



“RETRIBUTION: A MINISERIES”
EPISODE 4: THE BEGINNING
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 4. Content warnings for this episode as well as transcripts can be found at wgcpresentations.com/retribution, and, uh, I'd get seated in your saddle, this ones a bit of a ride.

(Retribution Theme Song)

**Scene Two
Town Square: Afternoon**

(The BUSYBODIES, MS. BETTY, and
CLETUS stand around.)

BUSYBODIES

I'm sick of life like this. Sick of strife. Sick of sweat. Sick of cricks in my neck kept down so long under sun's senseless toil.

CLETUS

Sick of witches weaving webs 'round the good folks I love.

MS. BETTY

Sick of self. So sick my belly aches.

CLETUS

So sick my eyes strain.

BUSYBODIES

So sick my back's broken till it's bent like the scythe of the reaper sent to haunt me.

CLETUS

Is he there in the corner?

MS. BETTY

Or there, up above?

BUSYBODIES

Death, he lurks like those little dots that float in front of your eyes.

MS. BETTY

Appearing outta nowhere.

BUSYBODIES

Only to disappear, making you question your own good mind.

CLETUS

I see him on the faces I love. I see him in myself.

BUSYBODIES

I see him everywhere.

MS. BETTY

Just everywhere.

ALL

He waits for me.

CLETUS

God and all the angels, y'all just okay with this?

MS. BETTY

What else are we to do?

BUSYBODIES

Not enough money to move and even if we did, not enough family to go back to.

CLETUS

Not talkin' bout moving. I'm talking bout are you okay with havin' those two girls treat us like this.

MS. BETTY

Girls?

CLETUS

Miserable girls.

BUSYBODIES

Terra and Willow?

CLETUS

Course, or ain't you been payin' attention? You think it's just coincidence all this started happening when Willow got pregnant? With the rain and all? Terra knew it, that vicious girl, she knew it and she went to talk to Willow. I bet that girl, that little girl, that little, irreverent, ungodly girl wrapped Terra round her finger, that's the sort of thing that would draw a girl like Terra in, you know?

CLETUS

The two of them, that twisted pair, the wind, the rain, the earth laid bare, who else but them has brought death into this, our paradise?

BUSYBODIES

The girls.

CLETUS

Miserable girls.

BUSYBODIES

Miserable girls./ Miserable, wretched, damnable girls.

CLETUS

We must right the scales. They've unbalanced the order. They've gone out of order and now we suffer for their crimes? For their infidelity. Why must we bear their sin?

BUSYBODIES

Why must we be punished for their iniquity? Is it always the duty of the righteous to bear the weight of the forsaken?

MS. BETTY

Wait.

BUSYBODIES

What, woman?

MS. BETTY

You can't

CLETUS

Can't what?

MS. BETTY

Cletus, you can't be serious. You have to understand what's really going on here. Cletus, you have to know what we did.

CLETUS

We? We did nothing wrong. Did we?

BUSYBODIES

No.

MS. BETTY

But we-

CLETUS

But what? Listen, Betty, you're either for us or against us, and if you're against us, then you're with them, and if you're with them, you better not be.

MS. BETTY

You don't even have a plan. If they are the cause, and they're not, but if they were then what's the plan to fix the scales, as you called it. You're not God.

CLETUS

Of course not, but it wouldn't be the first time He, in his high holiness, gave his people a certain license against those who despised him.

BUSYBODIES

Wouldn't be the first time at all.

(Beat)

MS. BETTY

You can't kill them.

BUSYBODIES

Sometimes death is justice.

MS. BETTY

No. They're kids. Kids, Cletus.

CLETUS

Haven't been kids in a while, Betty.

MS. BETTY

No.

CLETUS

I'd rather a hundred of them than any one of us.

MS. BETTY

No.

BUSYBODIES

Then tell us another way.

MS. BETTY

I.....we can wait.

BUSYBODIES

Wait? Wait. You think us so foolish as to twiddle our thumbs until they kill us all. Kill our loves. Kill our children.

CLETUS

You of all people should know how that feels.

BUSYBODIES

Wait? Wait for what? Wait for Death 'round the corner to come carry us home? The time of waiting is done, the time of action is here.

CLETUS

Go home, Betty. Get some rest. I promise it'll all be different in the morning.

