

Brian's Path, Episode 9

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BRIAN'S PATH

Episode 9: "Breakdown"

BLANK SCREEN

YEAR ON SCREEN

2001

INT. COFFEE-SHOP - MORNING

CARA and BRIAN talk.

CARA

The relationship of muse-and-writer is too superficial; besides, you're too controlling and possessive. I think we're over; besides, we've never really begun, when you think about it.

BRIAN

No! I only want to be with you! I'll do anything!

CARA

Now you're creeping me out.

BRIAN

There's nothing creepy about loving a beautiful girl!

CARA

I'll talk to you later.

BRIAN

Quit pushing people away! If I'm annoying you, please tell me what I'm doing wrong, so I can change!

CARA

I said I'll talk to you later.

BRIAN
What did I do wrong?

CARA
For one thing, the words "only want to be with
you." It's too serious, too soon.

BRIAN
Too serious, too soon?

CARA
I said I'll talk to you later. Bye.

BRIAN
Bye.

CARA exits.

INT. NEW YORK OFFICES OF A.A.P., OFFICE TOWER - NIGHT

DARLA, CAP, ANTON, JAMES, GABE, CHERYL, CARA, and CHANTANE sit
around a table, and BRIAN sits at the head of the table.

BRIAN
We need to work on something -- a project of some
sort.

ANTON
What kind of project?

BRIAN
Anything, if it'll get my mind off of Cara at the
same time.

CARA
I'm right here.

BRIAN
I know. But I also know that we've got a lot of
funds from Anton, and we should put those funds to
good use by putting these offices to good use.

ANTON

That's right. If we don't stop using this place as merely a hang-out, my investment will have been pointless.

BRIAN

You don't like hanging-out with us?

ANTON

I didn't mean it that way. What I meant was ...

BRIAN

I know what you meant. And I think everyone does. So people, it's time we got to work!

WORDS ON SCREEN: One week later...

INT. NEW YORK OFFICES OF AGARTHA ANIMATED

PRODUCTIONS (A.A.P.) - MORNING

BRIAN enters from an elevator, wearing a suit, and his jaw drops as he looks out over the sea of people in business suits: some in cubicles, some discussing story-boards, some making copies, some sending faxes, some walking around carrying toners, and others walking around getting coffee for some of the ones in the cubicles.

A young man in a suit, named MORLEY, approaches BRIAN.

MORLEY

Wow, Mr....

BRIAN

(interrupting)
Call me Money.

MORLEY

It's so great to finally meet you.

BRIAN
Who are you?

MORLEY
I'm Morley.

BRIAN
Mort?

MORLEY
Let me just say it's an honor to be working for such
a visionary.

BRIAN
A visionary would figure out a way to get Cara to
see things from my perspective.

MORLEY
Oh, you are a visionary.

BRIAN
Why?

MORLEY
This project is so inspiring.

BRIAN
I don't know what project you're talking about,
Morley; however, I do love a suck-up. I'll see to
it that you get a raise in your salary next pay.

MORLEY
Thank you!

BRIAN
Move along, and don't push your luck.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, NEW YORK OFFICES OF A.A.P. -

MORNING

BRIAN is alone with ANTON.

ANTON has a smile across his face.

BRIAN

What project are they working on?

ANTON

They're making Banana Chan!

BRIAN hugs ANTON, and cries joyfully into ANTON's chest.

ANTON

There, there. It's alright.

BRIAN

You don't know how long I've waited for someone to say that they're making Banana Chan.

ANTON

Yes, I do.

BRIAN

Good point.

INT. STARBUCKS - MORNING

BRIAN and DARLA chat.

DARLA

Brian, I brought a script with me.

BRIAN

Why?

Pause.

DARLA

I noticed that it's well within our company's

abilities to produce another series, so I went ahead and wrote a script and an outline of the series. I want us to produce this series...um.

BRIAN

Did you write it?

She nods.

BRIAN

What kind of series is it?

DARLA

It's an anime series.

Pause.

BRIAN

Well, we're already making one -- mine.

DARLA

Great! Let's combine them!

BRIAN

It doesn't work that way.

DARLA

But we're a team!

BRIAN

I'm the writer. You're the music person.

DARLA

This company would be nothing without me.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINER - DAY

BRIAN and ANTON are in a plane. BRIAN has the window seat.

BRIAN
(mocking)
"The company would be nothing without me."

