

[Birds chirping, engines running, treads squeaking, and pulling up to a stop. The engine stops. Parking brakes engaging, a sliding van door opens and closes, footsteps. A chopper flies by. Jets fly over. A large, heavy door creaks open. Footsteps move inside the echoing building.]

GRAHAM/JOSHUA (Sean Williams): Uh, hi? Hello? Is there like a—

FATHER BEN (Casey Callaghan)(from the confessional booth): Uh, hi! Back here. S-sorry, [footsteps] they told me to wait in the—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Nuh-nuh-nuh-no, no, we (nervous chuckle) we just weren't sure if—

FATHER BEN: They wanted me to wait in the confessional, I guess to simulate a regular—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Oh! Right, like if it was a normal confession—[a curtain slides back on metal rings with a clinking sound]

FATHER BEN: Sorry, I should've—I-I obviously knew th-you were here.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Oh, you mean from the (chuckling as he speaks) several vehicles you heard pulling up at the same time?

FATHER BEN: On all sides of St. Patrick's? Yes, it was rather hard to miss.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Sorry about that, not sure what they think we're gonna do, weaponize the communion wine or whatever. Joshua speaking: You never know. (as Graham) Okay Joshua, let's not start off like—Joshua speaking: You think I can't? Bring me a cupful and give me ten minutes.

FATHER BEN: All right, that's gonna take some getting used to.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: How much do you know?

FATHER BEN: Maybe we should continue this in the confessional?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Uh, yeah, I guess. Lead on.

[Music break: synth and string melody over driving percussion, fades into]

VOICEOVER (Adam Raymonda): "Forgive Me Away," a crossover episode of *Forgive Me* and *Give Me Away*.

[Music fades out, into the sound of curtains being rapidly drawn along their rods]

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Wow. [a soft thud]

FATHER BEN: Are you all right?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It's like—(sigh of disbelief) when you revisit someplace you went to a lot as a kid, and you're shocked at how much *smaller* it is.

FATHER BEN: That's right, they said you'd taken first communion—or, Graham-You did—and I assume that came with a confession?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah, Graham's mom was raised Catholic—dad Jewish, obviously, the name—and it mattered a lot to his grandmother that he did the whole first communion thing. After she passed away his mom didn't keep it up. Or his dad with the Jewish stuff.

FATHER BEN: All right, so you refer to each of your selves by name, in the third person?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Ahh, you know, we're still figuring it out. Sometimes it'll be like "Graham speaking: I whatever," or—Joshua speaking: For whatever reason I'm supposed to announce myself even though it's blazingly obvious when it's me.

FATHER BEN: Who's speaking when you don't use a preface?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Let's be honest: Graham. Graham speaking: Not totally, though, I do think we're starting to integrate like they said we would.

FATHER BEN: Okay, well, as a beginner to this particular dynamic, I hope you'll [beat] both help me out a little bit as we go along.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah, of course. This is gonna be a big adjustment for everyone.

FATHER BEN: Which I guess is why we're here today.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: How do you [beat] feel about that?

FATHER BEN: Conflicted, honestly. But "conflicted" isn't a new feeling for me. At least this is a new flavor of conflicted.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: But you'll do it? (as Graham) What's gotten into you, why do you even care? Joshua speaking: Because the men with guns care. This is the hoop we apparently have to jump through for a modicum of freedom.

FATHER BEN: The answer is yes. I'll do it.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah?

FATHER BEN: Partly because you had a—or Graham—had a genuine Catholic upbringing. Partly, honestly, because of the government's "kind" donation to St. Patrick's. Which shouldn't be a factor, but we can do a lot of good with that money. And partly, (a breath) God help me, because I'm just very, very curious.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: We'll take any reason.

FATHER BEN: And in answer to your other question, "How much do I know?" I suppose I know as much as the whole world knows.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: So, presumably the spaceship landing, the screaming sounds when they opened it up—

FATHER BEN: Definitely, all that.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: The livestream of the scientists working inside it, the interview with Brooke and Deirdre when Deirdre spoke out loud for the first time—

FATHER BEN: All that, yes, and, uh, well, not to put *too* fine a point on it—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: The interview with us.

FATHER BEN: It was, uh, striking stuff.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: We promise we're not gonna do anything to your mind or body.

