

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA
Chapter 9 Transcript
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****Warning****

This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 9 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 in truck while driving)

JOSEPH:

(Panicking, breathing) Antonia, we need to get back to my car right away. There's something in there I need.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

If the drone that Antonia shot out of the sky really was spying on me, or us, and if it's from the same person or people who flew the drone above me on Westlake Avenue in Belltown, then whoever is behind it surely knows how and when we got to the cemetery, as well as where we were before that, and where my car is parked...

I get a terrible feeling that my car has been broken into. And if it has, the Coinmaster was in there...

ANTONIA:

What makes you think you're being spied on?

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) It's...it's a long story.

ANTONIA:

Look, I caught a quick glance at the drone. I wouldn't say it's the kind of drone people use for a hobby—or for spying. It's pretty similar to the ones we use on our farm. So I guess just... It, I mean, it might not be what you think it is.

JOSEPH:

Well what was it doing out here then?

ANTONIA:

Look. Joseph, look. Right over there, and over there...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Antonia points to the numerous orchards and vineyards and farms below us, surrounding the park, and lining the river shore.

ANTONIA:

(Exhales) I probably shouldn't have been so hasty.

(Sound of truck turn signal and driving into parking lot)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

We drive back into the park. A moment later we pull up next to my car, which looks very much NOT broken into.

(Sound of truck turning off and key being removed)

JOSEPH:

(Groan) I think I'm going crazy.

(Sounds of Joseph and Antonia getting out of truck, truck doors closing, footsteps on pavement, opening Joseph's car door)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I get the Coinmaster out of my car and clutch it close.

(Sound of Joseph turning on detector and looking it over)

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Okay.

ANTONIA:

You okay?

JOSEPH:

Ugh, for a second there I thought I lost it.

ANTONIA:

You've grown quite attached to that thing.

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) Yeah.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Now that I have the Coinmaster, I feel calmer, much more myself again.

(Sound of closing car door)

JOSEPH:

(Pause) Yeah. I'm okay.

How about we try over there.

ANTONIA:

Okay.

(Sounds of walking on grass)

(Sound of train in distance)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

We head towards the closest picnic shelter. With this being a Thursday in late October, the park is pretty much empty. Except for a park ranger, who spots us from afar and starts to head our way.

ANTONIA:

What does the story say about this place? The one that made you come here...

JOSEPH:

Unfortunately, not a whole lot.

ANTONIA:

Knowing Aimo, it must say *something*...

(Sound of footsteps approaching, everyone stopping together)

PARK RANGER:

Hey folks!

JOSEPH

Hey.

PARK RANGER:

It's nice to see other humans. Pretty slow day here.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Must get pretty busy on weekends...

PARK RANGER:
Yeah, it usually does.

Oh, hey now. Now that's quite the old relic you got there.

ANTONIA:
He's not *that* old yet. What are you, 38?

PARK RANGER
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:
Good one.

PARK RANGER:
So unfortunately, metal detecting isn't allowed at Maryhill State Park.

JOSEPH:
Oh. Really? Why is that?

PARK RANGER:
You know... I don't know all the reasons. I just know they never have.

JOSEPH:
Never have?

PARK RANGER:
That's right. Never.

JOSEPH:
Huh. Well, I guess that's good to know. Appreciate you telling us.

PARK RANGER:
Sure thing. But...there's still lots of other stuff to do. I mean, if you like to fish or whatever—though you'll still need a license to fish of course. We can get you one over at the entrance station.

JOSEPH:
No, no. Thanks though.

Well, I guess we'll go put this back in the car.

PARK RANGER:

Oh hey...

JOSEPH:

Yeah?

PARK RANGER:

You guys got your costumes picked out yet?

ANTONIA:

(Laughs)

PARK RANGER:

I'm going as that jaywalker guy, from up in Seattle. (Laughs) Can you believe that guy?

ANTONIA:

Oh! My mom was telling me about him. Didn't he stop traffic for like an hour?

JOSEPH:

I don't think it was that long...

PARK RANGER:

Well, you folks enjoy the rest of your day!

ANTONIA:

Thank you.

(Sound of ranger walking away)

JOSEPH:

Everybody wants to be costumed jaywalker this year...

ANTONIA:

Well, that changes things.

JOSEPH:

(Sighs) Yeah. I mean, maybe we just hang out and then do some searching after it gets dark?

