

Episode 18: On the Safe Side

Marina Verlaine:

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DiPA:

Observer Pictures presents Apollyon, written and directed by Faith McQuinn. This is episode 18: On The Safe Side.

Gabriel:

Why are you up, bud?

Young Lincoln:

I got scared. Is it okay if I sleep with you?

Gabriel:

Oh, not tonight. You've got to sleep on your own bed.

Young Lincoln:

But there's a monster in there.

Gabriel:

Monsters don't come in the house anymore, remember. We got rid of all of them.

Young Lincoln:

This one is maybe hiding. Can you please come check. Please.

Gabriel:

Okay, but I need one minute. You stay right there.

Theo:

Hi.

Gabriel:

Hey.

Theo:

Do you need me to go?

Gabriel:
No. No. I just...

Theo:
Got to fight a monster.

Gabriel:
Yeah, I'll be right back.

[Theo gets out of bed, gets dressed, and leaves the room.]

Gabriel:
You're dressed.

Theo:
I thought it'd be rude to leave without telling you, but I'm going to go.

Gabriel:
He usually sleeps through the night. I'm sorry.

Theo:
It's okay. Kids are on their own schedule. At least that's what I've been told. Look, Gabriel, I really like you.

Gabriel:
Shit.

Theo:
Please let me finish. I really, really like you and that's why I think we need to stop this.

Gabriel:
This?

Theo:
Yes, I'm not very good at this.

Gabriel:
Theo. I don't know who you've been talking to, but you are in fact very good at this.

Theo:
Thanks. But I meant the relationship part.

Gabriel:
Oh.

Theo:
As I was saying, I really like you and I really like Lincoln.

Gabriel:
You do?

Theo:
Yeah.

Gabriel:
I figured with you not having kids that you didn't.

Theo:
No, no. He's wonderful. You both are, and that's why I think we'd be better as friends.

Gabriel:
Wow.

Theo:
I hope this doesn't scare you, but this is all too good to mess up. You know?

Gabriel:
I'm not going to say I'm not disappointed, you know, because, well, you are a lot of fun.

Theo:
You are too.

Gabriel:
But I might agree.

Theo:
Really?

Gabriel:
Well, you're the first person besides his nanny that Link has really taken to, and if I'm being honest, you're the first person since my... You're the first person that I've wanted in my space for more than one night. I don't want to ruin that either. And believe me, if you think you're bad at relationships, just wait until you know me a little longer.

Theo:
I have noticed that a few of our classmates glare at you.

Gabriel:

Yeah. I should probably start dating outside of my department.

Theo:

Yeah, probably a good idea. Friends then.

Gabriel:

Yeah, friends.

Theo:

Great.

Gabriel:

Friends stay at each other's apartments when it's really late and they have the same class in the mornings.

Theo:

I don't know. What if Lincoln gets up again?

Gabriel:

There's an extra bed in Link's room. I'll sleep there. 100% platonic, okay?

Theo:

I do hate riding the MARTA this late.

Lincoln:

Dad, please say something.

Gabriel:

She said she wants to see you. Wait, what does that even mean?

Lincoln:

I don't know.

Gabriel:

But does she want to talk to you on a video call? A hello interaction or does she expect me to apply for a travel visa, huh? Because there's no way in hell I'm doing that.

Lincoln:

I don't know. She said she wants to see me. That's it.

Gabriel:
So you've spoken to her?

Lincoln:
No messages only.

Gabriel:
What if it's not really her?

Lincoln:
Who else could it be?

Gabriel:
I'm just surprised she stuck around long enough to talk to you, that's all.

Lincoln:
Dad.

Gabriel:
What, Link? This is the woman who literally walked out the door one day and never came back.
Why the fuck would I want you to contact her in the first place?

Lincoln:
Because she's my mom.

Gabriel:
She is the person who gave birth to you. It's not the same thing.

Lincoln:
Just because you hate her doesn't mean I have to.

Gabriel:
I don't hate her. Why didn't you talk to me first?

Lincoln:
I was afraid you wouldn't let me try.

Gabriel:
Oh, damn it. You're probably right, but that still doesn't mean you should have gone behind my back.

Lincoln:
I'm sorry I lied.

Gabriel:
But you're not sorry you contacted her.

Lincoln:
No. I want to decide for myself if she's worth knowing.

