**The Picture of Dorian Gray - Act III**

**by Oscar Wilde, Adapted by Mark Nixon**

[[*MUSIC: SOFT NOTES FROM A RHODES ELECTRIC PIANO.*]]

**DAVID AULT:** Hello, everyone! I know that you’re dying to get to The Picture of Dorian Gray, but first, before we start all of that, I just want to let you know about our sponsor for this mini season.

Hemlock Creek Productions is a post-production audio studio based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded by audio editor and sound designer Marisa Ewing, Hemlock Creek Productions is Marisa’s response to a growing need for remote audio editing services. While based in the United States, Hemlock Creek Productions has worked with clients and vocal talents across multiple countries and languages. They’ve provided their expert editing services on a variety of projects, including podcasts, films, and video games.

In addition to providing editing services, Hemlock Creek Productions also strives to work on projects that highlight diversity, both in the stories being told and the people that tell them. As a queer and black owned business, they believe diversity is a strength and look forward to working on projects that reflect the same values.

Hemlock Creek Productions will also be releasing its first original podcast, “Liars & Leeches” in 2023. Follow the story of Tonya in this supernatural horror podcast, as she grieves a sudden familial loss. But soon, her grief will bring someone–or some*thing*–into her life in ways she could never have anticipated. That’s “Liars & Leeches,” available on all good podcast apps in 2023.

But to learn more about Hemlock Creek Productions, please visit [hemlockcreekprod.com](http://www.hemlockcreekprod.com), or follow them on social media on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/hemcreekprod) and [instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hemcreekprod/) at @hemcreekprod.

So, there we go! And now, it is time for Dorian Gray.

[[*MUSIC: ENDS.*]]

**MARK NIXON:** Shadows at the Door is a podcast designed to scare and delight you. We are, at times, explicit and produced for an adult audience. To see if this episode is for you, consult our show notes for a list of content warnings.

[[*MUSIC: SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME, DORIAN GRAY EDITION: SHORT, CHOPPY STRING NOTES AND A RUNNING PLUCKED BASS NOTES. IT ENDS AS DAVID BEGINS SPEAKING.*]]

[Timestamp: 02:43]

**DAVID:** Hello, dearest listeners. Welcome to our discussion episode on *this Shadows at the Door* Pride Month special. And how apt that title is for *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* Is it not, Mark?

**MARK:** It’s very proud. It’s basically a peacock.

**DAVID:** Yes, indeed. And what a dazzling array of talent to be shown on that peacock’s tail in all areas of the podcast, don’t you think?

**MARK:** I would say so! It’s… [EXHALES DRAMATICALLY.]

**DAVID:** For listeners, you can’t see this, but Mark basically just sort of sat back in a kind of, “I don’t know where you’re going to go with this but I’m quite interested to hear where it is.” Which is why I said, “Don’t you think, Mark?” because then it’s just straight batted back into his court. That’s how we like it.

**MARK:** I’m beginning to think we should structure these podcasts a little bit more, David. [DAVID LAUGHS.] I don’t like being ambushed on my own podcast. [BOTH LAUGH.]

**DAVID:** On *our* own podcast, surely, Mark!

**MARK:** Well… How much work do you do?

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Forty minutes.

**MARK:** Yeah… That old bit.

**DAVID:** So, if you are tuning in, that means hopefully that you have listened to all three acts of our adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and can I say, straight out of the gate, props to Mr. Mark Nixon for the adaptation, for getting into the mind of Oscar to be able to bridge some of the gaps, I think we can possibly say… [INQUISITIVE NOISE FROM MARK.] And also for producing the whole thing. I know it’s been a long time coming but the finished product, I think, everyone will agree has been absolutely fantastic.

**MARK:** Well, thank you very much, David. And props to you, for channelling the most smug… as I said that, David took a sip of red wine… [TRAILS OFF CHUCKLING.]

**DAVID:** Yes.

**MARK:** Yes! No, absolutely, I mean everyone in this is just incredible. One thing I have been saying to everybody is, well, it’s kind of meant to be a compliment for others but it becomes a compliment to me, where I just say “how perfectly cast is this?” Some– whoever was casting director did a really, really good job. Because…

**DAVID:** Does this mean that I’m a smug, amoral libertine?

**MARK:** It’s how I see you.

**DAVID:** Okay!

**MARK:** It may not necessarily be who you are… [BOTH LAUGH.]

**DAVID:** Good to know, good to know.

**MARK:** All I say is, when friend of the show Erebusodora designed our poster for us, she just got the smugness in David perfectly. [BOTH LAUGH.] But I mean, should we jump in talking about the performances, David, because I, personally, have a lot to say.

**DAVID:** Absolutely.

**MARK:** This was my first time working with Karim. He’s just perfect for this role. Karim actually said to me, when I approached him for the role, he says, “Oh, this is not the kind of role that I normally get.” And I had actually only heard Karim’s show reel. David, listeners, then approached me a week later and said, “You do know Karim’s a big deal, right?” and I was like, “Is he? Well that’s fortuitous.”

**DAVID:** Yes, very much.

**MARK:** But, you know, all jokes aside, there’s a reason for that. Karim is absolutely fantastic. And he instantly infused Basil with this, like, sensitivity that could easily have gone too far or gone into, like, camp.

**DAVID:** Yeah, well, I think… Yes, sensitivity, fragility, vulnerability, I think, there’s this very definite feeling that Basil is wanting to say so much more but is holding himself back because of the times and what is acceptable and what isn’t and Karim just brings that forward so wonderfully, so perfectly.

**MARK:** Yeah, and, you know, there’s a line of Basil that breaks my heart almost, when Dorian is pressuring him to tell him what he sees in the painting, and Basil, on the verge of coming out, says, “If I told you, you might like me less.” I have said those words. You know, as a closeted young man. And it’s… [NOISE OF DISCOMFORT.] But yeah, no, Karim just absolutely fantastic. His exhaustion and laughter when he was filming his death scene… He ended his recording going “thanks for that, Mark.” [BOTH LAUGH.] And, moving on to Jake as Dorian, which was interesting. Because Jake played Dorian a little bit older than I had actually thought. And I was first hearing Jake and I was, like, “oh, he’s a bit deeper than I thought he’d play it.” and I thought “I might need to ask him to redo it. He’ll love that. Actors *love* retakes.”

**DAVID:** Absolutely.

**MARK:** Yes. [BOTH LAUGH.] But *Shadows at the Door*-heads, please refer to “Bread and Salt.” Just channelling Stan Lee there. [IN AN AMERICAN MOVIE ANNOUNCER VOICE.] “Excelsior!” [BACK TO NORMAL.] Anyway, no, but… and then I learned to really kind of understand that and it meant, you know, Dorian changes a lot through this story. He comes in trying to sound grown up and then he actually becomes, like, grown up. And the venom that Jake often performed in this was phenomenal. That’s kind of, like, one of the main things that I take away from Jake’s performance in this, was just Dorian was so full of venom. At times.

**DAVID:** Yes, and there’s a really lovely change from him being innocent to that rose garden scene which was *very* charged.

**MARK:** Yes! I took the subtext. And I rubbed it in everyone’s face. [BOTH ARE LAUGHING.]

**DAVID:** Oh, absolutely.

**MARK:** And then offered them a baby wipe to get some of that subtext off.

**DAVID:** Yes, but some of it obviously had sunk in by that point.

**MARK:** It’s meant to be good for your skin, subtext.

**DAVID:** Eh, so I hear.

**MARK:** Will that remain in the cut? I don’t know. We’ll have to find out.

[[*MUSIC: TRANSITIONAL GUITAR NOTES PLAYING THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR MELODY.*]]

**MARK:** This novel is barely concealed subtext. It was toned down from its original publication in a magazine. Apparently he was approached by the publisher at the same time Arthur Conan Doyle was and Arthur Conan Doyle provided *The Sign of Four*, I think Oscar Wilde turned in this, but very late. Which, I kind of… From what I know of Oscar Wilde, sounds very typical.