ANTON
(mocking)
"The company would be nothing without ME!"

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, NEW YORK OFFICES OF A.A.P.

BRIAN, ANTON, DARLA, CHERYL, CARA, and some other people
(extras), sit around a big table.

BRIAN
Two words: live-action.

ANTON
Been there, done that.

DARLA
I wanna act in legitimate television!

BRIAN
We hire voice-actors for that, Darla. And when we
move into my live-action idea, we'll hire real
actors. You couldn't act your way out of a paper
bag, no offense.

DARLA
Yeah, well you've never given me a chance to prove
myself!

BRIAN
Neither has Cara for me.

CARA
I'm right here.

BRIAN
I know. And Cara - as you know - Banana Chan is
inspired by your idiosyncrasies.

CARA

Yes. And it creeps the hell out of me.

BRIAN

You yourself told me that I had your permission to do that.

CARA

I was fourteen - too young to make such a decision.

BRIAN

Well, it was my major writing project, so I stuck with it, and I'll finish it. I love you, but I've gotta be true to my art, and I sure as hell hope it doesn't mean losing you.

CARA

We'll see.

BRIAN

Promise you'll read the final draft, because I promise you'll love it.

CARA

I promise I'll read the final draft.

BRIAN

Thank you. Now don't break your promise just because I said "I love you."

CARA

Huh?

BRIAN

Someone PLEASE change the topic!

ANTON

Okay. What about getting networks to buy the shows?

BRIAN

If we bring good stuff to that trade-show in Banff,
we'll be on TV in no time.

CAP enters, and sits down.

BRIAN

A random net guy suggested we write a show about
Canada, and move to that country, and apply for ...

CAP laughs hysterically.

CAP

A random net guy!?!

BRIAN

Yes, Cap.

ANTON

All the best ideas come from random net guys, Cap.
You're an idiot.

BRIAN

And you've just earned yourself a raise, Anton Lace!

ANTON sticks his tongue out, toward CAP.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

ANTON enters BRIAN's office. BRIAN puts down a rubix cube.

BRIAN

How may I help you, buddy?

ANTON

Did you know that Darla had some huge issues in her
past, and she was actually, for a little while, a
prostitute?

BRIAN

Yes. It's in her past, and we should leave it
there.

ANTON
Of course.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

BRIAN talks with someone on the phone.

BRIAN
(to the phone)
If you find out someone's dirty secret without telling the person that you know their secret, and if you sell the dirty secret to a third party, as fiction, and if the person who's secret it is gets hold of the fiction, they'll feel a false sense of vilification for a while, and it's then that the person can be manipulated most easily, because everyone will think it's fiction, and...

DARLA enters.

BRIAN
(to phone)
... anyway, that's what Monkeyboy said, and I disagreed entirely.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

BRIAN and ANTON talk over coffee.

BRIAN
Sleep is work, in the business of selling dreams.

INT. ANTON'S OFFICE

ANTON plays Nintendo's DUCK HUNT.

DARLA enters.

DARLA
Don't you ever get bored of that thing?

ANTON

Nope.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

BRIAN, DARLA, and ANTON sit around a table.

BRIAN

Do you guys have any new show ideas?

DARLA

My anime idea.

BRIAN

Darla. No means no.

DARLA

That's exactly what Cara keeps saying to you, but you never let it get through your thick persistent, sexist male chauvinist horny harassing possessive, controlling, manipulative, stalker, stubborn skull!

BRIAN

Any other ideas?

ANTON

Fake daily news.

BRIAN

It's been done.

ANTON

But never as a drama.

BRIAN

What are you saying?

ANTON

Fake daily news with reporters and everything, taking place in this actual city, using actual

people with their real names, but telling lies.

BRIAN

Kind of like ... ?

ANTON

Nothing like anything. People call in with their story ideas, and we send reporters.

BRIAN

Isn't that lying?

ANTON

Yes.

BRIAN

Are you suggesting ...

ANTON

Yes, I'm suggesting.

BRIAN

What are you suggesting?

ANTON

A suggestion.

CUT TO:

WORDS ON SCREEN: One Week Later...

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

BRIAN sits in his office, when MRS. LUANNE enters.

BRIAN

Mrs. Luanne? What brings you here?

MRS. LUANNE

I've given it a lot of thought. I was wrong.

BRIAN

I pay you to be sincere. Try again.