Gabriel:
Did she say where she was?

Lincoln:
Candida still.

Gabriel:
That's interesting. You said messages. She sent more than one?

Lincoln:
Two.

Gabriel:
What did she say? Was she happy you found her?

Lincoln:
She said-

Gabriel:
You know what? Don't tell me. Not right now. I'm not sure I can handle it right now.

Lincoln:
Okay.

Gabriel:
All right.

Lincoln:
Really?

Gabriel:
No, that's not what I meant. I-

Lincoln:
But Dad.

Gabriel:
Lincoln, stop jumping ahead. Let me speak.

Lincoln:
Sorry.

Gabriel:
I need a couple of days to process this, okay. Just don't do anything before we have a chance to make a plan together. Lincoln, promise me.

Lincoln:
I promise.

Gabriel:
Good. Finish cleaning up the kitchen. I'm going to bed.

Annabelle:
We are doing safety evaluations on two different mucosal adjuvants.

Horatio:
We've set up a meeting with Pulmonary for later today to discuss intranasal delivery.

Elliot:
This is my first experience with mucosal vaccines, so I was wondering if I could sit in on that meeting.

Theo:
Oh, absolutely, Elliot. I want to make sure you get all the knowledge so you crush your exams. We can go over the correlates of protection later in the week.

Elliot:
Great. Thanks.

Gabriel:
I bet that was a hard meeting to set up. They barely talked to anyone.

Annabelle:
Oh, it was easy. They owe us

Theo:
For what, exactly?

Horatio:
I mean, nothing bad.

Theo:

Well, I didn't think it was anything bad until you said that.

Annabelle:

I gave one of them my slot with the review board.

Gabriel:

Okay.

Horatio:

Well, Annabelle's slot was late in the afternoon, which is prime time to go before the board. They're tired, want to go home.

Annabelle:

They barely ask questions. You're a shoe-in for a good evaluation.

Gabriel:

Smart.

Annabelle:

And it got us a meeting with the most closed clique in the department.

Theo:

I can't wait to hear what you learn.

Gabriel:

We'll have to remember that when our evaluation comes around.

Horatio:

Wait, wait. Isn't yours just with Dr. Weiss?

Theo:

Yes. And that man doesn't have a good time of day. But you didn't hear that from me. Anything else?

Elliot:

I was wondering if I would be able to attend the honor banquet this year.

Theo:

Oh, I'd completely forgotten about that.

Horatio:

You're telling me you forgot the biggest event of the year.

Theo:

I've had a lot on my plate.

Annabelle:

It's not really all that great.

Horatio:

Please. You just hate getting dressed up. I, on the other hand, love a reason to look my best.

Gabriel:

Can we go to lunch already?

Theo:

Elliot, I'll check with Dr. Weiss just to be sure.

Elliot:

Thank you, Dr. Ramsey. I'd really love to go.

Gabriel:

All right. All right. That's lunch. See you this afternoon.

Victoria:

How's life in virology going?

Theo:

Rather well. Everything's on schedule and we're making great progress with the new experiments. How's life with the primates?

Victoria:

It's breeding time, so loud. We're still caring for the subjects from your experiment. They're doing really great. Which bodes well for the human trials, right?

Theo:

Yes. Yeah.

Victoria:

Gabriel, you all right?

Gabriel:

Are you all interested in dinner tonight?

Victoria:

Sure. Callista's with her father.

Theo:

Why? What's going on?

Victoria:

What do you mean?

Theo:

He only does impromptu dinners when he plans to do a lot of cooking and he only does a lot of cooking when he's stressed.

Victoria:

Oh, I didn't know that.

Gabriel:

It's not something I advertise.

Victoria:

I guess it explains the random gifts of baked goods. What's on your mind?

Gabriel:

It's Link.

Theo:

Is he all right?

Gabriel:

Yeah. He contacted Kate.

Theo:

Oh.

Victoria:

I take it that's not good.

Gabriel:

I don't know what it is.

Victoria:

Do you want to talk about it?

Gabriel:

Yeah, but I don't think I want to do it right now.

Victoria:
It's obviously weighing on you.

Gabriel:
I want to make it through this work day and we can talk tonight.

Victoria:
All right. I'll be there. What time?

Gabriel:
Right after work if that's fine.

Victoria:
That's fine with me.