**DAVID:** Oh, very typical, yes.

**MARK:** Yeah, but it’s barely concealed subtext and I just took it that little bit further. I mean, at no point does anyone nosh anyone off or anything, sadly… The foley would have been quite difficult. But, I think it’s…

**DAVID:** [OVER MARK’S LAST SENTENCE, LAUGHING.] Mm… I mean, it’s nothing that you haven’t gone for before. Not to be a tell-tale or anything.

**MARK:** [ALSO LAUGHING.] Yeah, *Shadow at the Door*-heads, please refer to “Tell-Tale” if you have the stomach for it. So, yeah, I don’t know, it’s just to me, this… I see that charge in the story when I read it and I wanted to kind of make sure that it came through and I think this story deserves to be as gay as possible. [“Mm-hm!” FROM DAVID.] While still having, like, this “less is more” mentality. That I tend to apply to horror. The rules for horror, I believe, apply to the rules of erotica as well.

**DAVID:** Absolutely. Yes, most definitely.

**MARK:** Imply, less is more, let the viewer fill the gaps. Oh, god.

**DAVID:** But yes, as you say, Jake did a wonderful job of that changeover and there was a lovely dichotomy for him of “yes, I will be good” and then the painting saying “actually, no, no you’re gonna have to do this, come on, invert.”

**THE PAINTING:** [ECHOING, ANGRY.] Invert!

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] Yes, David’s… I wanted to find an offensive word for a homosexual and I googled “what’s a bad word for a homosexual?” and then I was like “no, google, I meant, like, in the late 1800s.”

**DAVID:** Ye olde [WITH THE E AT THE END OF OLDE PRONOUNCED.] google. Googl-ay. Yes.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] That’s just a guy in the street, you went up and asked him questions.

**DAVID:** Yeah.

**MARK:** And then if you asked him to put incognito mode in, he went into an alley with you. [BOTH LAUGH.] But, yeah, and apparently invert was applied to, like, homosexuals, non-binary people, and basically anyone who wasn’t…

**DAVID:** [INTERRUPTING, WITH AN AFFECTED POSH ACCENT.] Anyone that didn’t go with the norms of the Victorian era.

**MARK:** Yeah, and I don’t even think there was much of a room for cishet people, ‘cause, like, I mean, there was, but don’t *do* anything about it.

**DAVID:** Oh, yeah.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** Sorry for which people, did you say?

**MARK:** Well, I said cishet.

**DAVID:** Oh, cishet, right, okay, yeah. Because it’s really interesting that we’re told that the workhouses were full of pregnant women that had got off with the young masters of the houses and that there were all of these orphans and that everything was so tightly bound in terms of the rules and the morals of society but I recon Victorians were absolutely getting their rocks off most of the time.

**MARK:** Absolutely. They didn’t have podcasts, what else were they going to do?

**DAVID:** Mm, mm-hm. They did have podcasts, it was just some bloke in the street that you went up to and you said, “tell me a story.” And he would get…

**MARK:** And then a guy stood next to a bell across the street and he went “hear ye, hear ye, hit that bell and smash that like!” [BOTH LAUGH.]

**DAVID:** Yes, I was thinking, [BACK TO THE ACCENT.] “If you hear a reference to a certain time traveller, then ring *that* bell!

**MARK:** H. G. Wells!

**DAVID:** After all, Charles Dickens with his ghosts in that theatre!

[SFX: CLOISTER BELL GONGS.]

**MARK:** For pictures of Lady Watton’s feet, look through the peep hole…

**DAVID:** Lady Watton would never do that, Erika was a wonderful Lady Watton.

**MARK:** She was.

**DAVID:** Leaping back on track…

**MARK:** Are you implying that…

**DAVID:** …even though I’m…

**MARK:** …Erika is… No, I’m not going to… No, no.

**DAVID:** Yes, when I first performed with Erika, she was a street woman, a lady of the night.

**MARK:** What… what…

**DAVID:** …dressed up as a gentleman.

**MARK:** Oh…?

**DAVID:** She was! Yeah, that was the first thing I acted in with her, in Aylesbury we did a walking tour and she was [LOWERS HIS VOICE.] someone that could be bought for a low price. [NORMAL.] Not that low, but…

**MARK:** Well, surely rented.

**DAVID:** Well, yes, of course. Yes, fair enough. Rented for a time.

**MARK:** *Shadows at the Door* supports sex work. No, Erika…

**DAVID:** Actively, in your case?

**MARK:** Yeah, I mean, there’s a lot of stuff I’ll do in my Patreon…

**DAVID:** Oh, that’s true, yeah. Yeah.

**MARK:** [HURRIEDLY.] No, wait, Patreon, no, I won’t! It’s…

**DAVID:** I think you just got another ten subscribers. But Erika was… One of the things that I loved about her performance was the fact that she was able to match my complete disinterest and dismissiveness. And it was so beautifully disingenuous between the two of us, it was just so much fun.

**MARK:** I wrote in the bit where they kiss each other and the instruction is, like, “a disinterested kiss.” [**DAVID:** Yep.] And for Erika I think I wrote the word “mwah.” Which, m-w-a-h. [DAVID LAUGHS.] Yeah, I mean, I wanted to put her in more, but she’s not in the story much and I had considered putting her in the last act but then I saw an opportunity… Like, there’s a throwaway line that Lord Henry’s wife leaves him, towards the end of the story and, also, I had the scene where Dorian knocks on his door and I just thought, “I can’t be arsed to have another butler…” I didn’t want to have butlers in the story much, because you have to cast someone and then you’ve gotta, like, just, it’s more work just having another character come and introduce somebody.

**DAVID:** Though that wasn’t too much of a problem for Basil’s butler, was it, Mark?

**MARK:** Well, no, ‘cause I did *one* butler and then I thought, “do I have to do this for every fucking time?” So, I may, to me…

**DAVID:** [IN A DRY BUTLER VOICE.] A Mr. Dorian Gray, sir.

**MARK:** [MUTTERING.] Excuse me, David, if you’re gonna imitate it, do it right. It’s like, [HIS BUTLER VOICE IS LESS DRY, DEEPER, AND MORE IN THE CHEST.] Mr. Dorian Gray, sir. [BACK TO NORMAL, AS DAVID LAUGHS.] But, like, to me, it was this little inside joke to myself that Victor was always talked about but never heard. And that Dorian was always shouting up the stairs to him. And then, there’s a throwaway line in the book where Basil’s like, “where’s your butler?” and it’s “oh, he married someone.” I thought, I want to give Victor an end to his arc. What happened to Victor? He married. So he’s presumably somewhat happy.

**DAVID:** Aw.

**MARK:** Yeah, but it’s a throwaway line that his wife has left him, and I thought, “I’ll have him answer his own door. Why? ‘Cause he can’t afford as many servants as he used to.” And I just thought, she’s taken some of the money, she’s gone, and he’s just, like, clinging on to this idea that he’s happy and successful. And in fact, now I’m gonna use this opportunity to praise David, so, buckle your seatbelt, David.

