



“RETRIBUTION: A MINISERIES”  
EPISODE 2: THE TRUTH AWAITS  
WRITTEN BY JADE MADISON SCOTT

**Transcription Note:**

When the Busybodies speak the purple indicates Tal Minear speaking, the blue indicates Inez Jacobs-Hinton speaking, and the red indicates the two are speaking in tandem.

**Scene One**  
**Introduction**

HOST

WGC Productions presents-

(Retribution Theme)

Retribution: A Miniseries. You are now listening to episode 2. Content Warnings for this episode can be found at [wgcpredictions.com](http://wgcpredictions.com). Transcripts for this episode can be found in the same place. Alright go along now, and you might wanna be on your best behavior, you know how the neighbors can be.

(Retribution Theme Fades Out)

**Scene Two**  
**Terra's Kitchen: Dusk**

(NEIL is sitting in Terra's kitchen reading a paper. TERRA enters, tired but triumphant.)

NEIL

Terra, you look miserable. Did you get any sleep last night?

TERRA

Buck up, Neil, you old homebody. I've done you and me both a real favor. I stopped the drought. Rain should be coming any day now.

NEIL

Come again?

TERRA

I stopped the drought.

NEIL

Terra, what did you do?

TERRA

I told you I-

NEIL

No, no, no. I mean what did you do to make you think you did what you think you did?

TERRA

I found the father.

NEIL

Ms. Gravis'-

TERRA

Yes, Willow's. Keep up, Neil. Usually, you're so sharp.

NEIL

It's just...how'd you even find any of this out?

TERRA

Irving told me.

NEIL

Irving!

TERRA

Calm down. Yes, Irving. Apparently, him and Ms. Willow Tree have been having an affair of sorts for the past couple of years. Well, he never told me how long it's been going on, but he said it'd happened more than once, so

NEIL

He and Ms. Gravis?

TERRA

No, him and Ms. Betty. Yea, him and Willow. Neil, are you feeling okay?

(WILLOW enters in a fury.)

WILLOW

Terra McHale!

TERRA

Damn, I need to reinforce that door.

NEIL

Miss, you need to le-

WILLOW

Would either one of you thick-headed beasts tell me why my father burst into my room today talking about how he was going to murder Irving?

TERRA

Oh, that's bad.

WILLOW

Yes, it is, which is why I had to hitch a ride to get all the way out here. I figured you had something to do with it.

TERRA

I may have had a hand, but everything else was all Irving. He told me how you two got to know each other in the Biblical sense

WILLOW

Oh, Lord

TERRA

And how the baby was his-

WILLOW

Oh, Lord

TERRA

But he seems excited to be a father.

NEIL

That little boy couldn't take care of a rock.

TERRA/WILLOW

He runs a flower shop, Neil/ He owns a flower shop, Cornelius.

NEIL

Ain't the point

WILLOW

No, the point is you've been diggin' in my business.

TERRA

Your business is all of our business. My farm-

WILLOW

No one cares about your farm but you. You think your farm matters compared to this. I've got a whole new life to take care of, and it's already been stained with tarnish.

TERRA

Don't talk about it that way!

NEIL

Terra

TERRA

No, you can't come in my house and talk about my livelihood that way. Now, you best apologize or you better get out.

NEIL

I'm sorry, Miss. Could you just leave my sister and I for a quick minute? Take a seat in our parlor, it's well furnished. This way, please.

(WILLOW exits)

Terra Anne McHale....now I don't know exactly what you did and it doesn't matter, either. You can't go around talking to people like that. Treating them like that. I mean, she's a lady

TERRA

I'm a lady.

NEIL

Well, she's a pregnant lady, and you can't speak to her that way. Go apologize. You were wrong.

TERRA

No one respects me. No one respects what I do. Farmin' isn't just putting seeds in the ground, Neil. It's building a community. It's making something more than yourself for people who need it. Farming is a kindness and I want to be kind....Neil, I don't know what I'd do if I had to shut down the farm. It's my gift.

NEIL

You seem like you're under an awful lot of stress here. Might it be better if you go back to Boston to rest?

TERRA

No.

