

THE DOCTOR IS DEAD

by é boylan

Episode Two--Transcript

INTRO

NARRATOR

Now.

a chord

Welcome, listener. Welcome to now. Now, you have chosen to hear *The Doctor is Dead*, a contemporary fantasy for queer imaginations.

a chord

Wherever “now” takes you, I invite you to stay, make yourself comfortable, and listen.

Chime begins

What you are about to hear is a story of entirely unfamiliar people who abandoned the familiar long ago. The story you are about to hear does not begin on the surface of our world, but far below, within the roots of our belonging. Here, the world is very much different, and yet painfully the same. But here, some extraordinary individuals have begun to Recall and Reveal a new beginning. It sounds like this.

Episode 2: fog.

II. fog

*the same room, moments later
a tape recorder activates*

SWALLOW

Day One, initial observations. The Time is 11:15 AM. Swallow and Nightingale on record.
I trust arrival was successful.

NIGHTINGALE

Successful, yes. I.

I already.

Actually, I already started the record—I was just beginning to/sort through the

SWALLOW

Confirmed inventory?

NIGHTINGALE

Oh—the itemized inventory is is missing, but the containers seem to be intact. I was planning

SWALLOW

Mark: Inventory missing. Mark: assignment addendum—please include written inventory along with
your narrative record.

NIGHTINGALE

Yes, of course. I can write or type that up. Later.

I also, uh, made note of the containers themselves, and.

SWALLOW

All right.

NIGHTINGALE

Well,
the fourth container is
unusual.

SWALLOW

Function?

NIGHTINGALE

I'm sorry?

SWALLOW

Functional descriptions, please.

NIGHTINGALE

I meant
I mean that it is, the container, the coffin

SWALLOW

Oh, that's a mistake.

NIGHTINGALE

What is?

SWALLOW

The coffin should be classified as inventory. It's not a container, it's a coffin.

NIGHTINGALE

Right.

SWALLOW

Retrievers find Things, not bodies. You wouldn't be assigned to identify a body.

NIGHTINGALE

Right!
Well, well that, uh, well—explains it!
I mean, the fact that I can hear the coffin's memory, I can hear the imprint of vibrations in the wood, the sounds

SWALLOW

Elaborate.

NIGHTINGALE

Well, I haven't had time to, or at least comprehensively, or
I, I guess I would describe the memory as loud?

SWALLOW

Elaborate.

NIGHTINGALE

I...mean to say...the memory was a complex sound. "Loud" as in: many things, all at once. The sounds of an event, the folding of paper, people pressing against one another, a voice said something as if addressing a crowd...maybe it was a congregation?

SWALLOW

Mark: narrative undetermined.

NIGHTINGALE

Sometimes, when sorting through the inventory, the Old Things, I can only hear an echo, or the echo of an echo. But this was

SWALLOW

What was the duration of contact?

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, uh
sorry for being unclear
When you arrived, I had only just begun to

SWALLOW

Did you not record the duration of contact?

NIGHTINGALE

No, I.
It's not that that I didn't record the uh, uh, no, but I just
I haven't made physical contact.

SWALLOW

How/did you—?

NIGHTINGALE

I haven't touched the- Sorry.

SWALLOW

Mark: Old Thing is generating independent noise. Nightingale can hear noise without contact.

NIGHTINGALE

Yes. Well, I can only hear bits and pieces.

SWALLOW

Would you demonstrate?

NIGHTINGALE

I'm...I'm still hearing it now.
I am demonstrating.

SWALLOW

In a dark room.

NIGHTINGALE

You'd like to—?

SWALLOW

I'm here to record my observations as well as yours.

NIGHTINGALE

Right, let me just.

Find the, uh

switches on fluorescent fixtures overhead

SWALLOW

Ah. Let there be light!

NIGHTINGALE

Sorry for my, I just have to wear this hood under the fluorescents- it's

SWALLOW

Mark: a large wooden coffin, sealed. Old Thing appears mundane, no phenomena presenting to the naked eye. I suspect the Retrievers might have listed a coffin in the original inventory but it was removed/as an oversight

NIGHTINGALE

Maybe the Retrievers knew who was meant to be buried inside. And they.

SWALLOW

No.

NIGHTINGALE

I mean-I mean maybe one of them remembered family from the Surface. They could have been--

SWALLOW

No. Retrievers are often careless. This was just a common oversight.

NIGHTINGALE

I mean, not that I know how Old these things are, or if they came from the Surface, or, I mean—
you're probably right.