**DAVID:** Oh, oh dear, oh no. [SIGH.]

**MARK:** My favourite performance of yours is–You think it would be the bit where you’re seducing Dorian in the garden, Henry that is, but it’s actually the bit at the end, when Dorian is playing the piano and Henry, in one adaptation of this story, Henry realises that something is going on with Dorian, because he’s just not ageing. In this, you know, and in the book, he doesn’t really care, he doesn’t notice it, he’s, like, what’s that line? “Tell me what you do, Dorian, I’ll do anything except exercise and get up, you know, early.”

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Ah, yes.

**MARK:** Which, I think we can all relate to that.

**DAVID:** Oh, absolutely.

**MARK:** But, no, I kind of wrote it and David, and I directed you this way, and you played it is that Henry kind of knows that Dorian’s done some bad shit. Like, he kind of knows that Dorian killed Basil, but is just not interested. He’s not even immoral, he’s just, he can’t be arsed with it. No, so I adore your performance in that, ‘cause you sound desperate and you sound like Henry’s clinging onto this idea of who he was and it’s all gone wrong for him. Well, not all gone wrong, but… Yeah, and I just love that and you read Henry as such a smug bastard and I think one of the first things that you said to me is that you hated Henry or that you just really didn’t like him. Even though he was an amazing character to play, [**DAVID:** Oh, yeah.] because he was just very much not you.

**DAVID:** Yeah, he’s thoroughly unlikeable. But thoroughly likeable at the same time.

**MARK:** Yeah, yeah. I think Henry would be a great person to have in your friend group for about two minutes.

**DAVID:** Yes. Yeah, he strikes me in a way as a little bit like the Piers Morgan of the 19th century. Or, someone…

**MARK:** Except witty and intelligent.

**DAVID:** Well, yes, obviously, but… If Piers Morgan had actually wrote his lines beforehand. It’s that kind of people want to interact with him but people don’t want to interact him. And he sort of swans through life popping his head up everywhere.

**MARK:** And I think, he’s so desperate to be a meme.

**DAVID:** Mm, mm.

**MARK:** He just wants to be quoted. He keeps throwing stuff at the wall and seeing what sticks.

**DAVID:** Absolutely. And that’s one of the wonderful things about Henry is that every line was a gift of writing. Every line was a witticism and in a way it goes against some of the roles I’ve done before where, if you know that a line is meant to get a laugh, you play for a laugh. But all of Henry is you are not playing… you are just casting these pearls before swine, you’re just sort of sending it out there and you don’t care about the adulation, but you do actually really want the adulation, but you don’t *care* about it.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** Or you don’t want to been to be caring about it.

**MARK:** I feel like if he’d got, like, a round of applause for saying something witty at a dinner party, he’d be like, “no, no, no, no” and then he’ll go home, look himself in the mirror, going, “Y-yes, Henry, yes! You did it!”

**DAVID:** Exactly, yes, yes. [LAUGHS.]

**MARK:** Would Henry be a troll on Tw–oh, god, imagine, Lord Henry with a Twitter account.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Oh…

**MARK:** [SOUNDING PRETENTIOUS.] A man who uses a hashtag is desperate to connect with the world. And yet the world is so eager to avoid him! [DAVID LAUGHS, MARK SWITCHED BACK TO HIS NORMAL VOICE.] You know, I’ve got this cracking quote from Oscar Wilde, he wrote in 1894 in a letter, he said, “*The Picture of Dorian Gray* contains much of me in it. Basil Hallward is what I think I am, Lord Henry what the world thinks me, Dorian is what I would like to be, in other ages perhaps.” I have always seen Henry as the Oscar Wilde insert!

**DAVID:** Mm-hm, absolutely! Yes! There to corrupt young minds.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** And bring them over to the hedonism and the amazing, wonderful charms of indulging every single impulse.

**MARK:** Yeah, which, I mean, what else are you going to do in London except sex work, opium, alcohol…

**DAVID:** I mean, we’re talking the 19th century here, not now.

**MARK:** Oh, now, I’m pretty sure you can do anything you want.

**DAVID:** No, with the cost of living crisis as it is, what are you going to do in London but sex work, opium… [LAUGHING.]

**MARK:** Hang on now, hang on, you can afford an opium habit? With the cost of living crisis?

**DAVID:** Opiate! Shall we say, opiate. Just, just, yeah. Go to… go to the doctor’s, they’ll dispense you whatever you want.

**MARK:** So talking about the hedonism and such, of course, we have Sibyl, who is…

**DAVID:** Ah, Sibyl Vane.

**MARK:** She’s like the polar opposite of what…

**DAVID:** Wouldn’t you call her the antithesis, Mark?

**MARK:** David’s saying that because I just mispronounced it three times in a row and then moved on to a different word. But you know, she’s this very young, pure young woman. You know, when I was–I remember the second person that I cast in my head–no the third, was Ilana. I was like, okay, Jake as Dorian, David as Henry, and Ilana as Sibyl. It’s a shame Ilana is confined to act one, although we’ll talk about the allocation of the acts shortly. But no, she’s incredible and I was having this great conversation with Ilana at the time which I hope Ilana herself can remember, because this was when we recorded act one, which was about, I think, thirteen months ago.

**DAVID:** It was a long time ago.

**MARK:** It was, yeah. But, ‘cause I had said that I see Sibyl as a representation of codependency. That she represents this desperate, insecure, keen love that we experience the strongest in our first love. Or, indeed, early loves. And I’m someone who’s really into, like, reading about, like, love and relationships and all this kind of stuff. Head and heart work, as it’s referred to on my favourite podcast, and Ilana kind of countered to this. She said she sees Sibyl as a representation of misogyny. Of how, you know, women can be seen in all-male spaces, you know, and, like, although you could see her that way, she could just be a “oh, well, women are insecure, women are needy.” You know, “women are…” all these things. And I don’t know enough about Wilde to know, you know, what his relationship with women was. I really should read a bit more. About that. And I think Sibyl’s an interesting one and I remember Ilana, just in the chat, started writing, “Justice for Sibyl! Justice for Sibyl!” [BOTH LAUGH.] So listeners, if you agree with Ilana, hashtag “Justice for Sibyl.” And it was fun as well, because Ilana said that when I decided to have Sibyl’s… ‘cause I thought, if I write Sibyl the way that she is in the book, we’re only going to get to hear her acting badly. So I thought, I’m going to let her do a monologue from Romeo and Juliet and I went for the classic. Because Dorian’s saying “oh, and she did Romeo… ah, well, she did do Romeo, but she was performing as Juliet and ah, she was fucking awesome, Henry! You should have heard her.” And then it cuts to her [IN A SQUEAKY, BAD VOICE.] “Romeo O Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” and Ilana’s doing a great job, but I’m making her do it in this really thick southern accent and she pulls it off. So, I think… And then, I absolutely loved writing the scene where we hear her act badly because the direction was like, “she’s acting badly, it’s in monotone.” and then in the background I’ve got all this going whilst they’re talking over her and then the direction just says “oh, god, she won’t stop. She is not improving. Please make it stop.”

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] I did love Henry’s “oh, dear.”