NEIL

Terra-

TERRA

No, Neil. I can't go back there.

NEIL

That's home, Terra. This...all of this isn't anything more than a fantasy constructed in the middle of a three-year-long psychotic break. This obsession with the rain, that fake accent you seem to have put on, this farm...it's all a dream, Terra.

TERRA

And what do you know about my dreams, Neil? That place is bad for me. With mother and father....I hate that man, Neil. I'll hate him forever.

NEIL

That man is the one who paid for this house. Lest you forgot, it's his money you stole to buy this place. You're lucky you're his favorite and he didn't ask me to bring you back to Boston kicking and screaming.

(Terra's anger forces her out of her accent.)

TERRA

Favorite? I should.....don't you ever, ever speak about that man like that to me again. I swear to God, Cornelius..... don't pretend that he is some sort of saint when I've seen what he is.

NEIL

And what is that?

(Beat)

TERRA

You wouldn't understand.

NEIL

How can I if you don't tell me? It's always secrets and lies with you. Terra only cares about Terra, yes? Well, I have a life too. In Boston. Where we belong.

TERRA

Go back, then.

NEIL

You know Father won't take me back without you.

(Terra finds her accent again.)

TERRA

Then I suggest you get comfortable.

NEIL

Go to Hell.

(WILLOW enters)

WILLOW

It's getting awful dark, and I can't stand to be in here for any second longer.

I'll walk you

TERRA

I don't want to spend a single moment longer with you either.

WILLOW

I'll walk you out, Willow.

NEIL

Look Willow, I...

TERRA

What? What's wrong with you now?

WILLOW

Terra, what's the

NEIL

You...you called her, Willow.

TERRA

What?

NEIL

You called her....Oh, Neil, tell me it's not true.

TERRA

Maybe I should wait outside.

WILLOW

(WILLOW quickly leaves the house.)

You and Willow. Tell me that's not true.

TERRA

I...now, wait a minute

NEIL

Oh, Cornelius.

TERRA

I don't-

NEIL

TERRA

You called her Willow. Not Miss Gravis. Willow. You said it with such tenderness, I...you took her hand, you...when I told you about Irving, that wasn't confusion, that was anger. When I told you about the pregnancy that wasn't prudence that was guilt. Oh, Cornelius, is that child yours?

NEIL

I....I'm not....I....I don't know.

TERRA

Well, you'd better know. You and Irving are the only two men who've laid with her so the child must be one of yours.

NEIL

What makes you think that we're the only two?

TERRA

You know how many men are in this town, and now that I've seen what she fancies, there aren't many like the two of you running around. Jesus, Neil. You had me going around looking like a fool when you were here the whole time. Are you even gonna take care of her? I feel like I ought' tell someone

NEIL

Please, don't tell father. Terra, I'll be done for. He'll never let me marry now that I've gone and ruined some girl. I'll never get the business. Terra

TERRA

And you shouldn't. Cornelius, take some responsibility, man, if I can even call you that. Jesus, don't you have any standards

NEIL

You sound just like him.

TERRA

Do not do that. Do not compare me to Father.

NEIL

What? You do. So judgemental. So high and mighty. So convinced that your way is the only way. For someone you claim to hate, you're a lot alike.

(Beat)

You're not gonna tell him. Are you?

(Terra turns away.)

Thank-

TERRA

Go home, Neil. I don't want to look at you.

(NEIL hesitates. NEIL exits. Transition Music.)

**Scene Three**  
**Town Square: The Next Morning**

(BUSYBODIES, MS. BETTY, and CLETUS are beside themselves with excitement and a deep-rooted compulsive energy, as if the words are being pulled out of them)

BUSYBODIES

Two fathers. Two. One outsider. One who belongs to us. One child. Two girls. Too much to handle. Too much to know.

CLETUS

So much was had.

MS. BETTY

Too much to know.

BUSYBODIES

Yet the Lord without mercy won't let the rain waters flow. The land is barren. Crops can't grow. Just this morning another two families gone. Now the money's run out, we're a living swan song.

MS. BETTY

Can't believe the preacher was wrong.