FATHER BEN: (nervous chuckle) And that's appreciated. I'm fond of both. So just to clarify: I'm currently speaking to two souls within the same body?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: two people. What the hell is a soul? (as Graham) Sorry.

FATHER BEN: Two people in the same body. The body that until recently exclusively belonged to Graham Shapiro, but who now shares it with a second, um, entity?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Entity, consciousness, anything's—

FATHER BEN: Eh-named Joshua. Who was, as I understand it, downloaded from a sort of computer-prison they discovered inside the spaceship?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Correct.

FATHER BEN: And there's now a whole kind of community at the landing site of this spaceship. A former ghost town, right?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah, mining town, it was called Red Camp back in the day.

FATHER BEN: A community called the “Nevada Project” of double-people like you living around the spaceship.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah, volunteers. But all carefully screened, and all meticulously paired with whichever released prisoner is the best fit—Joshua speaking: mostly. Graham speaking: No, always. We were meticulously paired too.

FATHER BEN: And you haven’t been allowed to leave that community? Until now?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: There’s only so much we can tell you.

FATHER BEN: Promising start to a confession.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (sigh) Essentially those of us who live in Red Camp, the hybrid people, we recently (haltingly) had a [beat] difference of opinion with the military unit that guards the project.

FATHER BEN: Guards it [beat] both ways, right? No one in or out.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Right.

FATHER BEN: Now this I know almost nothing about, just that a few months ago the livestream was shut off for an oddly long time. I certainly heard theories among my parishioners, but I—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: All we can say is that we (haltingly) resolved the situation in such a way that our concerns—the concerns of the hybrid people—are being taken more seriously. Joshua speaking: Just barely.

FATHER BEN: Hence this experiment in—I think they said “trial interactions?”

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah.

FATHER BEN: Which is the purpose of these furloughs they’ve been sending some of you on.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Not even really “furloughs,” we’re here with an armed escort.

FATHER BEN: Several, by the sound of it.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: The basic idea is, prove that we hybrid folks can function in society with “normal people” by engaging in a series of selected activities that, in their minds, comprise a robust civic life. Not surprisingly, given the architects of the program, many of those activities are religious in nature.

FATHER BEN: Like confession.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: And Graham's the closest thing in Red Camp to a Catholic.

FATHER BEN: Which raises the question, whose confession am I hearing today?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (clicks tongue) Well, for the purpose of this exercise we were thinking—Joshua.

FATHER BEN: (gamely) Okay. Joshua, I'm speaking exclusively to you now, and trying not to feel silly about the question I'm about to ask, but—you didn't experience any version of baptism or any other Catholic sacrament on your [beat] home planet?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: HA!

FATHER BEN: So, that's a no.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: On so many levels.

FATHER BEN: I might've guessed based on your joke about weaponizing communion wine that this isn't exactly your—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (interrupting) Joshua speaking: I wasn't joking. (as Graham) Okay, I don't think the Father needs to— Joshua speaking: Biochemical warfare is based on the understanding that every molecular structure is like a sleeve with a knife hidden inside. Most of the time that sleeve just keeps your arm warm. But when necessary, you know the knife is there.

FATHER BEN: I can't tell if you're threatening me or—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: I'm just saying if you know how to look closely enough, everything has a blade inside it.

FATHER BEN: You know, Joshua, I think I would like to hear your confession.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (as Graham) Yeah? You'll do it?

FATHER BEN: I want to hear what Joshua has to say. To be honest, I might be entirely motivated by curiosity here. When will I ever have an opportunity like this again?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Hopefully a lot in the future if these trial interactions are—

FATHER BEN: But I have to be clear. I don't know what absolution or even advice I'll be able to offer under these circumstances. It doesn't get more unprecedented than this.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Oh, there's a much bigger problem than "unprecedented."

FATHER BEN: Which is?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: I'm not sorry. For the actions I'm about to describe. I don't regret a single one of them.

FATHER BEN: Then why are you about to describe them to me in a confessional?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Graham and I went over a number of my exploits prior to arriving here on Earth, and he suggested this event in particular would be well suited. Graham speaking: It's a—easier to understand than a-a lot of his stories, and it's, y'know, shorter.