MRS. LUANNE

Yes, boss. Of course.

EXT. SKYLINE, SHADY BROOK - DAY

This is a small city; as such, it has several office towers in its downtown core, the highest being twenty seven floors -- the rooftops of these buildings make up the skyline of SHADY BROOK.

The image of a golden cross appears in the sky.

Cars stop on the roads below, as people view the golden cross in the sky.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE, A.A.P. - DAY

BRIAN and ANTON have a conversation.

ANTON

Aren't you gonna ask me about my current project?

BRIAN

Nope, and I expect the same courtesy from you.

ANTON

What?

INT. PUBLIC-SCHOOL-BOARD ROOM, OFFICE TOWER - DAY

Several people are at this public school board meeting.

A guy named MR. DYLAN, at the head of the table, says...

MR. DYLAN

I think it's about time that we, the public school board, re-consider the issue of prayer in the classroom -- what with the recent miraculous appearance of a golden cross in the sky, and all.

Anyone second that motion?

Everyone seconds the motion.

MR. DYLAN

Then it is settled. Prayer will now be allowed in Shady Brook Public School classrooms.

INT. LIBRARY, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

MRS. LUANNE prances happily about the library which is full of students studying.

MRS. LUANNE

Attention everyone.

Everyone in the library looks at her.

MRS. LUANNE

I just wanted to inform you that the Catholic School Board of which this school is a part of, has just successfully banned Harry Potter books. And David Icke.

Twenty per-cent of the students applaud.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PATH, SHADY BROOK - DAY

TRACY, a fifteen year old goth girl, sits on a bench, looking disappointed.

TRACY has long, black hair which flows to the bottom of her long, black dress. She's very skinny, and wears many bracelets and necklaces.

The golden cross is still in the sky, though the bench which she is sitting in is facing the opposite direction.

Someone behind her, riding a bike, notices the cross, and falls off of the bike.

TRACY turns around, sees the biker nursing a wounded knee.

COMMERCIAL BREAK

INT. HALLWAY, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

TRACY argues with MRS. LUANNE as many students pass by.

TRACY

Even though I'd never read Harry Potter in my life,
it's literature, and a lot of people like it. You
shouldn't ban literature! You're banning
free-speech!

MRS. LUANNE

Some people shouldn't speak.

TRACY looks shocked.

TRACY

Whom? Who shouldn't talk?

MRS. LUANNE

Anyone un-godly ... like J.K. Rowling, David Icke,
and ... you.

TRACY's feet rise off the ground as the ceiling of the building
parts and she ascends gracefully into the clouds, guided by a
beam of light; of course, everyone from her school is shocked,
especially MRS. LUANNE.

INT. BOARD ROOM, AGARTHA ANIMATED PRODUCTIONS - MORNING

BRIAN and ANTON chat.

ANTON

When I retire as a brain surgeon, I may take up
screenwriting as a profession.

BRIAN

What a coincidence. When I retire, I might take up

brain surgery.

GABE enters.

BRIAN

Hi Gabe.

GABE

Well, you guys ARE NOT gonna believe this. A Golden Cross appeared in the sky over Shady Brook -- it's like a UFO, but not.

INT. TAXI - EVENING

TRACY rides through SHADY BROOK in a taxi-cab.

It is raining outside, and she is wearing a hood.

DRIVER

You're that Tracy girl!

He stops the cab, looks at her.

DRIVER

They showed it on the news, how you flew into the sky! I've got so many questions!

TRACY

Shut up.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL -

EVENING

The SHADY BROOK high school football team is playing against the team from DUANE OAK in an outdoor stadium which is packed with a capacity crowd.

A large television set above the action displays TRACY's face, as the crowd falls silent and watches in awe.

TRACY

Time out.

The football players stop playing.

TRACY

You no doubt saw the news, and how I ... you know. They told me a citizen of Shady Brook will be chosen to receive an important message of some sort. They said to tell you that. Anyway, fankoo for your time, and play ball.

INT. LIBRARY, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL

MRS. LUANNE's dusting her computers as TRACY enters, carrying a back-pack.

MRS. LUANNE watches as TRACY sits at a table.

TRACY intentionally faces MRS. LUANNE; they shoot fake smiles at each other.

MRS. LUANNE

Nice weather outside, eh?

TRACY nods, unzips her back-pack, and reveals a copy of HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE, which already has a book-mark somewhere in the middle of it.