**MARK:** Yeah. But that’s the…

**DAVID:** It’s just, everything that he needed to say.

**MARK:** Yes, and then Basil’s like, “oh.” And I love that Basil’s trying so hard to be supportive in that scene because, you know, Basil cried on the way to the theatre. You know, his heart’s breaking and yet he loves Dorian so much that he is willing to put up with this and to be there. But that was a fun scene because, again, when I’m adapting a text, I like to look as to what I can do… What can I add to the text and it’s like… In the book, Henry hates the theatre because it’s small, it’s tacky, it’s just everyone is ugly who’s attending. And he says, “oh, what a place to find one’s divinity in.” And I just thought, “how can I put this in sound.” Because there’s a lot of talking in act one, it’s a very talk-y act and I was getting very self-conscious. So, Henry has an uncomfortable scene. He’s shifting in his seat. He’s like, [IN A LORD HENRY VOICE.] “oh, this seat is ghastly.” [BACK TO HIS NORMAL VOICE.] And that was fun to play with. But speaking of adapting, so much of this dialogue includes action in it. It’s like, “don’t shrug your shoulders like that”, “oh, you smile? Oh, yeah, you see my point.” It’s almost as if he wanted a horny bi man to adapt this into audio adaptation later in life.

**DAVID:** 132 years later.

**MARK:** It’s exactly what he wanted. Yeah, he… I think he would be happy that I did it. Of…

**DAVID:** I think so, yes.

**MARK:** Yes, of all the podcasts…

**DAVID:** I think you’ve done… Well, all art is useless, Mark, all art.

**MARK:** Yeah, he did say that… [THEY LAUGH.] Quite famously. Yeah, but there’s just so much dialogue that includes the action and it’s like, it may feel like that I did that, but there was some parts in adaptation that I thought I could just bloody copy and paste this paragraph, this is perfect.

**DAVID:** Yeah. In fact, it’s something that Shakespeare did a lot.

**MARK:** Copy and paste.

**DAVID:** Yes, absolutely. It was all Francis Bacon anyway. But, no, Shakespeare put all of his action into the text so that when you were… when the actors were given the text, because they weren’t given the full text because that could then be either copied or given to other travelling theatre troupes to perform, so each actor was given cue lines. You would have the cue line and then you would have your speech and then the next cue line and then your next speech. So, no one had a full copy of the play but the writer and the person dealing with all of the stage decor, et cetera. So all of the action had to be put into the text, so that the actors knew what they were going to do with the lines when they said them. So if they said, “look, look over here, here is a Montague over here who’s dead,” then that gave the actor the knowledge and the impetus to say “look over here.” There it is, in the text. It is guiding the audience over to the dead body over there. So it’s Shakespearean, it has precedent.

**MARK:** Oh, wow!

**DAVID:** But it doesn’t work so much in a book, in a way, because it sounds like it was meant to be performed, rather than read.

**MARK:** And yet it wasn’t.

**DAVID:** And yet it wasn’t.

**MARK:** Yeah, but I guess he was used to writing plays. This is his only novel that he wrote and… I have always wanted to see *The Importance of Being Earnest* and I haven’t because I want to see it on the stage and during lockdown there was one theatre that had released a recording, I think it was just done to keep in their archive, they had never intended to release it. And they released it for free, to say “hey, you know, we’re all locked down, enjoy this.” And it was, like, from the nosebleeds and it just wasn’t… I thought, this isn’t how I want to experience it. But I did borrow, I believe, I borrowed a line from *The Importance of Being Earnest* where he says, “If alcohol…” no, “If drunk in sufficient quantities can produce all of the effects of drunkenness.” Which, I tried to sneak in a few little Wilde-isms, either way, ‘cause I very much doubt I’m going to be doing any other Oscar Wilde adaptations. I mean, you could argue this isn’t even the spookiest thing in the world, but it’s gay and spooky, and that’s pretty much our brand, David.

**DAVID:** I think that’s fine. It deals with the paranormal, so I’m game.

[[*MUSIC: STRONG PLUCKED NOTES PLAY A MELODY, WITH DISTORTED LONG STRINGS UNDERNEATH AS A TRANSITION.*]]

**DAVID:** In terms of other performances, we do need to, given that we’ve talked about Sibyl Vane and Ilana’s brilliant performance there, we should give a mention to her brother as well.

**MARK:** Yes, Andy Cresswell. I don’t know, I remembered thinking to his no-nonsense character in "Zwergin Pond."

**DAVID:** Mm, yes.

**MARK:** Which appeared on *NoSleep*. And I always enjoyed that and when I contacted him, and I was like, “I’ve been meaning to really go on about that.” And he did a great job. But no, he was a fantastic, very, I would say, very broad James Vane. And he made him sound a bit more groggy and a bit more worse for wear as it’s been like 15, 20 years since his sister died in the final act. Again, it’s hard not to talk about the story, but I wouldn’t deprive you of the drunk special which we have recorded but I haven’t edited at the time of recording this yet. When we record the drunk ones, I get a little bit nervous to hear it. It takes me a few weeks to steel myself. However, the next drunk one that I have to record and edit will be far more pleasurable, because David has agreed to record another one.

**DAVID:** I have agreed, yes.

**MARK:** And we will have a no snacks rule. [BOTH LAUGH.]

**DAVID:** Fair enough, yep. So, in terms of just coming back, we’ve already mentioned one of the cameos that we had, which was you as the Butler. [IN A FALSELY INQUISITIVE TONE.] However, I understand that there were another couple of cameos! Were there not, Mark?

**MARK:** There was. I wouldn’t even consider myself a cameo, ‘cause I was named on the cast because I’m Alan Campbell in act three, a scene I did not enjoy putting together. I’m still not used to hearing myself act earnestly. I’m absolutely fine with [IN A WEIRD VOICE, THIS IS ALL BUT UNINTELLIGIBLE.] Pet Semetary, [BACK TO NORMAL.] but when it comes to someone being completely normal… By the way, UK listeners, Pet Semetary is on Netflix right now. Go for it. Although someone did contact me and said they watched it but it’s not the same without hearing the [HIGH PITCHED MICKEY MOUSE LAUGH.]. Anyway.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Ah, yes. [ALSO DOES A MICKEY LAUGH, THEN CONTINUES IN A MICKEY VOICE.] A truck!

**MARK:** [MICKEY VOICE, LAUGHING.] Ooh, father, I’m going to get squished!

**DAVID:** [BACK TO NORMAL.] So we’ll start off with act one and it was Alasdair Stuart, the wonderful guy behind *so* much audio stuff. He’s very much a royalty within the world of audio drama. So Alasdair was our Romeo, wasn’t he?

**MARK:** He was Romeo, that’s how I credited him in the cast. Rather than “the actor playing Romeo”, just “Romeo.”

**DAVID:** Yeah.

**MARK:** It was lovely, actually. I just saw an opportunity for cameos and I put it out on twitter and he was quite keen and he gave me it straightaway and I don’t think he realised he’d be waiting such a long… We need to talk about why this took such a long time, as well. But no, it was lovely to have him in and such an honour. I didn’t think that would be the first time I’d be working with him in that capacity, but that was great. And then, in act three we have Dean J. Smith playing the hansom driver. That is ‘hansom’ although, you know Dean, not to…

**DAVID:** Well, yes.

**MARK:** Yeah. Yeah, Dean, it’s on the record. Handsome. Yeah, so he does a tremendous job and it was actually Erika who suggested Dean because they worked together on *St. Kilda*.

**DAVID:** *St. Kilda*! Yes.

**MARK:** A podcast I’ve been really looking forward to listening to and haven’t started yet because I’ve been really busy.

**DAVID:** Well, Erika at HorrorCon was *very* keen to make sure that everyone knew that it was *definitely* not a cult.

**MARK:** Right.

**DAVID:** *Definitely* not a cult. It’s wholesome!

**MARK:** That’s a little sus.

**DAVID:** *Definitely* not a cult. [MARK LAUGHS.] Just saying.

**MARK:** Okay.

**DAVID:** Naomi, if you’re listening, cast me.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] Oh, I love how… That wasn’t even a request!

