

Westcrest

Episode #3 — Welcome to Westcrest

Marcus guides the bike into a large drainpipe that extends from the side of the island. Jeremy gulps as concrete closes in around him. A bright light blooms at the end of the pipe, illuminating the drab grey walls of the tunnel in stark detail.

“It’s me, it’s me, turn that godamn thing off!” Barks Marcus and the light softens. The motorbike exits the pipe into a long underground room filled with metal shelves, computer monitors and cluttered desks. A blonde woman wearing a long coat and glasses stands behind the most enormous lamp Jeremy has ever seen. She is regarding Jeremy intently.

“Home sweet home,” says Marcus and kills the engine. He steps off the bike and approaches the blonde. Jeremy follows, glancing about nervously.

A thin, dark-haired girl dashes forward and grips Marcus in a hug. He lifts her up off the ground and spins her around.

“How was she?” She asks as Marcus sets her down. She moves towards the bike, her pale hands softly tracing the metal.

“Perfect,” says Marcus, flashing her a grin.

“You took it up it again, didn’t you?” Says the blonde.

“Did you?” Says the dark-haired girl, regarding Marcus with wide eyes. Then, as though noticing Jeremy for the first time, she beams at him. “I’m Sarra, I helped Marcus build the, uh, conveyance.”

“And *that’s* Helena,” says Marcus, motioning at the blonde. “Her bark is worse than her bite, I assure you.”

“You’d know,” says Sarra mischevously, forcing a smile to Jeremy’s lips.

From behind him a loud burst of static makes Jeremy jump.

“Oh, and that’s Conor,” says Marcus, twirling his finger to indicate that Jeremy should turn around.

A computer monitor set into the ceiling displays the flickering, blue-tinged image of a bespectacled man wearing a lab-coat.

“Hello!” Says the man with an exaggerated wave. “I’m in charge of advanced technologies.”

“Like the invisibility device?” Jeremy asks the man on the monitor.

“You used the invisibility generator *in public*?” Says Helena, narrowing her eyes at Marcus. Jeremy notices that she has the traces of an English accent.

“I needed to, the kid almost got nabbed by the police.”

“What about the artifact?” Asks Helena and Marcus twists the rucksack around on his body so that he can reach into it.

“Here,” he says, handing the instrument to Helena. As he watches, Jeremy realises that he still doesn’t know how he’s going to explain any of this to DuPont.

Helena inspects the maraca, tracing the grooves of the carved wooden face with a slender finger, before placing it on a shelf behind her. “Chatravati will be pleased.”

“Where is the old guy anyway?” Asks Marcus.

“Same place as always,” says Sarra, rolling her eyes.

Suddenly an alarm whoops from several loudspeakers around the room. Jeremy spins around as two metal doors close over the drain through which he and Marcus entered. The sound of similar doors closing elsewhere on the island can be heard, echoing dully.

“What’s going on?” Says Marcus, pushing Jeremy aside and staring up at the monitor. Conor looks worried.

“It’s a breach in one of the holding cells,” he says rapidly. “The whole island has gone into lockdown.”

“Which cell?” Barks Marcus. Jeremy watches Sarra as she opens a cabinet set against the wall. Inside is an assortment of weapons, ranging from scimitars to assault rifles.

“Twenty-three,” says Conor to Marcus.

In the distance, something roars.