You know, we could always pay for one of the campsites here, then wait until the sun goes down...

ANTONIA:

I don't think it's here, Joseph. If they *never* allowed metal detecting... I feel like Aimo wouldn't be sending you here.

JOSEPH:

Wouldn't be sending me... Now who's making it sound like he's still alive?

ANTONIA:

Do you have the story with you?

JOSEPH:

I do. It's in the car.

ANTONIA:

We could look at it together if you want. I mean, if that's ok with you...

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Yeah, let's do that. But there are a few work things I should do first. Just sending some texts to a few people. Okay if I do that real quick?

ANTONIA:

Yeah. But let's look at it over lunch. I'm starving.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

ANTONIA:

There's a diner over at Biggs. I'll buy.

JOSEPH:

Woah, big spender.

ANTONIA:

Hey, this is a business trip, remember? It's a write off.

(Sound of starting to walk again)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Whatever you say.

(Fade out all sounds)

[End scene]

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

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I send a few messages from my work phone from the parking lot, including some instructions to Angela. Then we both drive both vehicles across the bridge to Biggs. I check my mirrors and occasionally scan the sky for any trace of being followed or spied on. I notice Antonia doing the same. And not just while driving...

(Sounds of parking car and getting out and walking into diner; sounds of trucks on Interstate below)

...but in the diner parking lot, and even in the restaurant. (Sound of opening door and walking into diner) The way she does it is subtle, like she knows what she's doing.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, this'll work...

(Sound of walking through parking lot)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Of all the information Mel shared—including that the Seattle police are now involved—I'm most preoccupied by the news that a board member from Kim's company is somehow connected...

(Sound of opening diner door)

GREETER:

Two of you?

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

...to the piece of property right next to Flores Farms.

GREETER:

Right this way.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I don't know if Kim herself has any connection, but I can't help but wonder about it.

(Sound of sitting in booth)

(Sound of diner sounds in background)

It's the same bad feeling I had when I asked for a background check on Salvador.

I'm also keenly aware that I'm now sharing lunch with the Flores Farms business manager. If a possible purchase of the land is being worked out with a person who sits on the board of my sister's company, she would know. But of course, Antonia doesn't know that I know about any of it—or how I got my information.

ANTONIA:

Oh a salad bar! That's what I'm doing.

JOSEPH:

Nice, same.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

After a couple days of fast food, even iceberg lettuce feels healthy.

We get back to the table, and as soon as we've finished our salads...

ANTONIA:

So, let's go over it.

JOSEPH:

You're really into this.

ANTONIA:

Well, if I were home right now, I'd just be ordering new water pumps.

JOSEPH:

Sounds kind of exciting.

No?

ANTONIA:

(Laughs)

JOSEPH:

Okay, how about if I read it to you. It'll be more dramatic that way.

(Sound of drinking water, setting down glass)

(Sound of Joseph clearing throat)

The Places I've Been, by Aimo Elo.

ANTONIA:

Okay wait. So, he would have written this, when? Back in the eighties?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I mean probably? I don't know for sure what year. But before 1990, obviously.

ANTONIA:

Okay sorry, go ahead.

JOSEPH:

(Clears throat again)

The Places I've Been, by Aimo Elo.

(Continued sounds of diner interior, door opening and closing)

Many people with greater means than I have traveled the world to see its exotic places and wonders. I'm thinking of places like the pyramids of Egypt, the Taj Mahal in India, and Mt. Fuji in Japan.

I too have done some traveling in my brief time on this Earth, but on a much smaller, yet pleasing-to-me, scale. To me, the part of the world where I was raised, and have lived and worked in ever since, with Vivian as my constant partner, is the grandest that there is.

Washington may not be as famous in history books as the places I mention above, but I would not trade my time spent here for anything.

(Sound of Joseph clearing throat)

One day I got to thinking about the places I've been that have the most meaning to me. I started to write them down but quickly stopped since there were simply too many to choose from.

But now, years later, I've taken up the task again. This time really focusing on the spots I most *treasure* (chuckle), and why. Places where the ground *speaks to me*. Places where I have gained much, and also *left* much.

Finally, I was able to narrow my list to these six:

Pel Ell, where my teaching career was first sparked.

Now, see that's funny, because he uses the work sparked, and there was a fire that he put out at the school one day. Apparently, it was a big deal and he got some awards for it.

ANTONIA:

Oh.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Anyway...