Theo:
I'm sorry. I can't make it. I'm helping Reese tonight.

Victoria:
Oh, that's right. She's moving to Phoenix?

Theo:
Yes.

Victoria:
I couldn't imagine the amount of work it takes to relocate.

Theo:
It's been a lot. She is on her fourth or fifth round of forms. I didn't realize how hard this would be.

Victoria:
I've moved once and I must say there are definite perks to working for the ICRS.

Theo:
Maybe you can tell Reece that. I've been trying to convince her for years.

Gabriel:
Still?

Theo:
Yeah.

Gabriel:
You are constantly a surprise, Ramsey.

Theo:
I try to keep you on your toes, Larson.

Victoria:
What am I missing?

Theo:
Nothing. Just a work thing. What's on the menu tonight? I want to know what I'm missing.

Gabriel:
Well, I thought I'd start with a large salad and then maybe some...

Theo:
We're going to have the results of the newts tomorrow, right?

Gabriel:
That second round? Yeah.

Theo:
Great. Then I think I've done all I'm going to get done today. It's past four. Should we call it a day?

Gabriel:
Yeah.

Theo:
I'm sorry I can't make it tonight.

Gabriel:
It's okay. Vicky will help me hash it out.

Theo:
We can talk a little now if you want.

Gabriel:
I don't know what to do about all this. I'm so afraid she's going to burn him like she burned us before.

Theo:
Understandable.

Gabriel:
Am I a horrible dad?

Theo:
Not in the slightest.

Gabriel:
Teenagers are just so fucking difficult.

Theo:
Yeah, you're lucky because Lincoln is better than most I've met.

Gabriel:
I always thought I was biased for thinking that.

Theo:
No. Granted, I'm probably a little biased too.

Gabriel:
Let's get out of here. You need to get over to Reese's and I need to start cooking too much food.

Theo:
We can pick this up later. Wednesday dinner?

Gabriel:
Vicky and Callista can't make it this week, so that might be perfect.

Theo:
It'll be like old times.

Gabriel:
Link would love that, especially when I send him to his room so the grownups can talk.

Reese:
Thank you for doing this.

Theo:
I'm happy to help. Not to be rude, but you've looked rather tired for the last several weeks.

Reese:

Honestly, that's a compliment because I feel like I've been run down by a traffic drone. I can barely focus on the words on the screen at work. My eyes need a rest.

Theo:

That's why I'm here. Shall we get started?

Reese:

I guess.

Theo:

How much are you shipping?

Reese:

All my clothes and dishes and art. I have to take my grandmother's dining set. I can't leave that. But all the other furniture I bought when I moved here, I don't think I'm going to take it.

Theo:

Your limit is 1.5 tons. That's enough to take everything, don't you think? You're really going to buy rooms full of furniture all over again?

Reese:

I don't know, Theo. I swear this wasn't this hard the first time.

Theo:

I'm going to get you a drink and some cookies.

Reese:

You brought cookies?

Theo:

I did.

[Theo goes in the house.]

Reese:

Okay. This is part of the process. Get through this part and everything else will be simple. You'll be with your babies, who aren't even babies anymore.

Theo:

I hope you don't mind that I brought the whole bottle... What's wrong?

Reese:

It's nothing

Theo:

Bullshit, Reese. What is it?

Reese:

I don't remember all of this causing me so much damn stress. Maybe because it was all wrapped up in the divorce forms, I didn't even notice. But I've been going nonstop for the past month and it feels like there's no end in sight.

Theo:

Dealing with the end of the school year and all of these forms plus securing a job in Phoenix. It's so much to take on.

Reese:

Or maybe it's because the forms involved five various ways of asking me why I was moving. I don't know how many different versions of I want to be closer to my children would satisfy them. We are supposed to be a society that puts family first. Why wouldn't they just approve me after the first time?

Theo:

Look at it this way. They give you 5,000 forms to weed out the people who aren't as strong-willed as you are.

Reese:

Is that supposed to make me feel better?

Theo:

If it didn't, I do have spice rum and cookies.

Reese:

I'm going to miss you.

Theo:

I'll miss you too.

Reese:

You'll come visit me, right?

Theo:

When I can. Absolutely.

Reese:

When you can. You can whenever you want. Isn't that the perk of having your job?

Theo:

Just because it's easier for me to travel doesn't mean it's actually easy for me to travel. It's near impossible for me to get time off.