MS. BETTY

I'm too old for this, Cletus. We're too old for this.

(MS. BETTY exits.)

BUSYBODIES

Wait? Of all the indignities. Nevermind all that, so, tonight, under the cover of darkness we'll ascend on the house of McHale.

CLETUS

With gun, rope, and torch.

BUSYBODIES

Scorch them from this Earth. Scrub them from our paradise.

CLETUS

Justice will be done tonight.

IRVING
(off-stage)

Hey, everybody, hey!

BUSYBODIES

Irving, our boy. Our gentle sweet boy.

CLETUS

Speak nothing of this to him.

(IRVING enters)

IRVING

Hey, Cletus. Ms. Caper. Ms. Donaahue. Everyone.

CLETUS and BUSYBODIES

Hey, Irving.

IRVING

Any of y'all know what's going on with Ms. Betty? Saw her when I was walking over here. She wouldn't speak to me, which...I mean, I don't even know why she wouldn't be speaking, y'all know it's her favorite hobby. But I think something might be wrong. She was just walkin' home empty 'hind the eyes. Any of all y'all know what's going on? You think I should go and read with her or somethin'?

BUSYBODIES

Oh, you know how the old woman can be. Flighty. Foolish. Fretful.

CLETUS

Don't waste your time waiting on her. I'm sure you have better things to do, don't you, Irving?

IRVING

Not really....so, what are all y'all whispering about over here?

CLETUS

Ain't whispering 'bout nothing.

(CLETUS pats IRVING on the chest.)

Just passing time with our neighbors.

IRVING

Just passing time?

BUSYBODIES

You remember what that's like, don't you Irving? You used to pass time too before you forgot us.

IRVING

I ain't forgot you.

CLETUS

Course not. O'course not. Listen, why don't you come over round my place tomorrow and we can all sit and talk like we used to?

IRVING

That sounds mighty nice.

CLETUS

Hear that? Mighty nice. It's mighty nice. Now come on everyone. Sorry, to leave like this boy, but we all made plans to talk 'bout the old times. Not something much fun for you I'm afraid. But we can all talk tomorrow, you hear?

(CLETUS and BUSYBODIES exit.)

IRVING

Yeah....tomorrow.

(Transition Music)

Scene Three
Terra's Kitchen: Later

(TERRA is sitting at her kitchen table. She's writing a letter. One in a long line of failed drafts if the pile of crumpled paper by her feet is any indicator.)

TERRA

-one of the great joys of the territory is the hard work. The dark blueberry skies are made twice as sweet by the labor needed to enjoy them. However, these past months have been...it's been, difficult. No. Hard. No, it's been.....it's been, complicated. Impossible. Devastating.

(She rips the letter.)

"Dear Father, I need money. Be generous."

(She rips that paper as well)

"Dearest and Sweetest Father, I hope your pockets are still as deep as the dark, unforgiving, cavern you call a heart, you murderer."

(A little too provocative. Rip!)

"Dear Father, if I said some days I forget to hate you, would you believe me?"

(She rips the paper with vigor.)

"Dear Father, if I came home would you even recognize me? Would I recognize you? Would I want to recognize you, or is life better like this? As a living ghost?"

(She can't stand to finish this one. She tears it up. She takes a deep breath and starts a new letter)

TERRA

“Dear Father, I know that somewhere deep inside, you still feel you love me, and maybe you do. I am your daughter after all, and you’re my Father. My Father. The same man who would carefully walk me through the neighborhood after Easter service making sure everyone could see my fine new navy blue dress I was so proud of. The same man that would encourage me to read about all the far off places in Europe and Asia, even though his friends felt it improper. The same man whose shoes I used to wobble on as we haphazardly two-stepped to the exciting crackle of phonographs. The person who loved me. A person I was glad to be loved by. My Father. It is the least you could do to give me enough money to show the bank that I am not a hopeless case. And in case you’ve forgotten, that money is as much my birthright as Neil’s. More even. I’ve earned that money through blood. Both mine and hers. So, is it not right, is it not just that I get to benefit from that which has wounded me and killed her? Isn’t that fair? No. No, it isn’t. To be fair, I’d have to lock you away, make Mother die a slow death, and let her body be defiled by birds and vermin, but I’m being forgiving today, the way she’d want, so money will do. Your daughter, Terra Anne McHale.”

(She tears it to shreds. There’s a knock at the door.)