MRS. LUANNE yells.

MRS. LUANNE

GET OUT OF MY LIBRARY!

TRACY

I talked to God and he said you're going to hell, bitch.

MRS. LUANNE runs out, crying.

TRACY

Just kidding! Just because I flew into the clouds,
these idiots'll believe anything I say! Idiots.

TRACY laughs.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

BRIAN talks with DARLA.

BRIAN

I think I'm dreaming.

DARLA

As the song says: "Life is but a dream."

BRIAN smiles.

DARLA

God works in mysterious ways, so who knows if we're
all just a dream.

BRIAN

Interesting philosophy, Darla. By the way, did you
hear about Anton's book?

DARLA

Anton wrote a book?

BRIAN

Yeah, he wrote a book which talks about why all
religions are wrong.

DARLA

He's free to have his own opinion.

BRIAN

True, but he's got scientific proof to back up his
claim.

DARLA

No science can prove that my Jesus doesn't exist.

BRIAN

I find it amazing that you, of all people, are a Jesus freak.

DARLA

What's so freaky about loving the Lord?

BRIAN

For one thing, your so-called Lord doesn't exist.

DARLA gets angry.

DARLA

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!?!

BRIAN

I open my mouth, and my words come out; that's how.

DARLA puts her hand on his shoulder.

DARLA

I want you to come to my church with me, Brian; I'm sure you'll re-discover God there.

BRIAN stands up.

BRIAN

With only disrespect, screw-off churchy.

DARLA looks gravely offended as BRIAN walks away.

BRIAN exits.

DARLA

Brian's role as leader of this company sure has changed him into an immoral bastard. Or has he always been an immoral bastard? I'm really not sure.

CUT TO:

BLANK SCREEN

WORDS ON SCREEN: "A Few Days Ago..."

INT. ANTON'S OFFICE, AGARTHA ANIMATED PRODUCTIONS -

MORNING

ANTON stares out an open window.

ANTON

Mr. Self-Absorbed King of his own Universe should
be here any moment.

BRIAN enters.

BRIAN

Hello Anton.

ANTON

I've been expecting you.

Pause.

ANTON

When will we go to Shady Brook to investigate that
cross in the sky?

BRIAN

It's symbolic of the zodiac.

INT. HALLWAY, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

BRIAN and ANTON walk down these halls.

BRIAN looks at a locker.

BRIAN

Hey this used to be my locker.

He touches the locker gently.

ANTON

It's been forever since I walked through the old high school's hallways.

BRIAN

Yes, we had insane times in these corridors.

INT. GUIDANCE OFFICE, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

MR. SWAIN, the guidance counselor, sits behind his desk, playing with his thumbs. TRACY, the goth girl from earlier, enters the room.

MR. SWAIN

Please take a seat.

TRACY sits down.

TRACY

Yo.

MR. SWAIN

We're concerned about you, Tracy. We don't know what to do about you.

TRACY

Who said you have to?

MR. SWAIN

You abused your authority when you lied to Mrs. Luanne.

TRACY giggles.

TRACY

Is THAT what this is about?

MR. SWAIN

Telling her YOU received God's message, when in fact

you only spoke with an angel.

TRACY laughs.

TRACY

You believe that I spoke with an angel?

MR. SWAIN

I have to believe.

TRACY giggles.

MR. SWAIN

When you returned from the sky, and proclaimed this and that at the football game, you became a recognized and respected authority on the afterlife. As a guidance counselor, I can see that such authority is a rare career opportunity, and it'd be wise to slow down, and think before you abuse that authority further, which is exactly what you did when you lied to Mrs. Luanne.

TRACY

SHE DESERVES TO BE PUNISHED FOR HER IGNORANCE ABOUT HARRY POTTER!!!

MR. SWAIN

If so, your own kindness would be a better teacher, don't you think? Our faith teaches us that an authority on the afterlife should be an authority on proper Christian Ethics and good morals.

TRACY

Your faith, not mine, and I'm the one who's been there, and done that.

MR. SWAIN

You're more respected than you know, and you're wasting it with childish temper tantrums.

TRACY

If you continue to ignore me, I'll turn you into a pillar of salt. Transfiguration!

MR. SWAIN

Did the angel really tell you that someone from Shady Brook will receive an important message from above, within the next few months?

TRACY

No. There was no angel. The cross, my rising; it's all a test of holograms, fiber-optics, pyrotechnics, special effects, that will be used to fake a Rapture in 2012. Do you have any idea who my father is?