**DAVID:** Yeah, no, no, it’s a demand now. It’s, like, we’re a season down. Come on.

**MARK:** Yep. And now, speaking of sex work, I really wanted to have a male sex worker on the docks because I thought “how do I establish in audio that the docks are a bit seedy?” So I’ve got characters going “the docks! Oh, don’t go there!” And then, obviously I put in the sound effect of a dock, but I can’t put, like, you know… And I nearly put some rats in but rat sound effects all sound a bit cartoony. And…

**DAVID:** Well, the nice girls love a sailor, though, Mark…

**MARK:** Mm. And…

**DAVID:** And we know what happens in the Navy, so…

**MARK:** They serve on vessels.

**DAVID:** Yes.

**MARK:** Yes. [AFTER A PAUSE.] So I saw an opportunity to put a male sex worker in and, naturally, I thought I want to have Nico in a cameo. So…

**DAVID:** Nico? That was Nico? Surely not.

**MARK:** That was Nico.

**DAVID:** He would *never* be a male sex worker!

**MARK:** I think he would. You know? [DAVID LAUGHS.] He’s got a cute face. I think he’d get away with it.

**DAVID:** Yeah, I think he could, yeah. Nico, if you’re listening…

**MARK:** Cast him! In your next “scene.”

**DAVID:** [BOTH LAUGHING.] Although, to be fair, just before we go on to Nico, I have been in a couple of his episodes of his podcast *Connections*, which is a really…

**MARK:** Beautiful segue.

**DAVID:** Yes, thank you! It’s an amazing set of podcast episodes, set of stories, where he wrote the music first and then got writers, such as yourself, Mark, to write to the music.

**MARK:** Yeah! Which, at first, I was, like, do I have to, like, rhyme on beat? But, no. It was a lovely project, I hope he does more. Because, yeah, he had these five tracks, he approached five writers–well, I assume five, I assume they all said yes–and they all created a story kind of inspired by the words and some of these stories are a bit more fantasy, some of them are very terrestrial. Certainly mine is a very normal story with nothing fantastical going on, but…

**DAVID:** It was very wholesome, though, Mark. It was wonderfully wholesome.

**MARK:** Thank you. You know, I *can* do not-horror. So, you know, people, if you’re listening, hire me! [BOTH LAUGH.] But yeah, it’s just five very different stories and it’s a wonderful exercise in just exploring the kind of stories you can tell with a very wide remit. And, you know, there’ll be some writers that you will probably already be familiar with and writers that you won’t and certainly voice actors… In fact, one of the voice actors in *Connections*, I have approached to be in season three of *Shadows*, so…

**DAVID:** Ooh!

**MARK:** Yes.

**DAVID:** It’s nice I’m being allowed back onto my own podcast.

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] David, I’m writing a very good script for you right now, so be kind.

**DAVID:** Okay, okay.

**MARK:** No, yeah, tell you what, what we’ll do is we will now play you the trailer for Nico’s podcast, *Connections.* You will hear some of the beautiful words and the beautiful music, some of the beautiful acting and hopefully you’ll feel compelled to check them out.

**DAVID:** Hit that subscribe button now.

[[*MUSIC: GENTLE PIANO PLAYING A MELODY SLOWLY.*]]

**NICO:** *Connections: The Podcast* is a new audio drama that brings short stories to life with the music that inspired them.

[SFX: BLOWING WIND AND A CRACKLING FIRE.]

**LEY:** [THEY HAVE A SOFT, TREBLE VOICE.] It is safe to pay it no heed as I am called to by the voices at the water’s edge. Slowly, unsteadily at first, I push myself to my feet, [FOOTSTEPS ON SAND BEGIN, SLOWLY AT FIRST THEN ACCELERATING.] stumble forwards, and begin to run. [QUIET LAUGH.]

**NICO:** Whether standing braced on a blustery seaside cliff, taking a new step forward into the unknown, or channel surfing alone through radio static, each story in *Connections* contains a unique insight into the world, its challenges, and the music that connects us all. *Connections: The Podcast* is the debut production from We Talk of Dreams and you can listen to it wherever you listen to podcasts. Or visit wetalkofdreams.com.

**DAVID:** So there you go, do check that out wherever you get your podcasts. That’s *Connections*, from We Talk of Dreams.

**MARK:** Yes. Also, I would be remiss, because Erika was affronted that on Twitter I did not refer to her as being a secret cameo. Because she is the opium den landlady.

**DAVID:** Ah, of course. Yes.

**MARK:** And it was so fun, because… Before I go into why this took so long, I initially was writing a scene where Henry and Dorian entered a brothel and it was being run by a madam. And Ilana was going to play one of the sex workers and Erika was going to go, like, “oh, hello, gentlemen, welcome to, you know, fucking Moulin Rouge.” Or whatever I was calling it. And that was one idea. And then at one point, Erika was just going to be a sex worker and, you know, you think cockney, like, Victorian sex workers and I was writing dialogue for Erika that was so broad I was ashamed of it. And I–David, this… I’ve never told you this before, but I had written the line for Erika and told her this line and she was happy to record it as “fancy a good time, mister, I can suck the Thames dry, I can.” [DAVID LAUGHS.] And I came back to that a few days later and I thought, “I’ve gone too far.”

**DAVID:** Yeah, yeah

**MARK:** So…

**DAVID:** She’s in Aylesbury, there are much more local rivers there.

**MARK:** So anyway, she went from, like, sex worker on the street to brothel madam and then Erika kind of threw shade at me with her audio because she went “all right, Mark, I’m here to record the… ‘Erika Sanderson, *Shadows at the Door…* ‘“

**ERIKA:** [BEGINS OVER THE TOP OF MARK’S WORDS.] Erika Sanderson, *Shadows at the Door…* “Picture of Dorian Gray” scene six, the brothel keeper. No, I mean, the auld hag, no, I mean the *opium landlady.* [SLIDING INTO THE ACCENT FOR THE CHARACTER.] Who runs a respectable business here, I’ll have you know.

**MARK:** And it was delightful. And, so, Erika just considered that one of the secret cameos. I’m always inclined to give Erika what she wants because anyone who’s known or met Erika in any capacity is charmed.

**DAVID:** Absolutely. Yes. Although I just tend to find myself dead in various different ways. Turned into tea. Murdered…

**MARK:** Well, that’s how people feel after they meet you, David, is…

**DAVID:** Oh, that’s true, yeah. That explains such a lot. Oh, well.

**MARK:** It explains why I started this enterprise with you.

**DAVID:** So that you could murder me in different ways!

**MARK:** Well, no, it was actually… I was, you know, just ‘cause I… ‘cause you’re a lovely person, David, I enjoy your company and you’re a pleasure to work with.

**DAVID:** That’s *far* too wholesome, Mark. This is a horror podcast.

**MARK:** I wrote an episode of *Connections*. That’s the thing! I’m Mr. Spooky Writer but I’m also just… I refer to myself as a hopeful romantic because I think a hopeless romantic implies that you’re naïve.

**DAVID:** Yeah.

**MARK:** I’m not a massive fan of the Chibnall era, David, but I do love the line “travel hopefully, the universe will surprise you always.”

[SFX: CLOISTER BELL.]

**DAVID:** I agree.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** I very much agree. So, just coming back to our favourite male sex worker, Nico Vetessee, we should obviously give a mention to the music.

**MARK:** Absolutely. I really hope Nico releases this as another soundtrack because the music in this is terrific. We were both very excited to create a… we called it a period drama version of the *Shadows at the Door* theme.