SWALLOW

I'm glad you agree.

NIGHTINGALE

Do you- do you have everything you...?
Do you need something else from me?

SWALLOW

I'd like to stay and witness first contact.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, I. You don't need to stay. I promise, uh
to make a very detailed record.

SWALLOW

I apologize for my lack of clarity. I was not expressing a preference.

NIGHTINGALE

Yes.

SWALLOW

Proceed, Nightingale.

NIGHTINGALE

Yes. Of course. Can we
searching for the words
It's just that I don't know how to work under these lights

SWALLOW

I don't care about your appearance. I'm here for the record.

NIGHTINGALE

Sure, but

SWALLOW

The record doesn't look at you. It listens. Your voice is the record.

NIGHTINGALE

Right. Right.
Of course. I will
I will try to recover the narrative.

Mark: first contact with Old Thing. It is, it can be described as a wooden coffin. Drawing close again, I still hear an echo of what I heard before. The sound is, well, it is very low frequency.

I prepare to make contact. My gloves, are, removed, and...my fingers an inch from touching the surface, the lid of this coffin. Its wood appears to be smooth, an elegant if also modest finish. As my fingers lower, the frequency of sound rises. The the the air is thick with noise. And I.

SWALLOW

Functional descriptions, please.

NIGHTINGALE

When I make contact, my voice will record the imprint. What I hear in the Old Thing's memory speaks through me. Not my voice, only a record. Mark: the frequency of this memory changes the closer my fingers, um.

the lights flicker

I will

I make contact.

a horrible, low scraping noise crescendos

The surface shakes with sounds from before, the sounds you heard. They are a place. They are a day. They are a town and a day in that town.

SWALLOW

Mark: Old Thing uses Recaller's body as an amplifier.

NIGHTINGALE

The day is loud with endings.

SWALLOW

I can hear what they hear.

NIGHTINGALE

The day is loud, the day is!

The only narrative is this, this feeling

SWALLOW

I can hear it! Mark: it is loud/so loud I can barely hear myself- Mark: testing volume, testing...testing, testing!

NIGHTINGALE

It is hard to

it is hard to see

it is hard to see

a Recollection of a Revelation

it is, it is

ending, it is

it is hard to see though noise as thick as fog, it is

it is, it is, it is

sounds slow, isolate

(Music: #3 GRIEF SOMETIMES LOOKS UPWARDS)

It is October 18th in Main Town, Connecticut
and the doctor is dead.

The fog rolls in over the Long Island Sound

and the doctor is...
It is October 18th in Main Town
and the doctor here is dead.
We gather here, we gather here, and here is what it is.

IN THE OFFICE
OF A DOCTOR
(AS HIS FATHER WAS BEFORE HIM)

WE COULD TRUST HIM,
WE COULD KNOW HIM,
MAKE THE DOCTOR OURS.

THE FOG IS, THE FOG IS, THE FOG IS HIGH.

WE CAN'T SEE, THE FOG HIDES US.
WE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING—ANYTHING BUT THE

SKY, MY GOD!
WE MIGHT SEE, WE MIGHT SEE, WE MIGHT SEE GOD!
AND THE DOCTOR THOUGHT
ONLY HE COULD SEE GOD,
OR ONLY HE SHOULD TRY.

IN A SMALL TOWN
WE SEE MOST THINGS,
BUT WE DON'T SEE GOD

WE COULD TRUST THIS,
WE COULD KNOW THIS
AND OUR FAITH WAS OURS.

THE FOG IS, THE FOG IS, THE FOG IS HIGH.

WE CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE FOG THROUGH THE FOG THROUGH THE
WE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING—ANYTHING BUT THE

NIGHTINGALE
SKY OR GOD!
WE TRUST THIS,
WE KNOW THIS,
AND OUR FAITH IS OURS,
BUT THE
DOCTOR THOUGHT

ECHO
SKY OR GOD!

DOCTOR THOUGHT

NIGHTINGALE
WE WOULD NEVER SEE GOD!
MAYBE HE WAS WRONG.

MAYBE GOD ISN'T SKY,
BUT
WE DON'T LOOK BENEATH US
AND THAT'S WHY
THE FOG IS HIGH.

NIGHTINGALE
FOG STAYS HIGH,
SO BENEATH US, SO BENEATH US WE
DON'T SEE OUR LIE.
AND IN
MAIN TOWN WE DON'T
LOOK DOWN
AND WE DON'T ASK WHY
WE SHOULD ONLY TRUST THE SKY
(EVEN IF IT IS TOO HIGH)!