Go away!

WILLOW
(at the door)

Terra?

(TERRA goes to open the door. WILLOW enters, disheveled and dirty.)

TERRA
Hello.

WILLOW
Hi. What’s happening with the all paper?

TERRA
I’m not good with words. Why are you here?

WILLOW
A pregnant woman shows up at your door and that’s the first thing you ask?

TERRA
What else would I ask?

WILLOW
You could have asked if I was okay.

TERRA

You look fine.

WILLOW

I look like I bathed in dirt and lotioned with mud.

TERRA

Why are you here?

WILLOW

Where else would I be?

TERRA

I don't know. Where ever you've been avoiding me.

WILLOW

I haven't been avoiding you.

TERRA

Truly?

(Pause)

Is it me? Cause I know that you may not have met someone like me before but fleeing typically isn't the proper response to our vulnerability. It is, in fact, quite hurtful.

WILLOW

No, I don't care. You think I have time to care? No, it's...I don't hate you, I suppose.

TERRA

Thank you?

WILLOW

No, that's not what I mean.

TERRA

You do hate me then?

WILLOW

I mean, you didn't know so how....so I don't hate you. Every day of my life I've been surrounded by people who knew what was happening to me, and they mocked me for it. They ignored it, and I don't think there's a whole person in this town who I don't hate. Even Irving with his, well-meaning bullheadedness, but you didn't know. You never knew. How am I supposed to hate you if you never knew?

TERRA

You sound like you're asking.

WILLOW

I think I am.

TERRA

I could've known. I could've asked.

WILLOW

I think you already said that that day all way back when.

TERRA

Feels like forever ago.

WILLOW

Might as well be.

TERRA

Doesn't matter though. It's true. I could've paid attention.

WILLOW

Yes, I suppose you could've.

(Beat)

I'm sorry I avoided you. I needed time to figure out what not hating a person looked like. What it felt like.

TERRA

Did you figure it out?

WILLOW

It all feels the same. Just awful.

(WILLOW sighs)

Just awful.

(Pause)

TERRA

I was lyin' earlier. You look terrible. You okay? Where you been sleeping?

WILLOW

I'm fine mostly, and out in the ravine.

TERRA

The ravine?

WILLOW

Wasn't as bad as you think. Not the most comfortable but I'm here, and food was never too hard to find. A piece of fruit here, a clumsy bird drops a scrap of meat there. Even had water leak out the rock walls. No, wasn't too bad at all.

TERRA

There's water in the ravine?

WILLOW

Not a lot, and definitely not enough to collect. Just enough to keep a person alive. No more no less.

TERRA

That's.....that's strange, Willow. Mighty strange.

WILLOW

Maybe so, but normal's no good most of the time no way. I'm sorry, no I'm not sorry, I mean, I just need to know, are we friends now?

TERRA

Friends?

WILLOW

I've never really had one, and since I don't really hate you, I assumed ...I'd just like to know if I have one now.

TERRA

Uh, course? Course we're friends.

WILLOW

Oh, good. I meant it, I did. I've never really had one before, well not one I haven't slept with. And never a girl. I can't believe it. I'm friends with another girl, one my age even, well, not quite my age, more or less my age. What is it that friends do? Am I to braid your hair? In all the old books I've read that's what friends seem to do all the time, isn't it? Braiding hair and singing songs and-

TERRA

I-

WILLOW

Or maybe we can just talk or are we to cook food and share recipes? Crochet?

TERRA

I don't crochet.

WILLOW

I can teach you.

TERRA

Listen, Willow

WILLOW

Yes?

TERRA

I think you should-

(A frantic knocking on the door.)

WILLOW

Were you expectin' someone?

TERRA

No. Probably Irving, but he has a... stay here.

(TERRA exits. She opens the door.)

IRVING

(Distant)

Good, you're safe.

(IRVING and TERRA enter)

TERRA

Irving, what's this all about. You lose your...what'da mean "you're safe?"

WILLOW

Why are you here?

IRVING

Are all your doors locked?

WILLOW

Why? Were you hoping for a more dramatic entrance?

IRVING

Are they?

TERRA

Yes.

IRVING

Good.

TERRA

Did you run here?

WILLOW

Can you stop pacing? You're making me dizzy.

TERRA

Irving, what's going on?

IRVING

Something's wrong.