CLETUS

I can. No one with that much self-love can be right no way.

MS. BETTY

Wonder how Willow is? Why I remember when she was small enough to hide behind her mother's skirts and now she's old enough to throw her skirt back for every man that walks by.

CLETUS

Mattress on her back.

BUSYBODIES

Back to the sky.

CLETUS

Open to every man who longs to pass by. Oh, what a girl. Miserable girl.

BUSYBODIES

What a waste.

MS. BETTY

What happened to that little girl?

BUSYBODIES

Her mother happened.

(MS. BETTY realizes the truth.)

MS. BETTY

Her father happened.

CLETUS

What's that?

MS. BETTY

Her father. The butcher.

BUSYBODIES

Oh? (Everyone realizes the truth.) Oh.

(Beat. Denial.)

CLETUS

Right. Where were we?

BUSYBODIES

Which *boy* took her we'll never know, but such salacious, licentious, delicious

MS. BETTY

Do you think we must beg for forgiveness or do you think, like a curse, it will be given freely?

CLETUS

Betty, you're throwing off our rhythm, Jesus.

MS. BETTY

Heavy souls we shall be, but hush up here comes our cast of players now. Caught in some living drama.

(IRVING, NEIL, and WILLOW enter. Things are not going well.)

WILLOW

Boys, please leave me alone.

IRVING

I can not. I love you, Willow Gravis. I want to be with you.

NEIL

I thought you loved Terra.

IRVING

I do. You can love more than one person at once.

NEIL

Not legally. Willow, is this the boy you want to raise your child? Now, I know we're not sure if the child is mine, but if it is I will gladly send you and the boy up to some small town near Boston. Salem, perhaps. Medford has lovely autumns

WILLOW

I don't want to leave, Neil.

NEIL

And why not?

IRVING

Because you're a sad man, Cornelius.

NEIL

And what does that make you, flower boy?

WILLOW

Boys stop being boys, and be the men you told me you were.

(The BUSYBODIES laugh.)

And now you've got all these eyes on me...just go. Both of you.

IRVING

I'll check on you later.

(IRVING exits.)

NEIL

We'll talk.

(NEIL exits. )

WILLOW

You too. All of y'all too.

BUSYBODIES

Fine, Weepin' Willow. But we know where you are.

CLETUS

We know it all.

MS. BETTY

We know too much.

(BUSYBODIES, CLETUS, and MS. BETTY  
exit. WILLOW melts.)

WILLOW

Have I done something, God? Have I? Have I earned this? I've asked for so little for so long, how much longer am I supposed to wait? Or have I got it all wrong? Is this what I've asked for? Is it? Because if it is, this is not what I want. If this is what I asked for, please take it back. You have to take it back. Let me try again. Let me try again. You....you owe me....I try so hard, you owe me.

TERRA

(Distant)

Willow, there you are. I've been looking for you.

WILLOW

Of course, she has.

(TERRA enters)

TERRA

I've been looking everywhere for you, Willow.

WILLOW

What do you want now? Haven't I been through enough? What else could you need to know?

TERRA

Willow, I'm sorry. I am so sorry.

(Roll of Thunder)

WILLOW

What?

TERRA

Yeah, I...this whole thing. I was just sitting at my table thinking. Remembering how I felt when someone did what I did to you. Stole my secrets and made them plain. I'm truly ashamed of how I acted. Of how I treated you

WILLOW

You want to apologize? Why no one has apologized to me since....well no one's apologized to me.

TERRA

Truly? Not even...Say your parents made a mistake. They wouldn't apologize to you?

WILLOW

No. I mean, my mother died too young for me to....and my father he....he's not the sorry type.

TERRA

Mine either. When he was wrong, he was always wrong, he'd just throw money at me. Like it was his money I wanted. Bull-headed man.

WILLOW

I thought you would have liked your father.

TERRA

You were right. We must not have talked much.

