

TALES OF THE DAMNED:

Episode 8 - "OF CHILDREN'S TALES"

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"OF CHILDREN'S TALES"TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. A LONELY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

JIM WESTON is dressed just like you would expect of a hitchhiker. He's wearing old jeans, an aged leather jacket and has a backpack slung over his right shoulder that looks quite full and heavy. He is also sporting a five o'clock shadow that adds to his already gritty look.

In the darkness along this lonely roadside, Jim doesn't look like he'd get any luck catching a ride.

Suddenly, LIGHTS break the darkness of the night. They are headlights from a sedan, and they cause Jim to turn around and present his right arm waving the hitchhiker's thumb.

The car stops just a few yards ahead of Jim.

Jim rushes up to the car and looks in through the rolled down passenger side window.

MANDRAKE IS OUR DRIVER, and he is leaning towards the passenger side window with a disturbing smile that shows his not-so-healthy looking teeth.

Jim looks rather anxious and also reluctant at the sight of Mandrake.

MANDRAKE

Well...you better be glad anyone came down this road tonight. Hop in.

JIM

I appreciate it. I don't have that far to go, I don't think. It's been a while, but I don't think it's that far.

CUT TO:

INT. MANDRAKES CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jim enters the sedan, putting his now removed backpack into his lap. He shuts the door and as Mandrake smiles rather oddly again, he proceeds driving off down the road.

MANDRAKE

So, you seem quite anxious to get where your going. Most folks I'd pick up don't even have a clue where they're going!

Jim smiles in good will to his new chauffeur.

JIM

I'm going home...finally.

Jim gets a look over him as if he shouldn't have spoken.

JIM (CONT'D)

I mean, I've been working out of town for close to a year...so it's nice to get back.

Mandrake smirks.

MANDRAKE

Don't worry, I'm not the prying type. I didn't mean that you had to tell me everything.

Mandrake and Jim both laugh subtly.

JIM

Yeah...okay. I guess I look quite uneasy right now.

MANDRAKE

As you should...I've forgotten my manners as usual. I'm just a travelling man working in collections, so you know. I see a lot of folks needing rides here and there, but of course, I don't stop for just anyone. I like to think that I have a good perception about people just from eyeing them at a distance.

Mandrake lends a wink at Jim.

Jim seems amused.

JIM

Yeah, it never hurts to be careful. I do appreciate your kindness, and I appreciate that you don't think I'm just some straggler, I guess.

MANDRAKE

No sir. I could tell that you are
a man down on his luck this night.

Jim happens to look out the window and notice the lights to a house that is isolated in the distance in the wide open area alongside the road.

JIM

Oh, hey, that's it! That's my
house just up there. See it?

Mandrake peers and notices.

MANDRAKE

Okay then. Let's get you there.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE FRONT OF AN ISOLATED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mandrakes sedan pulls alongside the gravel drive that leads to the house that Jim had pointed out as his own.

The house is a nice sized two-story home, painted white with green shutters and has a wrap-around porch with a white wooden handrail accompanying it.

Jim exits the car and sets his backpack aside on the gravel drive. He shuts the car door and then slightly leans back inside the still open passenger side window.

JIM

I thank you very much, sir. If you
don't mind I'd like to pay you for
your hospitality.

Jim starts to reach for the wallet in his back pocket.

Mandrake holds up his right hand as to signal NO. He also smiles very disturbingly again with wicked eyes this time and showing his gritty teeth.

MANDRAKE

No...you'll find in this night that
you've already done so.

Jim is creeped by Mandrake's demeanor and words and backs away from his car.

Mandrake turns his head forward and drives his car away.

Jim keeps his creeped out look about him until he can no longer see the lights of Mandrakes car. Then Jim turns, picks up his backpack and proceeds to walk the gravel drive up to his house.

MANDRAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Damned: The wages of sin shall
always find them...and the timing
is never coincidence.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH OF JIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jim is reaching above the hearth of the front door. There are lights on in the house, but he doesn't seem to want to knock. His backpack is on the porch.