FATHER BEN: All right.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: But don't concern yourself with "absolution." You're not gonna get me to express regret I don't feel.

FATHER BEN: Do you mind if I at least maintain the formal shape of this ritual? Specifically the opening words?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Oh, right. Graham tutored me in this little tête-à-tête. [music creeps in, a little piano melody over strings that becomes a pacing string cadence over sustained bass notes] Ready when you are.

FATHER BEN AND JOSHUA: (close to unison) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and Of the Holy Spirit.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Forgive me father for I have sinned. I've never confessed before and don't expect I ever will again.

FATHER BEN: Please continue.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: for the purpose of brevity, can we just assume it's me speaking unless otherwise specified until the end of the confession?

FATHER BEN: That's fine.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: On the world I come from, there was a group called—[music stops] and already we have a problem.

FATHER BEN: Anything I can help with?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: [music begins again, now with added percussive notes] Not really. Human bodies can't produce words from my language. While there is a striking resemblance between your species and

mine, the way our heads and throats developed allowed us to produce bifurcated, resonant sounds your physiognomy doesn't allow for.

FATHER BEN: Just when you think it you've heard all.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I'll use substitute terms, will that suffice?

FATHER BEN: I'll let you know if there's anything I can't follow.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: There's a subset among my species, let's call them the Antelopes.

FATHER BEN: All right, the Antelopes.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: The Antelopes were [beat] students is perhaps the best word. And their course of study was "methods of interacting with the world while taking less from it." Or, to put it another way: survival.

FATHER BEN: I notice you're describing the Antelopes in the past tense.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Could be premature. For all I know some of them may still be alive. Or their descendants, if the biosphere held out.

FATHER BEN: But there's a chance they're all dead?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Well, either dead or screaming in eternal agony inside a virtual prison in Nevada.

FATHER BEN: So everyone who came here was among these [beat] Antelopes.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Not sure which Antelopes are the lucky ones. Pick your prison: a vice-like computer mainframe or a planet dying all around you.

FATHER BEN: Sounds like these Antelopes weren't able to find those new ways of interacting you mentioned.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Not their fault—or not entirely.

FATHER BEN: Whose fault was it?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: [music drops to just the bass notes, then fades out by the end of the line] Let's call them the Wolves. Another faction of my society, the powerful one, the group with all the weapons and the resources. Not to mention a strong dislike of us Antelopes and our inquiries.

FATHER BEN: Why would these [beat] Wolves want to stop the people trying to ensure their survival?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: That's really a question for your own Wolves here on Earth.

FATHER BEN: (sigh) Fair enough.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (sigh) So some time ago—I'm not sure when, we haven't been able to figure out how long we were traveling in space.

FATHER BEN: Sure.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: But [music resumes, eerie wailing notes like layered screams, punctuated by single piano notes] however long ago, the Wolves began arresting the Antelopes. Single arrests at first, then roundups. Some Antelopes would be held indefinitely, while others would be tortured and released.

FATHER BEN: That's awful.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: But a shrewd kind of awful. Two simultaneous deterrents: the fear of vanishing forever, coupled with the fear conjured from stories told by released Antelopes. One fate left to our imagination, the other blatantly illustrated by broken bodies and shattered minds. The Wolves weren't content merely to deploy the means of violence, they wanted to do so in a way that would engender the most terror—of both known and the unknown. [music stops suddenly] It was brilliant.

FATHER BEN: I [beat] don't think that's the word I would use.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It's the only word. I learned a lot from the Wolves.

FATHER BEN: You *learned* from them?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Fear takes up an enormous amount of bandwidth in the mind. If we Antelopes never felt safe, not even for a moment, we'd have no energy left for our intellectual pursuits.

FATHER BEN: Even ones as urgent as what you've described?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Immediate fear trumps distant fear. Yes, we were afraid of the biosphere collapsing, and we could see evidence that this collapse was mere decades away. But if you might be tortured in a dark room that very night? That beats "decades."

FATHER BEN: That's horrible.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I find your reaction a bit confusing, Father Ben. Hasn't your own organization used similar techniques many times in its own history?

FATHER BEN: I don't agree with everything the Church has ever done.



GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yet you're still its designated representative, empowered to grant or withhold "absolution" as you will?