Pel Ell, where my teaching career was first sparked.

Maryhill, a scenic place of rest beneath the stones.

So there's...a little more after that, but that's what it says about Maryhill.

ANTONIA:

Wait, can you say it one more time?

JOSEPH:

Sure. The whole thing, or...?

ANOTNIA:

No, just the last part, about Maryhill.

JOSEPH:

Maryhill, a scenic place of rest beneath the stones.

ANTONIA:

Joseph, that's easy.

JOSEPH:

What's easy?

ANTONIA:

Place of rest? Beneath the stones?

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Maryhill is scenic...

ANTONIA:

You know what's up the hill, above Maryhill right?

JOSEPH:

(Thinking)

Wait! Stonehenge is up there!

I forgot all about that place.

And then there's the headstones!

ANTONIA:

Joseph, we were at the right spot this morning.

JOSEPH:

Holy crap!

ANTONIA:

Good thing you have me here.

SERVER:

Anything else for you two?

ANTONIA:

No. I think we're good.

SERVER:

Okay then. Here's the check when you're ready.

JOSEPH:

(Totally distracted)

SERVER:

Is... is he ok?

ANTONIA:

Yeah, he'll be fine. Thanks, we're all set.

(Sound of Antonia only getting up out of booth)

(Sound of Antonia stopping)

You coming?

(Sound of Joseph and Antonia leaving booth)

(Fade out diner sounds)

[End scene]

(Fade in sounds of being inside car while driving)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I follow Antonia back over the river and back up the hill above the park. Now that I remember Stonehenge, I look for it on the horizon as we get closer. It really is Stonehenge, by the way—well, technically, it's a concrete *replica* of Stonehenge—built on a windswept plain overlooking the gorge. And yes, it's about as random as it sounds. It was built in the early 20th century by an eccentric wealthy local, as a memorial to Klickitat County's WWI veterans.

(Sound of parking car and getting out, gusty winds)

It's early afternoon, and the wind is blowing stronger now. Even from up here I can see whitecapped waves starting to form on the river. I also notice the damaged drone is still where it landed.

(Sound of getting detector out of the car, closing car door)

(Sound of walking into cemetery)

JOSEPH:

Carrying a metal detector and shovel into a graveyard. Nothing creepy about that...

(Sound of opening gate, walking through and closing gate)

(Sound of more walking in cemetery then stopping)

ANTONIA:

They were both born in Mexico. They made quite a life for themselves here.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, they sure did. Maybe we should have brought some flowers.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Just like down at the park, we seem to be alone.

(Sound of turning on detector)

I start searching while Antonia walks over to inspect the drone.

(Sounds of wind gusts)

ANTONIA:

(From a distance) Joseph...

(Sound of Joseph walking over)

JOPSEPH:

Yeah?

Woah.

(Sound of setting down metal detector)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Right next to the broken drone is a rectangular stone marker lying flat and flush with the ground. Etched into the stone is a name in all capital letters. It's *my* name.

(JOSEPH)

(Exhales) Well, this is either a bad omen, or we found the right place...?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There's a lot of open space around the marker, so rather than randomly dig holes I start to wave the disc over the ground on the side closest to us.

JOSEPH:

Hmph.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

After a minute or so, I move to the other side, and suddenly—

(Sound of detector buzzing noise getting loud)

(Sound of switching detector off, setting down detector)

(Sound of opening duffle bag, then digging)

(Sound of shovel hitting something hard, then sound of dropping shovel)

(Sound of breathing hard, pulling something out of the ground)

(Sound of wiping and blowing dirt off)

ANTONIA:

It looks the same as the one on the farm.

JOSEPH:

And the one in Pe Ell.

ANTONIA:

You don't have to open it while I'm here if you don't want to.

JOSEPH:

No. No, I—I don't mind.

(Sound of clasp being moved, sound of plastic rustling)

(Sound of sudden strong wind gust)

(Sound of plastic bag whipping in wind then getting blown away)

JOSEPH:

Oh crap—

ANTONIA:

(From distance, sound of grabbing plastic bag) *Got it!*

(Sound of Antonia walking back over)

Here you go.

(Sound of handling plastic)

JOSEPH:

Woah. Good catch. Man, the wind doesn't fool around up here.

I think I'll open the bag in the car, where it can't blow away—

(Sound of car door slamming shut in distance, then vehicle driving away quickly)

Um, who was that?