Reese:

Okay. Describe the last time you left Atlanta.

Theo:

That was when I went to see mom.

Reese:

Oh, I'm sorry. You don't have to.

Theo:

It's fine. I'm okay talking about it. It was an emergency travel visa, so I did have to do a rapid test before I boarded. They verified my ID and I got on the plane.

Reese:

Wait, that was it?

Theo:

Yeah.

Reese:

Okay, so when I went to see my sister, I had to do one PCR test to get the visa and another one week before travel. Then I had to make sure those results were loaded onto my personal ID so they show up in the scans. There are forms involving doing that too, by the way. Coming back into Atlanta, I had to do a rapid test before I could leave the station.

Theo:

Good Lord. I'm so sorry. The ICRS really does want people to stay where they are, even the ones who work for them.

Reese:

It's stressful, but I understand. We are safe within the limits because of all this.

Theo:

I guess.

Victoria:

I think I may have pulled that with my uncle when I was younger.

Gabriel:
What, the signature switch?

Victoria:
Yeah. I think it was a paper form though, so it might have been easier.

Gabriel:
I never suspected he'd lie to me, so I didn't give the form a second glance.

Victoria:
He's 15.

Gabriel:
And?

Victoria:
15 year olds lie to their parents.

Gabriel:
Well, not Lincoln.

Victoria:
He's a wonderful kid, Gabriel, but he's not infallible.

Gabriel:
I know. I just thought he'd come to me about this.

Victoria:
What are you going to do?

Gabriel:
What do you think I should do?

Victoria:
You should talk to Kate or whatever she's going by now.

Gabriel:
Hazel.

Victoria:
I can't believe she changed her name.

Gabriel:
Right. She really wanted to get away from us. I don't... Why would he want to know her?

Victoria:

Curiosity. No matter your feelings towards her, she's his mother. Wouldn't you want to find out more about your family if you had the chance?

Gabriel:

Not when that family doesn't want anything to do with me.

Victoria:

Maybe she's changed.

Gabriel:

Maybe she wants money.

Victoria:

And that's why you need to talk to her first. You need to find out why she has to see him.

Gabriel:

What if I talk to her and I don't like what she has to say? I'm afraid... I can't lose him, Vicky. I can't.

Victoria:

He's your son. He'll never stop loving you. And it's not as if he can run away.

Gabriel:

That's true.

[The oven beeps. Gabriel takes the food out.]

Victoria:

That smells wonderful.

Gabriel:

Thank you. I'm definitely going to have to take some of this to work tomorrow.

Victoria:

Do you plan on talking to Theo about this?

Gabriel:

Probably. Why?

Victoria:

Merely a question. Why didn't I know about your stress cooking?

Gabriel:

Like I said, I don't talk about it.

Victoria:
You don't talk about a lot of things, do you?

Gabriel:
Not really. I'm not the chatty type.

Victoria:
We've been together almost a year now.

Gabriel:
Wow. I didn't realize it had been that long.

Victoria:
You should be more chatty with me.

Gabriel:
I'm talking to you now about this whole Lincoln thing.

Victoria:
I know and I'm glad you're talking to me about it.

Gabriel:
But you want me to talk to you about more things.

Victoria:
Yes, and you know so much about me and I feel as if I know very little about you.

Gabriel:
You mean you know very little about me compared to Theo?

Victoria:
I did not say that, and don't put those words in my mouth.

Gabriel:
Sorry.

Victoria:
I love you and I want you to trust me.

Gabriel:
You love me?

Victoria:
Yes, Gabriel.

Gabriel:
Oh.

Victoria:
It's all right if you don't want to say it back. I know you care about me.

Gabriel:
I-

Lincoln:
Hey, Vicky.

Victoria:
Hi, Lincoln.

Lincoln:
Did I hear the oven beep? Is dinner ready?

Gabriel:
Yes. Grab the plates and set the table.

Lincoln:
Were you talking about me?

Gabriel:
No.

Lincoln:
You were. Vicky, did you tell him he should let me talk to my mom?

Victoria:
I think that's something you should ask your father.

Lincoln:
Damn it. You don't think I should talk to her either.

Gabriel:
Actually, Vicky thinks I should talk to your mother first and I think that's a great idea.

Lincoln:
Okay. That's good. This is good. I'll go get her email right now.