[[*MUSIC: SHORT, CHOPPY STRING NOTES AND A RUNNING PLUCKED BASS NOTES.*]]

**MARK:** And at first we were, like, saying nothing synthetic for this. It has to be, you know, all violins, all pianos and I gave him some reference tracks. And then I remember watching the film *Promising Young Woman*, a film that splits people down the middle. Starring Carey Mulligan, David, who you’ll know from “Blink.”

[SFX: CLOISTER BELL.]

**DAVID:** Oh! The lady that got sent back in time.

**MARK:** Sally Sparrow.

**DAVID:** Oh, Sally Sparrow, I thought that was Sheridan Smith.

**MARK:** No, Sheridan Smith…

**DAVID:** No! Oh, no? What? Oh! [SNAPS FINGERS.] Sally Sparrow!

[[*MUSIC: ENDS.*]]

**MARK:** [SOUNDING UNIMPRESSED.] Yes. Smooth.

**DAVID:** That’s just for you to edit in.

**MARK:** I know. Smooth. Anyway, yeah, so, there’s a brilliant scene where she, like, in the penultimate scene to the film… Well, I say penultimate, like, the film’s coming to a climax, and she’s marching towards, like, her objective and it plays the most fucking haunting cover of “Toxic” by Britney Spears with violins. And I paused the film, found this track on youtube, sent it to Nico and said “is it too late to include this in the notes.” And he went, “nope, it is now included in the inspiration.” And then, you know, one thing that Nico and I agreed on, and it was a really nice process, ‘cause, like, I don’t remember either one of us suggesting it, but we just knew that Dorian was gonna have a theme, Basil was gonna have a theme. Basil’s is the one that really sticks out to me in particular. But we knew that as the story progressed that the music would get corrupted and then synthetic elements would start coming in. I asked that the music kind of take the journey of the painting itself. It starts off beautiful, polished, wholesome, pure and then by the end, it’s just a mess. And Nico certainly does that. And I hope to god he releases it as a soundtrack. Because that *Shadows at the Door* period drama theme we’ll probably never get to reuse. Because we probably will not do another miniseries for some time.

**DAVID:** Although depending on what I choose for my drunk ghost story, *wink wink*.

**MARK:** Yeah, I mean, I know what he’s chosen…

**DAVID:** We could possibly use it then.

**MARK:** Yeah.

**DAVID:** Well, you chose it for me.

**MARK:** I *suggested* it for you. Because I know vaguely what kind of stuff you’ve read and what you’re aware of.

**DAVID:** Mm, okay.

**MARK:** I mean, Macbeth was a good choice.

**DAVID:** It was! It was, it really was. I have much more of a knowledge of, or, an ability to quote Shakespeare than most other things. Apart from *The Hitchhiker’s Guide*, but we’re never gonna be able to do that ‘cause that’s not spooky enough.

**MARK:** The more I learn about audio drama and mix with people who do audio drama–’cause that’s something I’ve never done til recently is speak to other creators. Karim’s been lovely in kind of pointing me in the right direction. So many people were inspired by *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, like you were.

**DAVID:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It was just a seminal work. And it happened at around the right time. ‘Cause it was the early, sorry, the late ‘70s, early ‘80s, when it came out. Just a bit like *Blake’s 7*, as well. And that was wonderful. Which was enough time for my dad to have got the tapes that I could then listen to. And, of course, a lot of it went over my head but that didn’t matter. It was just so nicely done.

[[*MUSIC: AS MARK GETS INTO THE SCENE, SLOW INSPIRING FLASHBACK TRUMPET MUSIC STARTS TO PLAY.*]]

**MARK:** David, I’ve got this image of… Because you said the ‘70s, of you, in, like, a flat cap, basically dressed like you’re gonna go sweep some chimneys. And we’ve got, like, a sepia filter on the camera and your dad comes in, and goes [THICK YORKSHIRE ACCENT.] ‘Ey, up, David, lad. Got you these tapes. Called *Hitchhikers t’Guide t’Galaxy*. Listen to these, my son, be inspired. Let them inform your life decisions. Be a better man.

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING THROUGH ALL OF THIS.] Oh, nothing could be further from the truth. Bless you, Mark. [BOTH LAUGH.]

[[*MUSIC: TRUMPETS FADE OUT.*]]

**DAVID:** [STILL LAUGHING.] Yeah, *nothing* could be further from the truth. But thank you!

**MARK:** Do you want me to leave in your “nothing could be further from the truth” comment?

**DAVID:** Absolutely, that’s fine. Yes.

**MARK:** Yeah, my parents don’t listen either…

[[*MUSIC: STRONG PIANO NOTES PLAYING A TRANSITIONAL SNIPPET FROM THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME.*]]

**DAVID:** So, talking about things that happened a long time ago, it feels like that the announcement that you were going to do the miniseries of Dorian Gray happened mid-’80s, early ‘90s? [MARK LAUGHS.] If I can just be the voice of the listenership here, just to ask you…

**MARK:** No, it was ‘97, David, because the announcement was overshadowed the next day by the tragic death of Lady Di.

**DAVID:** Oh, of course. Yes. 1997, amazing year, things can only get better. [DERISIVE SHORT LAUGH FROM MARK.] So, what took it so long?

**MARK:** Well, first of all, I’d always said I would do a miniseries once we were doing this a bit more, like, I had more time for it. But I just got excited by the idea and I wanted to do it. And [SIGH.] I gave myself this rule of no narration. Because when you’re doing an adaptation, narration is a very easy crutch.

**DAVID:** Yes.

**MARK:** For some stories, like “Sleepy Hollow,” it’s basically unavoidable. But for “Dorian,” I thought it would be possible to do it. I listened to the big Finnish *Dorian Gray* adaptation, which is very heavily narrated. I mean, it’s good, it’s all right, [MUTTERED.] compared to *Shadows at the Door*, at least, [BACK TO NORMAL VOLUME.] and I decided no narration. And I forgot that once Sibyl dies, the book is all narration and there’s a few chapters of saying, “oh, yes, and then Dorian read a sexy book” that did a lot of his character development for him and things happened. And I was like, “oh, god.” So then I had to start writing more. Like, in act one, there is some of my own words in there, like, there has to be, naturally, but not that much. In act two and act three, there’s a lot more of it. And I got–I’ll be honest, David, I got a bit intimidated. Because Oscar Wilde is known as perhaps one of the wittiest people to have lived. People usually cite him or Churchill, [MUTTERED.] I think the Churchill one is bullshit, [BACK TO NORMAL.] so, you know, I thought, “I have to channel Oscar Wilde.” And I have snuck in, like, little things that people say that sound like a thing that Wilde would say in the hopes that people will accept it as something that sounds like Wilde or… Or they will think it *was* Wilde but it’s me. And here’s a list of them–no. And I just started making the joke to people around me, saying I’m daring to write as Oscar Wilde. And then I was like, “how dare you write as Oscar Wilde? How dare *you*, Mark Nixon, try to write as Oscar Wilde.” And this scene where they visited a brothel, I wanted it to be that because I wanted to see Dorian… I wanted us to see some of Dorian’s steps into it. And putting the first cliffhanger as Henry saying Sibyl is dead actually cuts off the rest of the scene where they talk about it for a long time. And Henry goes, [HIGH, POSH VOICE.] Oh, it’s… [NORMAL.] And Dorian goes, [HIGH, POSH VOICE.] Oh, it’s terrible. [NORMAL.] And then Henry says, “is it, though?” And he goes, “eh, not really.” And, yeah, that fucking horrible line. “I wish a woman had killed herself over *me*,” or something. It’s horrible. Yeah, so I wanted to have this scene and it was becoming… I basically got writer’s block over it. And then I was starting to develop writer’s block and I was getting really intimidated by it and then, like, people in my life were trying to be helpful and saying, “oh, I love Dorian Gray, here’s what *I* think about it. Here’s what you should focus on.” And I was like, “no, no, please, please stop.” And they’re like, “oh, here’s an adaptation that I really loved,” or “here’s…” and then someone else would do it and I’m like, [PLEADING.] “No, no, please.” [NORMAL.] And it just, it became, to clumsily refer to another classic, it became my white whale. And then I couldn’t write anything for a few months and then I had a relationship end at a very similar time. So there was just some knock on effect from that and it just became this thing. When I was eventually able to return to it, it was because I had started writing some of season three. And then one day everything just clicked and I was able to write the rest of this very quickly. Not too quickly, but quickly. And…