(Sound of car engine fading away)

You don't know anybody who drives an old...what was that, a Datsun?

ANTONIA:

(Pause) (Worried) No.

(Sound of Joseph's phone ringing)

(Sound of Joseph getting phone out of pocket and looking at phone)

JOSEPH:

(To self) Carl...?

ANTONIA:
Who's Carl?

JOSEPH:
(Exhales) He's just somebody I met last night. In Pe Ell.

ANTONIA:
Okay, I say let's get out of here.

(Sound of starting to walk)

JOSEPH:
Oh, wait. Hang on a sec.

(Sound of walking back to hole, filling in dirt with shovel)

JOSEPH:
That's for you, Bernie.

(Exhales) Okay. Hey, maybe we should we take the drone too.

(Sound of walking over to drone, then handling drone)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
On the underside of the drone is a white sticker, with a bar code.

JOSPEPH:
Hmph.

ANTONIA:
We have those on ours, too. It's probably there for inventory tracking.

NARRATOR:
When I look a little closer, I see a few small words printed under the bar code. It's tough to make them out in the bright sunlight, so use my hand to block the light from hitting the sticker. When I do, I can read the words clearly.

They read: Manufactured by Hartson Rotors Incorporated.

(Fade out all background sounds)

An R. A. Hastings Company.

[End scene]

(Fade in sound of being inside car while driving)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I follow Antonia north on Highway 97 toward Toppenish, winding among the forested buttes and sagebrush-filled valleys of the Yakama Indian Reservation. The landscape looks just as it did in my dream with Aimo and Walter. When the road starts to travel alongside Satus Creek, I look over and imagine the three of us somewhere in the distance, looking for our places to fish.

I listen to the voicemail Carl left. I can hear the sounds of dishes and pans clanking in the background. In it, he apologizes for pulling me over, and says he won't try anything like that again. He just couldn't help himself, he says, after what he saw at the VFW. But says I shouldn't feel threatened by him.

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Dude, too late for that...

NARRATOR:

Instead, he reiterates that he wants to help me out. He says whatever I stuff have going on is safe with him. He also says he has some extra tickets to the coin show in Tacoma if I'm interested in joining him. It starts tonight but goes all weekend. He finishes the message with "Your buddy, Carl."

I consider blocking his number, but I don't.

(Sound of turn signal, then turning on to dirt road)

It's late in the afternoon when we arrive in Wapato. We decide to regroup at Antonia's house. We access her place from the farm's main entrance, but just beyond the security gate we turn onto a spur that skirts the edge of several acres of hops. The spaces between the rows are carefully manicured, and as I drive past them, I look over, and they seem to go on, up the gentle slope, forever.

(Sound of parking car, turning off engine, getting out of car)

(Sound of Joseph and Antonia walking on gravel, then stopping)

ANTONIA:

(Laughs) It's ok, we can go inside.

JOSEPH:

(Nervous laugh)

Do—do you *want* to go inside?

JOSEPH:

Sure. I just didn't want to assume...

ANTONIA:

Well, I have another gun in the house, so if you try anything...

JOSEPH:

(Laughs)

(Sound of Joseph and Antonia walking up to the house, opening door, going inside)

ANTONIA:

Help yourself to something if you're thirsty.

JOSEPH:

Thanks.

(Sound of Joseph walking to kitchen)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Antonia's house is smaller than Salvador and Maria's house, but it's also newer—and more modern. The main floor is mostly a big open space of kitchen and living room, with doors that lead to other rooms or closets or bathrooms. In the middle of the main floor is a metal staircase that leads upstairs.

(Sound of filling up glass with water)

Several photos are attached to the refrigerator with magnets.

(Sound of setting down glass on counter)

There's a photo of Antonia with a taller man dressed in fatigues. Other photos have small children in them. I also see photo of Antonia with another woman, standing on the edge of a road with a sweeping view behind them. They're both smiling, as if on vacation.

(Sound of footsteps of Antonia coming closer)

ANTONIA:

So how did that feel? Seeing your name on a gravestone...

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles) Yeah, yeah that was weird.

(Sound of Joseph swallowing water)

Is this your husband, in the photo?

ANTONIA:

Yeah, that's Mark. Everyone called him Coop because of his last name, Cooper.

JOSEPH:

How long ago was it?

ANTONIA:

You mean the photo, or since he's been gone?