FATHER BEN: I believe we can be better. I believe anyone can be better, with effort.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Graham speaking: Thank you for that. I—(sigh) I hope so.

FATHER BEN: So, Joshua, since this is presumably leading to a confession, I'm guessing you enacted some sort of reprisal? One based on what you say you "learned" from these Wolves?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: you're a nuanced listener, Father. And adept at adjusting to radical new frames of reference. I'm moderately impressed.

FATHER BEN: I like to think every parishioner brings their own world into this booth. It's not always *quite* this literal.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: The answer is [music begins, sustained bass notes and ticking percussion] yes. On both counts. A reprisal, but one based on their own tactics.

FATHER BEN: The instilling of fear.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: My species has a digestive process that's similar to yours in many ways. But for a long time now, our bodies have grown increasingly corrupted based on the ways we've outsourced our functions.

FATHER BEN: Outsourced? Your—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: For example there's a species of animal we use to incubate our offspring. Another to circulate our blood—well, that second one's mostly for the elites, but—

FATHER BEN: You use *animals* for things that basic?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: And not consensually either. It's monstrous. And it's led, generationally, to weaknesses [music adds piano melody] in our various internal processes.

FATHER BEN: Which I'm guessing is why you mentioned digestion?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: In my studies as a biochemist I noticed a phenomenon—more prominent with each generation—of ordinary digestive enzymes failing to make a distinction between food and the body's own organs.

FATHER BEN: Sort of an equivalent to heartburn?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: If “heartburn” was a literal term rather than a figurative one. [Piano and percussion stops, bass notes fade out] In some of the extreme cases I observed, the body would begin digesting its own vital systems for nutrition.

FATHER BEN: This is *definitely* going down as one of the all-time most unpleasant conversations I’ve ever—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: So I found a way to weaponize it.

FATHER BEN: And it just got worse.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: My Antelopes were a small faction. There weren’t enough of us to muster an army or an “uprising” or any other nonsense against the Wolves. If we were going to hurt them, it had to be in a way that made us seem like a larger, stronger force than we actually were. And these were the days before Deirdre and others had taken over my movement with their asinine fantasies of cooperation and incremental change. So there was nothing standing in my way.

FATHER BEN: What did you do, Joshua?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: There are foods on this planet that only rich people eat, correct?

FATHER BEN: Well, I guess there’s types of food that only rich people eat regularly, sometimes a relatively poorer person might have a splurge night, or, well I-I guess in the developing world that sort of—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Right right, I forget, you’re not quite as far gone as we were. (wry chuckle) You’ll get there, but you’re not there yet.

FATHER BEN: Well, I hope it’ll go the other way.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: You have a dish on this planet called veal, yes? Derived from a force-fed animal whose movement is restricted to keep the flesh tender?

FATHER BEN: We do.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: We have a delicacy back home that’s almost the opposite. An aquatic creature—the closest equivalent here would be a jellyfish—that we force to swim through pressurized tubes for its entire existence. This “jellyfish” tastes best, so they say, when it’s lean and tough.

FATHER BEN: That’s ghastly.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It’s also expensive. Nurturing these “jellyfish” to just the right consistency is so costly they could only be consumed by the most elite Wolves.

FATHER BEN: Ohhh, I think I see.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah?

FATHER BEN: The same elite Wolves ordering the arrests of your fellow Antelopes.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: We had an insider, a jellyfish farmer, who would have the opportunity—very briefly—to contaminate one of the pressurized tubes, and by extension the jellyfish inside.

FATHER BEN: To contaminate with your weaponized heartburn?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Which I knew would only be consumed by this small group of elites. At which point their own digestive systems began to systematically attack the rest of their bodies.

FATHER BEN: Systematically?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I designed the enzyme to work in stages. It was a sort of [beat] this is an incredibly crude term, but let's call it a learning acid.

FATHER BEN: What was it learning?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: That different parts of its own body were actually food.

FATHER BEN: So, not so much "learning" as "disinformation."

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: If you like. But tactical disinformation. It moved from digesting the least essential systems to the most essential.

FATHER BEN: Meaning—if I understand correctly—that they'd die slowly.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: And in extraordinary pain.