Finally, Jim pulls down a key. The key is rusty a bit, but Jim puts it into the front door and unlocks it.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jim enters the front door being very cautious and he drags in his backpack. He turns to shut the door and locks it.

The room is well lit and seems almost like an oversized foyer with hardwood flooring. There is a stairwell to the back of the room, a doorway to a hall beside that and two other doorways on either side of the room.

CRASHING of glass and SCREAMING is heard.

A broken cereal bowl is on the hardwood floor right in front of Jim, and a little girl about three and a half feet tall is now screaming and running up the nearby stairwell.

Jim takes after her.

JIM
Emily! Emily, wait!

The girl is still screaming.

Jim gets up to the top of the stairs and grabs the girl just as she was about to enter a room off to the left.

Still screaming and struggling the girl manages to kick Jim in his crotch.

Jim GROANS and drops the girl as well as dropping to the floor in agony.

The girl runs in the room, shutting and locking the door behind her. She's still screaming.

JIM (CONT'D)
Emily! It's Daddy! I'm your
Daddy!

Suddenly, for once the screaming stops from the little girl shut behind the locked door.

EMILY (O.S.)
(muffled through the door)
My Daddy's in jail! I'm calling
the police!

JIM
Emily! Daddy wasn't in jail. I
was in rehab. Just look at me!

There is a moment of silence.

Emily unlocks and cracks open her door so that one of her eyes could clearly see out onto the floor at Jim sitting there in pain.

Jim sees her and offers the best smile he muster while still hurting.

JIM (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry I scared you, baby.

Emily recognizes her Daddy and thrusts the door open. She runs and plops down into him.

Jim lets out another GROAN, but he smiles even more because of the situation.

EMILY
I'm sorry. Mommy just went to the
store a few minutes ago. She said
I'm a big girl now, and I could
stay here and watch TV if I wanted.

Jim laughs just a bit.

JIM
A big girl now, huh?

Emily frowns playfully.

EMILY
Yes, I'm eight years old now. I'm
a big girl.

JIM
Well, you certainly handled
yourself like a big girl. How
about helping up, big girl?

Emily gets out of Jim's lap, stands up and attempts to help him up.

Jim gets up on his own, but lets Emily think she is a big help.

The two walk slowly back down the stairs into the foyer. They stop at the base of the stairs and both look at the broken cereal bowl.

Emily gives Jim the I'M SORRY - PLEASE DON'T BE ANGRY smile.

Jim sighs with a laugh.

JIM (CONT'D)

Don't even worry about it. I scared the mess out of you, so I'll clean it up.

EMILY

Sorry.

Jim walks away from Emily and starts to pick up the pieces of the broken bowl. He also finds a few pieces of unpopped popcorn kernals.

Emily sits down on the second step of the stairs. She has a slightly worried look on her face.

Jim picks up one of the kernals and turns to show it to Emily.

JIM

Somebody was eating popcorn.

EMILY

Yup. I like the honey flavored kind.

JIM

So what did Mommy go to the store for anyway?

EMILY

She said we needed milk for in the morning.

JIM

Okay, so she just went down to the gas station for a minute...now I feel better about her leaving you here.

The two of them notice the SOUND of a car and see the HEADLIGHTS through the front windows of the room as it drives up the gravel drive in front of the house.

Emily seems to notice something as she is looking out one of the front windows. She stands quickly and goes to the front door.

EMILY
Mommy's back!

Jim hurries his task of getting the broken bowl picked up. He rises to his feet with the broken pieces and makes his way out of the room towards what looks to be the kitchen.

Emily lends him a glance and then unlocks the front door and opens it for her mother.

NOISE can be heard from the kitchen sounding like Jim dropping the broken bowl pieces into a plastic trash can.

Jim hurries back into the foyer just as his WIFE enters the house holding her car keys and a gallon of 2% milk. He looks at her the same as she looks at him - A SILENT APPREHENSION.

JIM
Helen.

Jim bites his lip a little.