ECHO
FOG STAYS HIGH,

MAIN TOWN
LOOK DOWN

AAAH...
AAAH!

NIGHTINGALE
GRIEVING FOR THE DOCTOR
MAKES US WANT ANOTHER.
GRIEVING FOR THE DOCTOR
MAKES US WANT A FATHER.

*sound crackles and
dies away*

SWALLOW

Nightingale

NIGHTINGALE

Makes us
want,
make us

SWALLOW

Nightingale

NIGHTINGALE

The The The The

SWALLOW

Mark: Nightingale unresponsive. / Mark: the sound recorded is complex but clear.

NIGHTINGALE

The The The
The

SWALLOW

The sound of a voice of someone close to a doctor.
I suspect the doctor we've been trying to find. A clear imprinted Memory, containing both the beginning and the/ ending of a complete narrative.

NIGHTINGALE

beginning, I
beginning, I

SWALLOW

Mark: clear time at Eden to determine next steps. A complete narrative demands the attention of our best songbirds and I know just the Revealer to expedite this project: Somewhat inexperienced, but she's demonstrated considerable talent at finding endings in the—

tape switches off

Nightingale, you've switched off the tape. Our record was/not finished

NIGHTINGALE

The record cannot continue
I must pause
I must pause the record for a moment

SWALLOW

If you need rest, by all means take a seat, but we are obliged by Society procedure to stay on record if we—

Nightingale switches off the lights

Nightingale. What is this.
I don't like you turning off the lights.

NIGHTINGALE

Please. Give me an hour.

SWALLOW

That's not how this works.
a lapse in response

but
seeing as I need to follow up on some paperwork
you can use this time to sort through the rest of inventory.

NIGHTINGALE

Thank you.

SWALLOW

Yes.
I suppose I can find my way to the door.
stumbles through dark

Breach of procedure—aside—I think (eurgh), this is the—this is the beginning of an exciting step forward for the Society.

NIGHTINGALE

Yes.

SWALLOW

A step forward for your career, too. Your peers at Eden will remember a Recaller of your talents: One who can Recall so much, so coherently...and on first contact, too! Even I never...

another lapse

In any case. I'll return shortly. We've found many memories, but never those of sky. Many beginnings, but rarely so clearly an ending.

We must remember this.

door opens

NIGHTINGALE

Yes.

SWALLOW

Good work, Songbird.

door closes

NIGHTINGALE

Thank you.

Thank you, yes. I.

oh

for a moment, when it gets dark I feel
it's almost like quiet, for a moment

but then I hear you.

Louder than memories I've heard before.

I listen and.

You've never been so loud.

What happened to you?

Why do they want to know your narrative?

whispers begin

Off the record...? I don't think ...

I will.

I will try to listen

if you like

okay.

Okay.

I will begin again. This record is for me. For us.
Fog can't hide anything in a dark room.

starts tape

Mark: The sound of a beginning. It is not quite as loud as before. As loud as the sound of sky. Now, soft, as glimpses of clouds through stained glass.

This room used to be a church, I think, or. A church basement, I think. Beneath the Surface now, at least. I don't know much about it. And I don't know anything about the sky.

Is that where your sound comes from? Or does it belong to him?
How does it end? That's what they want to know.
The sound comes from somewhere—where does it go?

Yes.

It's okay. I can go slower.

Just one question at a time.

So...

Did the Doctor really end? Or was his death a beginning?

OUTRO

NARRATOR

A chord

The Doctor is Dead is written, composed, and directed by é boylan.

A chord

Sound mixing and editing is by Katherine Cartusciello and Jay Eigenmann, with sound design and engineering by Charlie Freedman.

A chime begins

The voices you hear belong to marcos rené ospina, Genesis Adelia Collado, Joshuah Dominique, é boylan, and myself, Chris Okawa. Music is directed and performed by Sofia Geck, along with Kasey Blezinger, Yuka Tadano, and Matt Wong. Production management and coordination is by Lauren Durán Grajewski and Dinah Rokhinson. This audio presentation is produced by Musical Theatre Factory and made possible, in part, by generous support from The National Endowment for the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, Musical Theatre International, and listeners like you.

Next week: we'll return with another installment of *The Doctor is Dead*. If you liked what you heard, please support us by telling your friends and by leaving us a rating or review- and most importantly subscribe to hear what's coming next. Until then, thank you for listening.

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