FATHER BEN: But why specifically the digestive process? Were you trying to disguise it as a natural illness?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Oh, not at all. The pattern among those who died in that particular way would be unmistakable.

FATHER BEN: The Wolves trying to break the will of your movement.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Anyone who looked at a list of the dead would know they'd been targeted. And *why*.

FATHER BEN: Then, w-why?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Because it happened slowly. Gradually, a step at a time, and at a different pace for every elite Wolf infected. Meaning they died everywhere. While working. While eating. While playing with their families. While engaged in [beat] our version of sleeping, our version of sexual intercourse. While conducting meetings in their most secure chambers. Remember, this counter-attack was designed to be psychological as well as physical. And [beat] untraceable to any single source.

FATHER BEN: You wanted them to feel afraid everywhere. You wanted no place in the world to feel safe.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Because if we could get them everywhere, that made *us* seem stronger than we really were. More numerous than we really were. I wanted them seeing assassins in every shadow. Every place they ever thought was safe. Well, like I said—everything has a blade hidden inside it.

FATHER BEN: That's. Unimaginable.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (indignant) No it's not; I did it. I watched it happen, I watched them die, I watched the arrests stop. At least for a time.

FATHER BEN: "For a time?" That's all the benefit you got from this monstrosity, a temporary reprieve?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Of course it was temporary, every victory's temporary. Wolves don't stop being Wolves because a few of them die.

FATHER BEN: But these Wolves—Joshua—they weren't eating dinner alone, were they? Their loved ones were with them, right? Their children?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Sometimes? Maybe? They often held private banquets, bacchanals, no offspring invited.

FATHER BEN: But not always, surely, surely sometimes their innocent loved ones were at the table too!

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Of course not "always." Are you a child? There's no such thing as a weapon that only hurts combatants. Once a bullet's left the chamber it's gonna go where it's gonna go. The alternative is never defending yourself or your people at all.

FATHER BEN: Joshua. I'm not sure what you're expecting me to say here.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Nothing. I expect nothing from you. I'm here doing my bit to placate the Wolves of Earth. If they want me to show up and do this dance in exchange for a negligible increase in liberty, I'll do it. I don't have access to other options.

FATHER BEN: "Other options" like making them die in gradual agony?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Oh, well, you don't have to worry about that.

FATHER BEN: Don't I?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: *Graham* won't let me. I'm trapped for the rest of my days inside the body of a sentimentalist.

FATHER BEN: Wait—hold on—have I been misunderstanding this whole time?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: What?

FATHER BEN: Joshua, you don't have *any* physical control over Graham's body whatsoever?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: *Graham speaking*: well, uh, we're trying to think of it as *both* of our body—*Joshua speaking*: But that's preposterous, because Graham's the only one who can move it. (sigh) *Graham speaking*: It's n-not a secret, Father, th-this has been reported—

FATHER BEN: Just [beat] the way you've been speaking to me for the last, what, ten minutes? It felt as if I was hearing directly from—

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It's called "amplifying." Graham's responsibility as a host is to repeat what Joshua says in his mind as exactly as possible, not just in terms of the words, but also the tone. Even if that means [beat] (sigh) expressing ideas or tones that Graham wouldn't necessarily use himself.

FATHER BEN: So [beat] eh-okay. So, Graham, I'm talking to you.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: *Graham speaking*: understood.

FATHER BEN: Would it be fair to say that you found everything Joshua just said as horrifying as I did?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (sigh) Maybe even more so. After all, he is my permanent roommate.

FATHER BEN: And yet, you expressed it with the full measure of Joshua's—eh, I'm not sure what to call it—tactical glee?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: That's how Joshua said it inside my mind. If I [beat] don't recreate that, I'm not letting him be a person in this world. I'd be just another jailer. I'd [beat] be a Wolf.

FATHER BEN: I can't tell if that's inspiring, or— (sigh)

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It's easier for the other hybrid people. Most of the other Antelopes aren't like Joshua. *Joshua speaking*: But they sure are happy to accept my help when they need it.

FATHER BEN: Well, Joshua. I hope you can understand that there's nothing I can offer you in terms of absolution. As strange as it feels to say that.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: Like I said, I don't want it. But let me ask you this: if I was magically some sort of Space-Catholic from a world that inexplicably had your church on it, what would you have done then? Having heard the exact same story?