Pause.

MR. SWAIN

Tracy, I know you hate Mrs. Luanne, and I know you have a fondness towards the town in general; therefore it's logical to conclude that what you said to the town at the football game was more truthful than what you said to Mrs. Luanne in private. I think that you should embrace the public life and use it to be more truthful.

TRACY

(sarcastic)
Can't argue with logic.

MR. SWAIN

Out of personal interest, I've gotta ask this question: who do you think the prophet will be?

TRACY

You have no clue.

BRIAN enters.

BRIAN

Tah-dah! Am I interrupting anything?

BRIAN smiles at TRACY.

TRACY looks uncomfortable.

BRIAN

I know you! You're the girl from the TV.

TRACY

Just because I was on TV, does NOT mean that you know me.

BRIAN

You talked to an angel!

TRACY

That's what they say.

ANTON enters.

ANTON

Here you are, Brian.

MR. SWAIN

Mr. Lace!

ANTON bows.

ANTON

Yo, Mr. Swain. How ya doin'?

MR. SWAIN

Fine. You?

ANTON

Can't complain. You heard about the company in New York, I assume?

MR. SWAIN

Of course.

TRACY

I could leave.

MR. SWAIN

No, Tracy. It's best that we're all here.

BRIAN

Why?

TRACY

Why? Because I'm a tourist attraction?

MR. SWAIN

Not exactly. You see, I have this theory that each of us carries pieces of an interesting puzzle, and we should try to assemble those pieces together.

TRACY

How do ya figure?

MR. SWAIN

Well, Tracy's been to heaven. Brian's written so prolifically it's almost as if he's a superhuman. Anton's a neurologist. And I've...well, I don't admit this to many people, but... well, I saw a man turn into a ... reptilian being.

ANTON

A neurologist ain't special.

BRIAN

A writer ain't special.

TRACY

I'm not special either.

MR. SWAIN

I saw a man change shape! It's driving me insane. Please help me!

BRIAN, ANTON, and TRACY, appear to be creeped out by MR. SWAIN.

INT. COFFEE-SHOP - AFTERNOON

BRIAN, ANTON, and TRACY, sit in this coffee shop.

TRACY

Mr. Swain is a crazy old man.

BRIAN

Yup.

ANTON

There can't be any truth to his so-called
"interesting puzzle theory" about us.

BRIAN

That's right. No truth at all. None in the
slightest. Anyway, I've gotta go and have a chat
with my fortune teller now. Bye!

ANTON

Fortune teller? What fortune teller?

BRIAN

Madame Ovary.

ANTON and TRACY laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. MADAME OVARY'S FORTUNE TELLING PALACE

MADAME OVARY, an elderly fortune teller, talks to BRIAN.

MADAME OVARY

There is NO production company.

MADAME OVARY laughs.

MADAME OVARY

This isn't reality.

BRIAN

What do you mean?

MADAME OVARY

You're sleeping, in an amnesia-induced coma, trying to find reality.

BRIAN

Go on.

MADAME OVARY

You don't know exactly where you came from, because you were hit in the head with a blunt object, and you've got a form of amnesia.

BRIAN

Amnesia?

MADAME OVARY

When you wake up...

BRIAN

(interrupting)

Something knocked me out?

MADAME OVARY nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN BRIDGE, SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

ANTON stands beside a knocked-out BRIAN who wakes up, sits up, then says...

BRIAN

Did you get the number of that truck?

ANTON

Good, you're awake.

BRIAN

Yeah, and I can't remember my dream.

ANTON

Everyone left.

BRIAN

The animators?

ANTON

After you were accidentally hit with a rock, we had a guy from the company call his doctor to come and check on you, and he said that you'd be awake in no time.

BRIAN

Who hit me with a rock?

ANTON

It's a really warm temperature out here.

BRIAN

Was it you?

ANTON

Anyway, he suggested I stay with you until you wake up.

BRIAN

Well, thanks, then, for staying.

ANTON

You're welcome, Brian. And hey, just a thought from out of left-field, but I think you and I might be a little too disrespectful to the women in our lives.

BRIAN

How come each time I fall in love, it turns out that the girl doesn't feel the same way? And she usually ends up treating me like shit. I'm treating them how they treat me, and that can look like disrespect.

TO BE CONTINUED . . .