin background music)

(Sound of more footsteps approaching)

SALVADOR:

Is there something here for you, Joseph?

JOSEPH:

Salvador. I mean, Mr. Flores. I have a question for you.

SALVADOR:

Okay Joseph. I've been waiting for it.

JOSEPH:

I know what this is. Does anybody use it?

SALVADOR:

Is that your question?

JOSEPH:

Sorry, I mean, does it belong to anybody?

SALVADOR:

Not that I know of. It's been laying around the farm for years. As you can tell, we don't toss much out here. So no, as far as I know, it doesn't belong to anybody.

JOSEPH:

Mr. Flores...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I turn to Salvador and he seems to be waiting eagerly. In fact, all three of them are, as if my entire visit is coming down to this moment.

JOSEPH:

Mr. Flores, would you show me where Aimo and Ernesto planted their very first tree?

SALVADOR:

Yes. I know right where it is. Do you want to go there now?

JOSEPH:

I do.

One more thing. Do you mind if I bring this with us?

SALVADOR:

Not at all.

(Sound of holding and handling an object)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

My hand shakes as I reach out and touch, for the first time in my life, something I've only ever seen in Aimo and Vivian's home movies.

A thing that may have belonged to Aimo himself.

A thing that might be inextricably tied to the mystery I'm trying to solve.

A White's Electronics Coinmaster 4 Metal Detector.

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 Genie Leslie as Kim, Ana Noval as Maria, Jhonattan Fuentes as Salvador, and Megan Morales as Antonia. I play the part of Joseph.

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