Gabriel:
Can we eat dinner first?

Lincoln:
Right. Yes. I'll give you her email later.

Gabriel:
Great. That sounds great.

Lincoln:
Straight. I'll set the table.

Gabriel:
I apologize for the interruption.

Victoria:
Oh, please. I think you were glad for the interruption. We'll talk about it later.

Gabriel:
Maybe you can stay for the night.

Victoria:
Are you sure?

Gabriel:
Yeah. I think I could use the company.

Victoria:
All right.

[A phone rings. Savreen answers.]

Savreen:
Good evening, Xavier.

Weiss:
Hello, Savreen. I hope I didn't catch you at a bad time.

Savreen:
Not at all. What can I do for you?

Weiss:
If you can believe it? Nothing this time. I'm calling to do you a favor.

Savreen:
It's almost like old times.

Weiss:

You're not going to get an official call until next week, but you are the Green Award recipient this year. They want to honor your years of service in the ICRS.

Savreen:

What they want is to honor my work with Red Fear, but that's not something they would dare to do publicly.

Weiss:

Right.

Savreen:

Are you disappointed the award is not going to you?

Weiss:

I'll have my time eventually.

Savreen:

Thank you for letting me know, but I don't know why you think I needed-

Weiss:

A warning.

Savreen:

That's not what I was going to say.

Weiss:

But that's what it is. A warning.

Savreen:

Now, why do you think I need a warning about an award?

Weiss:

It's not the award as much as the ceremony. I'm thinking you shouldn't attend.

Savreen:

That would be strange, don't you think?

Weiss:

Oh, I'm sure you can make something up for why you can't make it. Maybe some volunteer work you can't get out of.

Savreen:

What do you know, Xavier?

Weiss:

I know that the current head of the DHH has eyes and ears everywhere. I also know that she has a very soft spot for Dr. Ramsey, which I'm sure you're quite aware of as well.

Savreen:

Theo may have shared a story or two.

Weiss:

Lastly, I know I might need to worry if you're given a platform at a public event.

Savreen:

What would you need to worry about?

Weiss:

I have the utmost respect for you, Savreen. I'm well aware that I wouldn't be where I am today without you, but that doesn't mean I'll let you get away with whatever you want.

Savreen:

You have no idea what I want.

Weiss:

That's where you're wrong. I may not be the most brilliant scientist you've ever met, but I am extremely good at getting information when I need it. Dr. Milgrim thinks she's better at this than I am, but she never will be.

Savreen:

Is that a name you should be using in my company?

Weiss:

I'm not revealing information you don't already know. I learned from the best. Here's some more information you already know. Theo has a bleeding heart. While I think it's a hindrance to her work, you've seen it as an opportunity.

Savreen:

Here I am worrying about the DHH listening in.

Weiss:

What I believe you failed to realize is how important she and Gabe are to this program, to the entire institution.

Savreen:

I know exactly how important they are.

Weiss:

Then please consider having someone accept this award on your behalf.

Savreen:

What if I chose Theo to do that?

Weiss:

Don't ruin her career for your repentance. Felicity may not have figured out the relationship you two have, but I doubt it will be long before she does. I need you to be careful, Savreen, not for your sake, but for mine, as well as Theo and Gabe's.

Savreen:

I thank you for your concern, Xavier, but I promise you that you have nothing to worry about. Have a great evening.

[Theme music]

DiPA:

This episode featured the voices of Marquita Richardson as Theo Ramsey, James David West as Gabriel Larson, Marisha Tapera as Reese Williams, Pamela Paul as Savreen Khanna, J.K. Robbins as Xavier Weiss, Kyle Nishimura as Lincoln Larson, Marina Verlaine as Victoria Kimathy, Meg Biddle Smith as Annabelle, Will Candelaria as Horatio, Mauricio Ortiz-Segura as Elliot, Lillie McQuinn as Young Lincoln, and me, Drea Silvertooth as DiPA.

Producer, Amanda Lorraine, Assistant Director, Van Donnell, Sound Design and Mix, Joshua Suhy. Sound recorded by Courtney Holly at Bowman Sound Studios. Original theme composer and Music Supervisor, Katharine Seaton. Additional music provided by Soundstripe Music. Virology Consultant, Peter Krug, Ph.D.

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ICRS Computer:

The ICRS is keeping the world safe.