WILLOW

But I mean, why wouldn't you? He was rich

TERRA

Money doesn't have a single thing to do with it! You think Neil'll be a good father just because he has money? Wait...that was....sorry....no, me and my father are...no. (Beat) He's a fine man, I suppose. A man with friends who like him for more than his money. A kind wife.....Neil loves him too, so maybe it's just me? But when he speaks, I... (Beat) You know, three years ago, before I moved here, I was twenty-four. There aren't many unmarried twenty-four-year-old socialites in Boston, and the few there are have some pretty nasty rumors flung about. I had a pretty nasty rumor, and Father....oh, how he hated it. Wanted me to be married off to a stately respectable boy. I told him I didn't want to marry. Wanted to travel and see the world and be a person, not a wife. He told me that I didn't have a choice anymore. Of course, it didn't matter that I was already in love. We courted each other in secret for nearly two years before he found out. Poor people and my Father never mixed after all. He was a farmer actually, my love. Wanted a farm out west. Said it would be his gift to the world. (Beat).

TERRA

When Father found out.... Father crushed his business. Told no one to buy anything even associated with...told 'em to not even sell to..... I snuck 'em money, but I was discovered, cut off, and sent to a convent for reform..... When father sent for me and I returned home, I found out she...I mean....It...I'm not....please don't-

WILLOW

It's okay. Who do I have to tell?

TERRA

She died. Maggie, she, uh, she died. She....she was twenty-three and she was so gentle with everyone, more than I could ever be, and she laughed with her whole body, like with her whole torso, and she could talk your ear off about everything you never even knew you wanted to know about and she just had all these....she had all these plans about how she was going help the world with her food and her farm and she just had so much she wanted to do, but, she died because my Father starved her out. My Father. (Beat) Do you know he even orchestrated it so she couldn't be buried in the church cemetery. Said he left her in the road to be picked clean. He looked me in the eyes and told me that she.....(Beat) My family said I had a psychotic break. Stealing as much money as I could from the family safe, packing a suitcase, and taking the first train out of Boston to travel as far as I could? Of course, it's psychotic. (Beat) Psychotic? It was perhaps the sanest thing in the world. (Beat) God, I hope she's proud of me. (Beat) I must be talking your ear off. Sorry, I've just never told anyone about this before.

WILLOW

You don't have any friends, do you?

TERRA

I have Irving.

WILLOW

Irving. Can I tell you a secret?

TERRA

I've told you all mine.

WILLOW

I never much cared for Irving.

TERRA

What?

WILLOW

I know. Aren't I awful? I know you're only supposed to share yourself with people that you deeply and truly love, but I never much believed in all that anyway.

TERRA

No. No. I get it. He can be.... unruly sometimes.

WILLOW

Always so pushy. So excitable.

TERRA

And he can never stop his mouth from running.

WILLOW

Never! It's just going all the time. Like, boy don't you ever get tired with all that talking.

(They share a laugh.)

TERRA

Huh?

WILLOW

What?

TERRA

Nothing. Nothing, I just don't think I've ever seen you smile.

WILLOW

Course you don't see me much at all.

TERRA

Fair.

WILLOW

You know, if someone told me I'd talk to Terra McHale this many times in one week, I'd think they'd have lost the best parts of their mind.

TERRA

I know what you mean.

WILLOW

I mean, after all you are the Terra McHale. Act of God. Vicious girl. Miserable girl.

TERRA

Miserable girl. (Beat) Still, that was nothing compared to you. What was that rhyme I heard some kids singing 'bout you? "Gravis" so shy she never says a word. Locked up in her cage like a golden bird. As bland as flour and as smart as ice. She'll leave her house once but she'll-

WILLOW

“Never leave twice.” I heard that one.

TERRA

Never understood that ‘smart as ice’ bit. You know, you must be awfully famous to have songs written in your honor. I’d never have a song.

WILLOW

Honor?

TERRA

I don’t think they describe you very well, though. I don’t know much about you yet, but shy is not the word I’d choose for you. Spitfire, maybe.

(WILLOW is silent.)

What’s ailing you?

WILLOW

I wasn’t shy.

TERRA

That it?

WILLOW

That it? You teasing me, McHale?

TERRA

No. Obviously not

WILLOW

‘Cause I’m not like you and all the rest of them. I got feelings. I’m not here to pretend and share with all town gossips

TERRA

What’d I even do?