WILLOW

What'd do you...stop pacing.

(IRVING stops pacing)

TERRA

What'd ya mean something's wrong? What's wrong?

IRVING

I mean, Cletus and them, I think they're tryna do something. Like malicious sorts of something. Saw em whispering together.

WILLOW

They always whisperin'.

IRVING

Naw, they looked different.

TERRA

What'cha mean, different?

IRVING

Mean different. Can't describe it. They looked....they looked like somethin' else. Somethin....something else. I think you two need to go.

WILLOW

Go? Go where?

IRVING

To my house. To Neil's place. Anywhere other than here. They know Terra's probably here, and if they know she's here they'll be here, and I don't want any of us to find out what's gonna happen when they arrive.

TERRA

Why would they wanna hurt me? I mean, I know I ain't made no friends, but I sure didn't make no enemies.

WILLOW

They're miserable people, Terra. Who knows why they wallow in miserable states?

IRVING

Alright, we can stand here wax on about human nature and the heart of man, or we can get out this house while we still got all our working bits and pieces.

TERRA

Fine. We'll take my truck-

IRVING

Naw, too noticeable. They'd track us easy. Walking's best bet.

TERRA

But she's pregnant. How we gonna sneak a pregnant woman all the hour-ways back to town on foot? She can hardly walk all that way.

WILLOW

S'true. Only managed to get here cause the ravine's so close.

IRVING

Ravine?

WILLOW

S'where I been hiding.

IRVING

You've been living in a ravine?

TERRA

Irving.

IRVING

I know the shed's not a hotel, but a ravine?

TERRA

Irving!

IRVING

What?

TERRA

The ravine's a good place to hide.

IRVING

It is a good place to hide.

TERRA

Willow, you think you can lead us back there in the dark?

WILLOW

Might take a few wrong turns, but I think so.

TERRA

We can take the back door. We should take food just in-

(CLETUS tries to ram down the front door.)

IRVING

Aww, naw.

(TERRA pulls out her gun.)

WILLOW

You're gonna shoot 'em?!

TERRA

Take the back door. I'll find you.

WILLOW/IRVING

Okay. /No way, Jose.

TERRA

I'm serious, Irving. I got a gun. I-

IRVING

No, we're not leaving.

WILLOW

I need to leave.

IRVING

Willow-

WILLOW

I got a kid. I got responsibilities.

TERRA

Can you two get out before they get in? That door ain't thick.

IRVING

Y'aint got to be a hero.

TERRA

Don't wanna be a hero. But if they don't know you're here, you can get far away while me and my widow maker keep 'em busy.

IRVING

No. I already left one of you, and I'm not leaving you too. I don't know what I'd do if you died.

TERRA

Willow, take him and leave.

WILLOW

Will do. Irving.

(CLETUS busts through the door and enters
brandishing a gun of his own.)

CLETUS

Evening, Ms. McHale. Ms. Willow. Irving.

TERRA

Cletus, you best get out my house.

CLETUS

Won't be doing that. No.

IRVING

Cletus-

CLETUS

Don't move, boy.

IRVING

Cletus, come on, I know you. You're no killer, Cletus. Not you.

CLETUS

It's a man's responsibility to defend what he loves. I love this town Irving, and them two girls
behind you there are putting it in danger. I told you we weren't doing nothing. You should've
listened.

TERRA

Put the gun down, Cletus, or I'll shoot you dead.

CLETUS

Bet I'll shoot you first.

TERRA

Run.

(WILLOW pulls IRVING off through the
backdoor.)

TERRA

Cletus, you even twitch and I'll shoot you through the heart.

CLETUS

Big talk.

TERRA

Look, I'ont know what sort of delusions you got wrapped up in your head, but whatever's going on up there don't make it so you gotta kill us.

CLETUS

You really gonna stand here and tell me that Willow ain't controlling the weather somehow and you ain't helping her?

(TERRA pauses)

Good, so you understand why I have to do what I have to do.

TERRA

It'll make it worse. Killin us'll make it worse.

CLETUS

How could it be worse than us. No rain for seven months. Ceaseless wind. Countless woe. Not a wink of sleep for days on end. Madness is our only friend with Death soon to follow? What could be worse than this?

TERRA

I don't know. Just know hurtin her's never made anything better.