**DAVID:** There was no feeling of it being rushed.

**MARK:** Fuck you.

**DAVID:** And I mean that in the nice way. [BOTH LAUGH.]

**MARK:** Fuck you, bastard. [BOTH LAUGH.] Listeners, that sound you heard was a knife being very, very slowly inserted into me.

**DAVID:** I was merely channelling Lord Henry there.

**MARK:** But a few things also slowed us down. Like, obviously, so, you’ll be happy to know that we are, like, season three is in production. It is mostly written. Some episodes have been recorded. Some have even started being produced. Oh, shit! Another thing that happened, David, remember I said to you before we started recording that there was a big thing I wanted to talk about?

**DAVID:** Yeah?

**MARK:** My laptop.

**DAVID:** Oh, of course! Yes.

**MARK:** So there I was, listeners, watching “The Apprentice,” of all things, over Zoom. [DAVID MAKES NOISES OF DISGUST.] And my laptop fell and broke.

**DAVID:** And Lord Sugar said you’re fired and it just goes [BLOWS A RASPBERRY.]

**MARK:** [MAKES A FALLING SOUND EFFECT.]

**DAVID:** [SINGS A SHORT GAME OVER MELODY.]

**MARK:** Now, to be fair, the laptop had been struggling for a while because of what I was asking it to do with regards to Audition and all, like, you know, like, when everything you work in is a .wav, you know, and… Even putting stuff in the cloud, it was struggling. And act one took a while to make. So act one had been pretty much finished and this thing died. And it wasn’t just the screen that died. There was like, some kind of issue with a lot of the stuff that was on it. I took it to Apple, it wasn’t fixable. I was freaking out. And I was talking to someone and they said maybe you can accept help. And I was like, “no.” And they were like, “can *I* help you?” And I was like, “no.” “But what if you ask everyone to help, and then I help as part of that?” I was like, [DEEP SIGH.] “okay.” And I put out a message and, you know, I’ll be honest, David, there are days where I get a bit stressed with *Shadows* because I think…

**DAVID:** Really?

**MARK:** ‘Cause I think, “well, you know, we… so much work goes into it, why isn’t it, like, the biggest thing since the sliced bread podcast?” But, you know, sometimes I feel like… And then I think, you know, the listeners that we have are just like the nicest people. Because they offer so much support and I’m often tagged in people recommending us to people, be that on Facebook or Twitter–please keep doing that because…

**DAVID:** Yes, please, please do, please do.

**MARK:** Yeah. A personal recommendation goes so much further than seeing an advert, even, sometimes. You know, people are just so supportive. And then, you know, for those that can, some people are also able to help us financially and, you know, here’s a good moment to say thank you so much for our Ko-fi supporters and my Patreon supporters because all of this is funding the show at the minute. And then, David, within the space of, I think, like, a few days, people raised the money… Like, I say raised the money, people just, like, donated money to me to replace the laptop. And I was able to replace it with one that can actually handle what it needs to do. And I, you know, ‘cause I already had some and then that. It was an act of kindness that, months later, still… I’m in a little bit disbelief that it happened. You know. It’s just, it’s so nice.

**DAVID:** Praise bounteous providence if you will that grants even an ogre a tiny glowworm tenderness encased in icy caverns of a cruel heart.

**MARK:** Where did you get the title for the next Troughton story? [DAVID LAUGHS.] But no, seriously, if people hadn’t done that, we wouldn’t be here. And, like, I mean, with Dorian Gray. It’s just, it saved it. And one of the downsides to this incident is that act one, I lost a lot of the original files. I could’ve got, like, the files from the actors again, but, like the mixing it together, the sound effects, it would’ve been a huge undertaking to start from scratch, which, frankly, I wasn’t prepared to do. I wasn’t able to do. It would’ve taken weeks and delayed things further. And probably taken a lot of the joy out of this process. Which makes it harder to do. So act one didn’t go through… It had been finished, it had been sent to Nico and it was because I sent it to Nico that I had those finished files.

**DAVID:** Ah.

**MARK:** So, what I normally do with a production before I finalise it is that I’ll listen to it with headphones on and I will listen to it in the car and then I can spot little errors or little, like, mixing issues. Act one was never able to go through that. So, if you notice anything that wasn’t in act two or three, that’s your explanation. And I’m sure you’ve already been very kind about it in not saying anything to me. So…

**DAVID:** It’s a bit late to say that now, Mark.

**MARK:** But no, but seriously, like, thanks without end. It’s… Quite literally, I cannot thank people enough for that. Yeah, it’s extremely humbling.

**DAVID:** And as we’re, as we continue to say, it is the listeners that make the podcast, really. Not just from a financial sense, but from the reviews, from the recommendations, but the fact that you’re out there listening to it, you’re interacting with us, you’re telling us what you like, what you don’t like, you’re sharing memes about Mark and Earl Grey. You know, there’s all sorts of things that make it so much more rewarding for us as creators and give us such a boost that we really need to say thank you to everyone who is listening and everyone who has done anything remotely towards sending us even positive vibes. It really does… it makes all the difference. ‘Cause we could be just putting this out there and sending it into the ether and that would be that. And there would be a certain amount of happiness derived from just the mere creation of stuff, but it is the fact that the audience is out there and your interaction, it just makes it so much more worthwhile.

**MARK:** You know, the other day, a listener said that he was at, I think he was at his children’s, like, a birthday party? And he was wearing a Shadows at the Door t-shirt and apparently a few people had said, “oh, what’s your podcast?” And he was like, “ha, ha, ha, they thought it was my podcast.” It’s like, “mate, as long as they subscribe, I don’t care whose podcast they think it is. Just get them to subscribe.”

**DAVID:** [LAUGHING.] Yeah. In fact, I did, at HorrorCon, take someone’s phone and actually subscribe them to *Shadows at the Door*.

**MARK:** ‘Cause that’s what you did to me at PodCon for *NoSleep*.

**DAVID:** Absolutely, yeah.

**MARK:** ‘Cause I couldn’t find it because there was no space between “no” and “sleep.” I think I was getting some kind of, like, gentle stories to help you get to sleep podcast.

**DAVID:** Yeah. And, hey, you’ve now got several stories *on* the podcast!

**MARK:** A lot’s changed, yeah!

**DAVID:** Yes, yeah, you see? Giving me your phone has made a world of difference.

**MARK:** Listeners, give David your phone.

**DAVID:** Yeah, yeah, give it to me.

**MARK:** He won’t look at your nudes… Speaking of nudes, and scandalous things though, we should, you know, we should talk about the impact of this book.

**DAVID:** Absolutely! Yes, I was going to get on to that. And that was a really useful segue, Mark! Yes! The queer content, given that this is Pride Month. Dorian Gray, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* itself, was not just a seminal work–I’ve used that word twice now–but it was actually used in a court of law.