FATHER BEN: It's not about the story, it's your plainly evident lack of remorse. Your unwillingness to see the cruelty in what you just told me.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I don't see the cruelty because it's *not there*. All I see is necessity. I'd do it again.

FATHER BEN: Then, as fascinating as this has been, I'm afraid we're at a bit of an impasse.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: So that's it? We're done?

FATHER BEN: Maybe.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Maybe?

FATHER BEN: If you want to be done, we can be done.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Sorry, we're not following.

FATHER BEN: If you *both* want to be done, we're done.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Both?

FATHER BEN: There's two people on the other side of this booth, right? And I don't mean to presume, but over the course of a career like mine, you get a sense for when a person is carrying a burden. Someone in this confessional has a heavy one, and it's clearly not Joshua.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Graham speaking: The wh-whole point of this was to give Joshua an opportunity—

FATHER BEN: And he's had that opportunity. And now you're both going back to a military installation where you probably won't see another priest for a very long time. Is there anything Graham wants to say while he's here?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Graham speaking: L-like I said, I-I'm here for Joshua.

FATHER BEN: And you've done a frankly remarkable job of representing him. But if I were you, Graham, I'd be careful not to use Joshua, with all his appalling amoral spectacle, as something to hide yourself behind. You deserve to represent yourself as well.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: [breath in] Graham can't confess the thing he's ashamed of.

FATHER BEN: Why not?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Because it wasn't his choice.

FATHER BEN: Does he want to tell me about it anyway?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: I hope not, I'm so bored with this whole thing I could scream.  
Graham speaking: Can we assume for the next few minutes that it's me talking unless otherwise noted?

FATHER BEN: Of course.

FATHER BEN AND GRAHAM: [music begins, a sweet piano melody that resolves into percussive, pacing strings, and then ticking percussion] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been forty-two years since my last confession.

FATHER BEN: Go on.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Like I said, it's not really my thing to confess.

FATHER BEN: Talk about it anyway, let's see where it goes.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Again, I can't share many details of our recent, uh, disagreement with the military.

FATHER BEN: Understood.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: But part of resolving that disagreement involved putting my daughter at incredible risk.

FATHER BEN: Your daughter?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Jamie, that's her name. There was a thing she could do that would help a lot of people. But at tremendous risk to her own life.

FATHER BEN: And she did it?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: And she survived. There was a bit of a recovery period, but she's fine now.

FATHER BEN: And you're saying it was her decision, Jamie's decision, to take this risk?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It was, but—

FATHER BEN: Go on.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Please understand, I didn't want her to do it. Even now I can still feel the full-body terror [music adds piano] of my own kid risking her life.

FATHER BEN: But?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I also did want her to do it. Because it would save so many lives. And there was no one else as uniquely suited to doing it as Jamie was.

FATHER BEN: But again, it was her choice.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Definitely. We all tried to talk her out of it: me, m-my wife Morgan, my other kid Talia, but Jamie held her ground.

FATHER BEN: Your family knew the risk she was taking?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: N-not exactly, but they knew she was about to do something risky.

FATHER BEN: How do they feel about it now?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: [music stops and fades out] Angry, I assume. They're not exactly speaking to me right now. There's a decent chance they'll never speak to me again.

FATHER BEN: So here's what I'm wondering, Graham.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yes Father?

FATHER BEN: Jamie's not a part of the Nevada project, right?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: She's living there for the time being, but no, not officially.

FATHER BEN: And Morgan and Talia aren't either.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (chuckle) Definitely not.

FATHER BEN: So how did it happen that they got caught up in whatever this mysterious event was? Why were they involved in it at all? [beat] (sigh) See Graham, this particular silence is usually the one I hear right before we get to the thing the person really wants to confess.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: They were there because they were all—in different ways—w-worried about me. Scared for me.

FATHER BEN: Scared of what?



GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Everything. Everything happening with me, what I was going through, if I was safe, if—

FATHER BEN: They disapproved of your decision to volunteer for the Nevada Project?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: They. [beat] They didn't know.

FATHER BEN: How could they not know?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Because I didn't discuss it with them first. I signed up without even talking to them. They only found out later. After the decision was made. After there was no going back.