CLETUS

But not doing anything has made things worse. Listen, I'm sorry you went and got yourself wrapped up in this but you made your choice-

TERRA

I'm not even the one doin it, you know, and the one who is, already gone. You can try to go get her, but I'll shoot you for you-

(CLETUS laughs)

What?

CLETUS

McHale, you think I came alone? Come on in, everybody.

(BUSYBODIES enter with IRVING and WILLOW, trying to break free. Irving has a black eye and he's bleeding from the head.)

TERRA/IRVING/WILLOW

Irving! You better let him go right now. Look what you did. If he's not okay, you don't want to know what I'll do if he's not okay./Ms. Donahue, please. Please. Let us go. Please. I just wanna go home, please. Please. Please just let me go home. Just let us go./Let go of me. When I get out, misery unlike anything you've ever known will follow. You have not yet begun to know the depths of your consequences.

BUSYBODIES

Quiet! We've gone too long without correcting this indecency. This immoral girl, and you Irving. We were too kind on you. Too forgiving, but tonight you will see what happens to those who mock us, and hopefully you'll return to us.

WILLOW

Terra, shoot them.

CLETUS

Bring that other one over here. Tie 'em to the chairs. We're gonna make it quick and clean.

IRVING/WILLOW

Terra!

(TERRA shoots the wall.)

TERRA

Everyone be still. Don't move a lick. I don't wanna kill you, Cletus.

CLETUS

Too bad.

(IRVING tackles CLETUS from behind.)

IRVING

You should have stopped, Cletus!

BUSYBODIES

Get off Irving! Stop it! Stop it you two!

CLETUS

Get off me boy.

IRVING

You should have let it go, Cletus. Let dead dogs lie.

TERRA

Stop. Stop moving the both of you. Irving, get off.

(CLETUS fires a shot. TERRA screams.)

IRVING

Terra!

TERRA/CLETUS

No, I'm fine. I'm-/Wait, I didn't mean-

IRVING

Give me the gun.

(CLETUS and IRVING struggle)

CLETUS

Get off.

IRVING

Give me the gun!

(CLETUS shoots IRVING.)

Ahhhhh!

TERRA/WILLOW

Irving!

(TERRA and WILLOW rush to Irving's side.)

IRVING

Terra? Terra?

TERRA

I'm here, Irving. Okay? I'm here. Willow, come on. Push on it. Don't stop. God there's so much blood. Come on push harder. Harder.

IRVING

Ms. Donahue? Ms.....Terra?

CLETUS

I didn't mean to....you have to know I didn't mean to-

TERRA

Look, just go and get a doctor or something. Get a....Irving, come on, stay awake, alright? You have to stay awake.

IRVING

I wanna go home. I want my Pop.

TERRA

Okay, we'll get you home. You'll see you Father and....can someone get a doctor, please?

BUSYBODIES

Town's an hour away.

TERRA

Take my truck.

BUSYBODIES

Don't know how to drive-

TERRA

Then run. Run do something. Do...Willow press harder. Press harder, damnit.

IRVING

Willow?

WILLOW

Yes, Irving.

IRVING

Willow, you're gonna be a good Momma.

WILLOW

Thank you.

IRVING

Name it after me, okay? Irving's a good girl name too, you know?

WILLOW

No, it's not.

IRVING

No, it's not.

WILLOW

You...you were better than most, Irving.

IRVING

I was?

TERRA

Hey, stop talking like that. You'll be fine. You'll be up and walkin' tomorrow. Look, it's barely even a scratch. You're so dramatic. You'll be fine. Come on, tell him. Tell him. Barely even a...come on, tell him.

(No one says anything.)

Forget them. You'll be fine. You got too much living to do to die. Irving, come on, look, get up. Take you on a walk right now. We'll show 'em. Look, we can go outside and see the sky. The stars are so pretty at night and-

IRVING

Terra, stop.

TERRA

But you're...no.

IRVING

Hey. Hey.

Yes.

TERRA

Think it'll stain?

IRVING
(jokingly)

(IRVING dies. Much like in life, he was the only one laughing at his joke. Transition Music)

Scene Four
Terra's Kitchen: Next Morning

(TERRA is standing in her kitchen as thunder rumbles outside. She takes a deep breath. She takes another deep breath. She slams her fist on the table. She destroys the kitchen. She tears things off walls, and pushes things off table. It should be a rage so intense that it scares the audience, it definitely scares Terra. Once she finishes she can only breathe and see what she's done. WILLOW enters.)