WILLOW

I wasn’t shy. I was scared. I was scared.

TERRA

Scared of what?

WILLOW

Scared of what! Scared of....of.....you don't know?

TERRA

I've never known less in my life. Willow, what were you scared of?

WILLOW

You don't know. I thought everyone knew. Cletus, Ms. Betty-

TERRA

Knew what?

WILLOW

What my daddy does to me. I don't know how you couldn't know. They talk about it. They think I don't notice how their conversation stops when I walk in. How they scan my arms for bruises. I know they know. Ms. Betty saw it happen. 'Bout seven months ago I had upset daddy one day. Didn't make him his breakfast like Momma used to, so he dragged me upstairs to his room....I can see Ms. Betty's house from his window. She was there that day, staring at me. I watched her close the curtains.

TERRA

Oh, Willow. Oh, God, Willow. I...you must...I should have paid attention. I was just so wrapped up in my life I never even thought about ...never tried to notice....I could have

WILLOW

What? Could have what? Apologized? Make promises, then do nothing?

TERRA

Willow, I'm sorry.

WILLOW

You said.

(Low thunder)

TERRA

How many people know?

WILLOW

Everyone knows.

TERRA

But Neil...Irving couldn't

WILLOW

Irving knows.

TERRA

Irving.....I.....Willow, that's awful....If I could-

WILLOW

I don't need your pity.

TERRA

It's not

WILLOW

I don't want your pity!

TERRA

Willow

WILLOW

Don't touch me. Don't....don't.

(Beat. BUSYBODIES, MS. BETTY, CLETUS  
saunter back in.)

BUSYBODIES

We heard all the screaming. Just wanted to make sure it was...alright.

TERRA

Ignore-

WILLOW

You knew.

CLETUS

Speak up child, can hardly hear you.

BUSYBODIES

Ever since she was a girl she had the smallest voice. Why in the Christmas pageant-

WILLOW

He hurt me and you knew. You watched.

MS. BETTY

What?

WILLOW

You. Watched. I cried for help and you heard me and you did nothing.

WILLOW

I begged God that you'd save me and you did nothing. I pray you all feel a fraction of what I've lived through.

BUSYBODIES

Now, don't be hysterical. These things are delicate. They weren't our business.

WILLOW

Not your business?

BUSYBODIES

Girl

WILLOW

I was a child. A child. Look at me when I speak to you. Look at me. Look at me! One of you....one of you....just look at me. God Damn you. All of you. Every single one.

(IRVING and NEIL run in, wildly happy.)

IRVING/NEIL

It was the most amazing thing. I could feel my skin prickle with the wind/ Terra Anne I don't know what happened by it was a miracle. A bonafide miracle.

TERRA

What's going on? What's happening? Why are you two together?

IRVING and NEIL

Rain clouds.

NEIL

Swirling rain clouds.

IRVING

Over your farm.

NEIL

Looked like it would burst any minute.

IRVING

Any second.

NEIL

Any minute.

IRVING

And it's just over there. Just over your farm. Not a cloud over the entire rest of the town. Not a cloud anywhere else.

BUSYBODIES

Impossible.

MS. BETTY

Truly.

TERRA

It's gonna rain? It's gonna rain!

(NEIL and IRVING exit. TERRA starts to exit, but she suddenly stops and turns around.)

TERRA

Willow?

IRVING  
(shouting)

Are you comin' or what?

(TERRA and IRVING exit. Retribution Theme)

#### **Scene Four Closing**

HOST

Thank you for listening to the first episode of Retribution: A Miniseries. Retribution was written and composed by Jade Madison Scott. Edited and directed by Cole Burkhardt. Terra McHale was played by Sophia Early. Willow Gravis was played by Sage Fortune. Irving was played by B. Narr. Cornelius McHale was played by Elijah Yale. Ms. Betty was played by Paige Alena. Cletus was played by Moses Princien. And the Busybodies were played by Tal Minear and Inez Jacobs-Hinton. If you wish to support the show and have access to behind the scenes exclusive subscribe to the WGC Productions Patreon which can be accessed through the website.