FATHER BEN: Ahh.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I mean, to be fair, Morgan and I were separated, the kids were both grown, I—I wasn't under any obligation to—

FATHER BEN: But they're still your family.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I thought they would try to stop me. And I knew that I needed to do this.

FATHER BEN: Take on Joshua, you mean?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (wry chuckle) Well I didn't know it'd be Joshua, but—but even if I had, I'd still do it. This is my purpose. This is my new life.

FATHER BEN: Then they couldn't have talked you out of it, could they? If you were this certain.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: I mean— (sigh)

FATHER BEN: It's not that you were afraid they'd talk you out of it; you were afraid of the conversation itself. The anger. The sadness. The confrontation. (sigh) I know what I'm talking about here, Graham. Once upon a time, not even that long ago, I made a big decision that affected someone else. That left them behind. And like your family, they didn't find out until it was too late. Maybe the reason I recognized your burden—(nervous chuckle) even concealed behind Joshua's horrifying chronicle—is that it's the same as my own.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: They wouldn't have understood. They would've just yelled and cried and—

FATHER BEN: But they deserved to. They're the people in your life.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Shutting people out like that, your people, the closest people in your life, it's almost like—

FATHER BEN: Like a kind of violence, right?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Everything has a blade hidden inside it.

FATHER BEN: Everything has a blade hidden inside it. [beat] I know what penance I want to give you, (sigh) but I'm not sure national security will allow it.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (with a laugh) What do you mean?

FATHER BEN: (heavy sigh) [music starts, simple piano that is happy and sad all at once] I want you to reach out to Morgan and Talia. Contact them in any way you're allowed to. And then I want you to just hear them out. Don't defend yourself, don't explain, that can come later. Just hear them. And see where it goes from there.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: It's not that simple.

FATHER BEN: Isn't it?

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: We're not really Graham anymore. We can do the whole "Graham speaking" thing, but with every passing day that becomes less relevant. We're not their husband, their father. We're Graham-and-Joshua. We're something new.

FATHER BEN: But something-new that has roots in their family, their love. [piano stops] Let them meet this something-new. Let them know it. [one last note] Graham-And-Joshua doesn't have to repeat Graham's mistakes.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Yeah.

FATHER BEN: And I sure hope they don't repeat Joshua's.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (chuckle) Joshua speaking: that chuckle was Graham. As far as I'm concerned, I didn't make any mistakes. (sigh) Graham speaking: The government's gonna ask you for a report.

FATHER BEN: I'm sure they will.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: What'll you tell them?

FATHER BEN: The truth. That I can and will take a confession from any person—human or otherwise—who wants to offer one in the spirit of penance.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: (heavy sigh) We better get moving. There's like four tanks waiting to take us home.

FATHER BEN: I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Thank you, Father.

FATHER BEN: [music begins, soft repeating synth chords] Graham, I mean.

GRAHAM/JOSHUA: Joshua speaking: I figured.

[Music swells for end credits, the same theme as the opening, then fades]

VOICEOVER: “Forgive Me Away” is a Rogue Dialogue and a Gideon Media production. This episode was written by:

MAC (pre-recorded): Mac Rogers

VOICEOVER: Story editing and direction by:

JORDANA (pre-recorded): Jordana Williams.

BOB (pre-recorded): Bob Raymonda.

VOICEOVER: and

JACK (pre-recorded): Jack Marone.

VOICEOVER: Dialogue editing by:

BOB (pre-recorded): Bob Raymonda.

VOICEOVER: Here’s our cast:

SEAN (pre-recorded): Sean Williams, Graham/Joshua.

VOICEOVER: and

CASEY (pre-recorded): Casey Callaghan, Father Ben.

VOICEOVER: The *Give Me Away* main theme was originally composed by:

ADAM (pre-recorded): Adam Blau.

VOICEOVER: Music arrangement, composition, sound design, and mixing for this episode by me, Adam Raymonda. Find out more about *Give Me Away* at [gideon-media.com](http://gideon-media.com). Find out more about *Forgive Me* at [roguedialogue.com](http://roguedialogue.com). You can find both shows wherever you get your podcasts. We hope you enjoyed listening as much as we enjoyed making this crossover.

[music ends]

END OF EPISODE