Morning. Your chickens still lay eggs?

WILLOW

You're hungry?

TERRA

Eating for two and all that.

WILLOW

Right. No, they don't.

TERRA

Huh. Got butter?

WILLOW

A little.

TERRA

WILLOW

Then I'll make us some pancakes.

TERRA

Ain't you gonna ask why the kitchen looks like a tornado came through?

WILLOW

No, I've been there before. You like pancakes?

TERRA

Depends.

WILLOW

On what?

TERRA

If they're good.

WILLOW

Oh, mine are good. It's my mother's recipe.

TERRA

Ain't got syrup.

WILLOW

That's fine. Thank you for letting me stay here tonight.

TERRA

Where else were you gonna go? JR's coming by to pick up Irving later.

WILLOW

Did you clean him up?

TERRA

Yeah. Changed the clothes too. It did stain.

WILLOW

You could have asked me to help.

No. TERRA

Did it take long? WILLOW

No. TERRA

You got chocolate chips? Momma used to put in chocolate chips. WILLOW

How'd you do it? TERRA

Do what? WILLOW

The rain? The wind? How'd you do it? TERRA

I didn't do anything. WILLOW

I won't be angry if you tell me, but I mean, if you hadn't done any of this, I'd still have a farm. I'd still have my friend. TERRA

I didn't kill Irving. WILLOW

I know you didn't directly, but- TERRA

No. No buts. I didn't. Cletus did. WILLOW

But it's all around you- TERRA

WILLOW

I'm just trying to live, I'm not....you'd still have the farm?

TERRA

I would.

WILLOW

Terra, I didn't know.

TERRA

That's fine, I didn't tell you.

WILLOW

What are you going to do?

TERRA

I don't know.

WILLOW

Does Neil know? He has money-

TERRA

I don't want that money. I can't take it.

WILLOW

There's no shame in getting help if someone's willing to give it to ya.

TERRA

No, you don't understand.

WILLOW

Yes, I do. You told me.

TERRA

I...I don't want to talk about this anymore.

WILLOW

Ain't this the sort of thing you talk about with your friend?

TERRA

I don't know.

WILLOW

Well, it just seemed like if you have someone to talk to it makes no sense why you oughtn't not talk to 'em....McHale?

TERRA

But how'd you do it?

WILLOW

I really didn't do anything.

(Beat)

TERRA

I don't want pancakes. I'm not hungry.

(The front door swings open.)

NEIL
(distant)

Terra? Terra!

TERRA

Here. We're in here.

(NEIL enters)

NEIL

Terra, I heard what happened. Is it true?

WILLOW

It's true.

NEIL

Oh.

TERRA

It's true.

NEIL

They did all this to the kitchen too? Were they trying to bring the place down-

TERRA

No. That was....no.

NEIL

Are you....are you both well?

TERRA

No.

WILLOW

Physically, yes.

TERRA

He died in my arms, Neil.

NEIL

Willow, could you please give us-

WILLOW

I'll be in the parlor.

(WILLOW exits.)

NEIL

Terra Anne-

TERRA

Why does this keep happening, Neil? Why do I know so many dead people?

NEIL

Perhaps you should sit.

TERRA

Did I do something?

NEIL

Really, you should sit-

TERRA

Cause if I did something I'm sorry. You hear, me? I'm sorry. I couldn't be more sorry. I can't be more-

NEIL

Terra. Please just...I did something that concerns you and I feel you should sit before you-

TERRA

Jesus, just say it. I can take it. I always take it.

NEIL

I telegraphed Father.

TERRA

Why would you-

NEIL

A rather expensive one at that. I told him everything.

TERRA

Everything?

NEIL

Everything. It's time you go home, Terra.

TERRA

I am home.

NEIL

It's time you really go home.

TERRA

You...you can't do that.

NEIL

But I did.

TERRA

No, Neil, you can't. I'm supposed to stay here.

NEIL

Stay here? Here? A place where the closet doctor is an hour away. A place where everyone smiles in your face and talks behind your back. A place where nothing grows. A place where you only have one friend and now you don't even have that-

TERRA

It's my gift, Neil.