Helen also looks a bit spent. Her demeanor is a mixture of being tired as well as angry.

HELEN
I thought you were going to stay at motel for the night...and call me in the morning?

Emily stands next to her mother and starts to hug her waist. Emily's face looks worried.

JIM
I've been away long enough.

EMILY
Mommy, don't be mad at me.

Helen's face turns to Emily and shows her complete sympathy.

Jim gets a look of uneasiness about him.

HELEN
No, babe, I'm not mad at anyone.

JIM

I came in by myself, Helen. I remembered the key above the door. She didn't let me in, so you don't have to feel sorry for me or even expect me to stay on Emily's behalf.

Jim kneels down a little and looks at Emily.

JIM (CONT'D)

I scared somebody anyway, so maybe I shouldn't be here.

Helen grabs Emily by the wrist with her free hand and walks them into the kitchen.

Jim follows them into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Helen releases Emily's wrist once in the kitchen.

HELEN

Go ahead and sit at the table or something, okay.

Helen puts the gallon of milk in the refrigerator.

Jim doesn't fully enter the room. He instead leans his left side against the threshold of the doorway. He is biting his lip again.

Emily goes to the dinner table that's at the far end of the kitchen. She has crayons and coloring books already strewn out on the table, so she just starts coloring away.

Helen turns her attention to Jim and she leans against the kitchen counter.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You're biting your lip. That means that you're stressed out. So, what do you do for stress now, huh?

Jim frowns accepting her implications yet seemingly frustrated too.

JIM

Look, I'm not going to spend my every waking moment telling you that I'm cured. No one gets cured of it.

HELEN

I'm sorry.

Helen rubs her eyes for a moment.

HELEN (CONT'D)

This isn't the best time to even have a conversation with me.

JIM

Yeah, it's late. Just go on to bed. I'll hit the couch. We can talk in the morning.

HELEN

No...that's not what I meant. I lost the second job I've had since you were sentenced last year.

JIM

Today?

HELEN

No...it's been about two weeks now.

Helen starts crying some.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(sobbing)

I'm surprised I could even buy some milk.

Emily turns to notice her mother crying. She has a concerned look but then turns back around and keeps coloring.

Jim advances to Helen and the two both embrace in a VERY MUTUAL, AGGRESSIVE HUG.

JIM

(whispering)

I'm back here for you. I'll find work somewhere...two or three jobs if I have to.

HELEN

(sobbing more)

Their going to turn you down, and you know it. They'll tell you a drunk has no place in their business family.

JIM

Hey, you don't know that. Everybody's got their faults, especially in our small town. Hell, I know I stand a better chance than old Ray Sanders.

Helen quickly PUSHES away from Jim's embrace. Her face is one of confusion and almost, shock.

HELEN

(scared slightly)

That's not funny, Jim. That's not funny at all.

Jim is freaked and confused.

JIM

Okay...what did he sober up and become a priest? Geez!

HELEN

He's dead, Jim! I know they let you watch the news...the paper or something, at least.

JIM

Hey, calm down. I didn't know. I'm sorry.

Helen looks a bit ashamed of her actions.

HELEN

I thought for sure you'd have heard. It just sounded like the type of joking you'd have done... before.

JIM

No...I seriously didn't know. Sorry.

HELEN

It was awful, Jim. He was found just a hundred yards down the road ...all torn up.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

They think someone in an eighteen wheeler ran him over. You know how he'd always take walks down the highway at night...sloppy drunk as usual, too.

Jim rubs his head a bit. His face reveals that he can't think of the words to say.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I think maybe bedtime is a good idea after all.

Emily turns around to face her mother.

EMILY

No, I'm not finished coloring yet.

Helen gives Emily her attention. Helen wipes her watery eyes and proceeds to Emily.

HELEN

Oh, yes, it's time for bed. I've let you do enough big girl things for one night.

EMILY

I want to stay up with Daddy.

Jim walks over to Helen and Emily.

Helen picks up Emily from her seat at the table and playfully drops her to her feet on the floor.