JOSEPH:

I guess, the second part.

ANTONIA:

Almost six years.

JOSEPH:

I'm sorry. How long were you together?

ANTONIA:

We met after I graduated from Columbia Basin College. I came back here to live and work, and he was stationed over at the Army firing range. He worked at the research station there.

JOSEPH:

Oh, I didn't know they did that there too.

ANTONIA:

Yeah.

JOSEPH:

What kind of research did he do?

ANTONIA:

It's actually part of a big surveillance network. They intercept signals from satellites to figure out if there are threats, that kind of stuff.

JOSEPH:

Wow.

ANTONIA:

Yeah. It's what he was trained in. And he was really good at it.

JOSEPH:

Did he grow up around here?

ANTONIA:

He was from back east, in Virginia. But he loved it here.

JOSEPH:

Your mom said it was an accident? Over in Afghanistan?

ANTONIA:

So they say. I mean, it probably was. It's can be hard to know if you're getting the full story.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

ANTONIA:

How about you. Your parents have been gone for about ten years now, right?

JOSEPH:

Yeah, about that long.

So these must be your nieces and nephews...

ANTONIA:

They are. From all three of my brothers. That's... Isabel, Tomas, Mariana...she's named after my mother...Sofia, Emilio, and Bruno. There's one more than was just born, Hugo, but I don't have a picture yet.

(Sound of phone receiving text)

(Sound of Antonia walking several steps to her phone)

(From distance) It's my mom, she saw us drive in. She wants to know if we'll join them for dinner.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Your mom and food. What a fantastic relationship that is.

ANTONIA:

(From distance, laughs)

JOSEPH:

Oh I'd love to, but this time I *really* have to get back home. I mean, I did the other night too, when I tried to leave...

ANTONIA:
Mmm hmmm.

JOSEPH:
(Laughs) For real, though. We have a huge meeting at the office tomorrow. One that could make or break the entire future of the company. I've been pretty absent this week so I need to get back to help out.

ANTONIA:
I'm sure you have a lot on your mind.

JOSEPH:
Yeah, you could say that.

ANTONIA:
So, did the box from the cemetery have what you wanted in it?

JOSEPH:
It did. It's not so much what I *want*, I guess. It's more just what's in there—and I guess how it all fits together...which, I don't at all understand yet, by the way. The note from today's box was just like the one from last night. It basically said "Congratulations, you found another one."

ANTONIA:
That was it?

JOSEPH:
Well there was a dime in it too, [from 1916](#). (Chuckles) Last night it was an old nickel... and apparently a valuable one. Today's note also had a large capital letter H written on it.

ANTONIA:
H. Sounds so mysterious. I think Aimo's just having fun with you.

JOSEPH:
Fun... I suppose so.

ANTONIA:
So what's next then?

JOSEPH:
Actually, I have a question about *this* photo... Were you on vacation somewhere?

ANTONIA:
(Exhales) *That*. Yeah. That's me and my friend, Jelly.

JOSEPH:

Jelly?

ANTONIA:

That's what my friends and I have called her forever. Her name's actually Becky. Her parents were really strict and she wasn't allowed to have a lot of stuff growing up. So she always acted jealous of what the rest of us had. Which, by the way, wasn't a lot either...

JOSEPH:

Huh.

ANTONIA:

The funny thing is, she totally embraced it. She pretty much insisted we all call her Jelly. So it stuck, I guess. We're still acquainted, but she's a pretty big klepto now. She steals things all the time, and has been in and out of jail for years. Knowing that makes me feel even worse that we teased her all those years ago. So, I kind of look out for her these days.

JOSEPH:

Those red headphones she's wearing in the photo... they look pretty new. Was this recent?

ANTONIA:

Ah, it was a couple years ago. A group of us friends took a trip to Vegas together. That was down at Red Rock Canyon, I believe. The headphones were actually mine, but she borrowed them so much, I just gave them to her.

JOSEPH:

Something tells me you're planning to pay her a visit this week...

ANTONIA:

She really liked my purse too.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. What kind of friend steals her friend's purse?

ANTONIA:

Well, since you're here, you can find out along with me...if you want.

JOSEPH:

Yeah. I think I'd like that.

(Sound of footsteps on floor, grabbing of keys)

ANTONIA:
I'll drive.

(Sound of walking toward door)

(Fade out all sounds)

[End chapter]

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