NEIL

You keep saying that, but I don't know what that means. All I know is that this place, this place is going to kill you, and I refuse to be the brother of a dead sister.

TERRA

I hate you.

NEIL

That's okay, as long as you get help-

TERRA

I don't need your help.

NEIL

Yes, you do.

TERRA

I don't want your help.

NEIL

This isn't about what either of us wants.

TERRA

You can't do this.

NEIL

You need more than I can give. More than this place can give.

TERRA

I hate you.

NEIL

One day you won't.

TERRA

You sound just like him.

(Pause)

I thought you loved me.

(Beat)

NEIL

I...this...fantasies aren't forever, Terra.

TERRA

Where are you going?

NEIL

To help you pack. (As NEIL Exits) You can go in now, Willow.

(WILLOW enters.)

WILLOW

Cornelius has the strangest look in his eyes. Something close to heartbreak. Is everything okay?
Terra?

(TERRA loses the accent)

TERRA

I'm a bad farmer.

WILLOW

O...kay.

TERRA

Even before the drought. Neil's been lying to our parents since I got here. Lying saying I was good, I'm not good.

WILLOW

Farming's not easy.

(Beat)

TERRA

How did you survive in this Godforsaken town?

(WILLOW really thinks about it.)

WILLOW

I don't know, but I did.

TERRA

You know, in Boston, when things felt a little too oppressive, I used to pretend that I was someone else. That I was some grand adventurer trapezing around Europe and the thick jungles of the Amazon. You know, like some sort of Charles Marlow.

WILLOW

Really?

TERRA

Really. Sometimes, all I ever wanted to be away from there.

WILLOW

But don't you miss it?

TERRA

All the time. How 'bout you?

WILLOW

How 'bout I what?

TERRA

What did you use to imagine you'd do? What was your big fantasy?

WILLOW

Promise you won't laugh?

TERRA

I'll try my best.

WILLOW

I used to imagine that I was a princess.

TERRA

A princess.

WILLOW

You said you wouldn't laugh.

TERRA

I said I'd try my best, and I am. I am trying my best.

WILLOW

I suppose it is kinda silly.

TERRA

No, it's nice. A princess.

WILLOW

A princess, and 'course, I had my own little castle on the top of the tallest hill in the kingdom.
And a prince-

TERRA

A prince?

WILLOW

The kindest prince, who would always be there to play and do all the things that princes and princesses do.

TERRA

And servants?

WILLOW

Oh, we didn't have servants, Food would appear. Magic of course was a staple.

TERRA

That sounds nice.

WILLOW

It was. It really was.

TERRA

How about now?

WILLOW

Huh?

TERRA

What do you want now?

(A gentle roll of thunder.)

WILLOW

What do I want? What I want....I think I...I just want to be a girl. I just want the things girls want. I just want to be loved and to love and be needed. Not the way that people need entertainment, or distraction, not the way gossips need a target, but the way people need people. I don't think that's a lot to ask do you?

TERRA

I don't think that's a lot at all.

WILLOW

See, that's what I think.

TERRA

Willow, if you could go anywhere in the whole world, where would it be?

WILLOW

Anywhere?

TERRA

Anywhere.

WILLOW

Mmmmmm....anywhere in the....I'd like to see the sea. I always read in my books that it was....I don't know, it just sounded like it would be so....so different than here. I just want to go meet it where it stands.

TERRA

My family used to go to the coast in the summers.

WILLOW

Is it wonderful?

TERRA

It's....you should come and see.

WILLOW

Whada' mean?

TERRA

Today I decided I'm gonna run away again, and you're right the sea's a good place to go.

WILLOW

Run away?

TERRA

It's the only thing I've ever been good at.

WILLOW

But-

TERRA

No buts. I lost the farm. I lost my friend, but my freedom's still here, and yours is too, so if you want to use it-

WILLOW

You want me to go with you?

TERRA

It's no fun being alone.

WILLOW

You want me to go with you.

TERRA

But only if you want to. So what do you say? Willow, are you coming or what?

WILLOW

I....I'd love to.

(WILLOW laughs and TERRA laughs too, then, for the first time in seven months, they can hear it. The gentle patter of rain. The curse is broken, retribution has been had, and those who have been denied their voice the longest have finally been recentered in the narrative.)

Scene Five

Closing

(The rainstorm continues gently in the background.)

HOST

Thank you for listening to the finale 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.