**MARK:** It was! So, Oscar Wilde, one of history’s, you know, like, queerest men, was unfortunately, he did time in prison because of his, because of just who he was and he was outspoken about it and when they were kind of, when they needed evidence against him in court, they presented *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a… What was it, David, a…

**DAVID:** Well, if I can quote…

**MARK:** Please.

**DAVID:** …from famous-trials.com, “After lunch, Edward Carson–a rival of Wilde since their days together at Trinity College Dublin–began his skillful cross-examination.” This “generally broke into two main parts: a literary part and a fact-oriented part focusing on Wilde's past relationships. In the literary part of the examination, Carson asked Wilde about letters to Douglas,” whom he’d been seeing, “and two of his own published works, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and *Phrases and Philosophies for Use of the Young*.” Note the double entendre there on “use.” “Wilde defended the works against Carson's suggestions that they were immoral or touched on homosexual themes. [WILDE IS VOICED SOMEWHAT ARROGANT AND DISMISSIVELY, WHILE CARSON IS VOICED VERY STUFFY.] ‘There is no such thing as an immoral work,’ Wilde asserted in Dorian Gray, rather ‘books are well written, or badly written.’ ‘That expresses your view?’ asked Carson, "a perverted novel might be a good book?" When Wilde replied–

**MARK:** I’m sorry, was Churchill prosecuting him?

**DAVID:** Yes, well, yes. “‘I don't know what you mean by a 'perverted' novel,’ Carson said, ‘I will suggest Dorian Gray as open to the interpretation of being such a novel.’ Wilde answered indignantly, ‘That could only be to brutes and illiterates. The views of Philistines on art are incalculably stupid.’”

**MARK:** [LAUGHING.] I love that as well. ‘This book was really immoral and really gay.’ ‘Oh, yeah? What makes you say that?’ ‘Because *I* got [FLUSTERED.] really turned on reading it!’

[[*MUSIC: TRANSITIONAL GUITAR NOTES PLAYING THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR MELODY.*]]

**MARK:** I can’t bloody wait to show you season three and all the stories we have there and the surprising directions that Troughton will be going in that even David doesn’t know about! He’s raising his eyebrow at me. Because he’s probably feeling a bit miffed I haven’t told him, but…

**DAVID:** Well, just by way of giving us a little hint as to what season three–’cause obviously I’m not going to ask you about this next week, because you’re going to be absolutely pissed out of your head.

**MARK:** I needed it. After this.

**DAVID:** What can our listeners expect from season three?

**MARK:** Well…

**DAVID:** Can you tantalise us with some…

**MARK:** You’re going to see the return of some writers that people have been actively asking to come back, such as Christopher Long, Hannah Rickman-Peddie, who used to go by Hannah Butler…

**DAVID:** Ah, excellent, yeah.

**MARK:** Yes. We’re gonna have a very good friend of mine who’s a terrific writer, Caitlin Marceau joining us for an episode and a half–I’m co-writing one with Caitlin.

**DAVID:** [ALL THESE INTERJECTIONS ARE VERY DRAMATIC.] Ah!

**MARK:** *That* episode features a very special guest!

**DAVID:** Ooh!

**MARK:** And I’m keeping that schtum for now.

**DAVID:** Ah!

**MARK:** You know, I’m gonna see how it goes because at the moment I’ve got a ten season episode–[MARK AND DAVID SAY THE CORRECTION TOGETHER.] I’ve got a ten episode season. Yeah. I’ve got a ten episode season planned, but if we can get sponsorship, I have another story I’m very, very desperate to tell that I reckon I can afford if we do that. Which, David, we need to acknowledge that we have a sponsor for…

**DAVID:** We do, indeed!

**MARK:** We’re being sponsored by the lovely Hemlock Creek Productions who actually–another reason to listen to *Connections*–is they did the sound design for it! You know, David and I have always said–and we have actually declined advertising in the past for the wrong kind of product–but we want to advertise stuff to you that we believe in, so with Hemlock Creek Productions, please, engage with them on social media, follow them. They have a podcast coming out soon–well, not *soon*, but, like, in the near future…? The not-too-distant future. And we’ll be talking about that when it comes out again, because it’s just nice. And if there’s something I really do notice about this community it’s that we all are supporting each other and we thank Hemlock Creek Productions very much for sponsoring us and supporting them is another way to support us. And, you know, like I said before, supporting us comes in many forms but if you have the means, please consider donating to our Ko-fi. That is a pot which directly funds future seasons and I am–I’ve been doing this for years now and I’m always surprised how *expensive* it is to make these things! Ten pounds for someone splashing water and then bubble afterwards and that didn’t include all the footsteps and everything else. You know, we’re taking steps to run Shadows a little bit more like, for lack of a better word, properly? You know, where we’ve got, like, rates of pay for depending on how much people are in. So all this–so it does mean that Shadows as we try to progress becomes more expensive, so this Ko-fi’s a great way to do it. My Patreon is a great way to get some extra behind-the-scenes stuff. We will never hide content behind a paywall, so the kind of stuff you get on Patreon is writing advice, guidance, behind-the-scenes of *Shadows at the Door*, and you can actually vote on, like, character names and stuff like that in the future. I’ve really, like, found a good line to make it not just an act of charity but to also not have people who don’t have the means to join it to not feel left out as well.

**DAVID:** We are very keen that all *Shadows at the Door* content is available for free. And so Patreon stuff will be… It’s Mark. He will do whatever you ask him to, depending on the rates of pay that you give to him. And for one of the highest rates, he will get *me* to write a story and he will be the principal voice actor. So, if you donate enough then we will switch roles.

**MARK:** But that would also be free. That wouldn’t just be–

**DAVID:** It would be free, oh, yeah, yeah. But you’d be actively funding me actually doing stuff and Mark–

**MARK:** David often asks what kind of stuff is on the Patreon and I’m like, “why don’t you subscribe to it and find out, bitch?” [LAUGHING.] But the end is near, but the moment’s been prepared for because this is *not* the end.

**DAVID:** Is it not?

**MARK:** No! As we’ve mentioned, a few times, we’ve got drunk ghost stories next week. I think the idea of talking about a story just after we’ve produced it is certainly a decision.

**DAVID:** It is. We’ll see how well it goes down and if I have any foresight into next week’s recording, I think it’s going to be a good one. I think people are going to enjoy hearing the difference between the book and the audio drama.

**MARK:** Yes, and we’ve recorded it in person this time. So…

**DAVID:** We *will* have recorded it in person.

**MARK:** We *will* have recorded it in person. Yeah. It’s a messy business, this time travel.

**DAVID:** Time travel is murder on the tenses.

**MARK:** Yes. So, you know…

**DAVID:** I remember tomorrow like it was yesterday. [MARK GROANS.] Yeah, you can cloister bell that one as well.

[SFX: CLOISTER BELL.]

**DAVID:** But as we say, season three is coming up, as is drunk ghost stories 17 or whatever. Who cares at this point? It’s just another one.

**MARK:** Just?

[[*MUSIC: AS DAVID SPEAKS, THE SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME BEGINS.*]]

**DAVID:** But I think we should just say again, thank you very much to our wonderful cast, for Mark for producing, adapting. Nico for the music. And, of course, all of you for listening and donating, whether it is your time, your attention, your likes, your subscribes, or your actual physical hard cash to us. Thank *you* for everything. And we hope that this Pride Month has found you happy, healthy, and well. And we will look forward to seeing you very soon.

**MARK:** Mwah. [BOTH LAUGH.]

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