JIM

You think I'm not tired, huh? That couch is looking pretty comfortable right now, and I'm beat.

EMILY

No, I want you to stay up so I can tell you about the monster.

Helen frowns slightly with a tiresome look about her. She kneels beside Emily.

HELEN

No...there's no monster. I told you I'm tired of that story, and remember what Dr. Jenkins says, okay. It's just your imagination.

JIM

Emily...monsters only come after
mean little boys.

Emily SMIRKS ODDLY.

EMILY

That's what you think. The monster
I saw always comes in my room when
I'm sleeping. Sometimes he'd rub
my legs to try and trick me into
thinking he's nice, but he's mean
and he stinks.

Jim quickly cups his hands over his mouth and nose. His
fingers touch together and then he is making a prayer clasp
with his hands.

JIM

Emily, I promise there's no
monster. It's just in your head,
baby...bad dreams is all.

Helen turns to Jim and gives him a SUSPICIOUS half-frown.

Jim lets his arms fall to his sides. He looks very much at
unease.

Helen looks back to Emily.

HELEN

Let's get you in bed, honey. Tell
Daddy, goodnight.

Jim crouches down on the floor. He is fighting back some
tears, but his face shows the pain he is feeling.

Emily steps to her father and the two share a big loving hug.

Emily pulls her head back enough to notice her Daddy crying
some.

Jim tries to smile instead.

EMILY

Daddy, are you crying because
you're happy? I hope so, because I
don't want you to have to go away
again, and I know that would make
you sad enough to cry.

JIM
 No, baby, I'm not going anywhere.
 I'm very happy.

Helen looks emotionally spent and grabs Emily's left hand to try and lead her away.

HELEN
 Come on, Emily, bed time.

JIM
 Yeah, baby...you go on to bed.
 I'll see you in the morning.

Helen leads Emily two steps away.

JIM (CONT'D)
 No, wait.

Jim falls completely to his hands and knees.

Helen and Emily stop and are turned giving Jim their full attention.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (sobbing)
 I'm sorry!

Helen falls to her knees as well. Tears are welling up in her eyes again.

Emily steps back to her Daddy and she kneels over his head. She looks very saddened and confused.

Jim looks up with his painful, sobbing face and gives Emily his best smile.

JIM (CONT'D)
 (sobbing still)
 It was me, and I'm so sorry. Daddy was bad. I was mean and angry, and I drank that stuff I shouldn't have. All it did was turn me into a monster. I was the mean one to you sometimes. I didn't mean to hurt you or yell at you. I can't even remember if I did hurt you.

Emily hugs her Daddy again but then steps away back to her Mother.

Helen and Emily share a hug, and then Emily rather sits on top of her Mother's legs.

Emily looks a bit upset with her Daddy.

Jim stops his sobbing. He is trying to wipe away his tears.

JIM (CONT'D)

I want you tell me if you remember
me being mean...okay Emily?

HELEN

Damn it, Jim, I don't want her to
hear anymore of this!

Emily puts her hand over her Mother's mouth.

EMILY

Mommy, I already know about Daddy
...the monster told me.

Jim and Helen both look a bit shocked.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JIM

The monster...talked about me? Did he say things like, how he wished he didn't drink so much, or...

EMILY

(interrupts)

No, he said the stuff you would drink just made you angry and tired. It made you slow.

Jim frowns but with a bit of humor.

Helen has a few tears flowing from her eyes now.

HELEN

The monster talked about Daddy's drinking?

EMILY

A little bit, but mostly the monster tells me when bad people need to come see him.

Jim is starting to look disturbed from Emily's proclamations.

JIM

Emily...I...there's no monster, baby. You just saw Daddy a lot when he was drunk. I drank so much bad stuff that it was like I had bad dreams when I was awake. That's what you saw and what you heard, babe.

Emily looks frustrated.

EMILY

I already know about that, Daddy. I told you the monster lets me know about you and everyone else when they're bad too.

Jim is looking frustrated now.

Helen is starting to look a bit spooked.

HELEN

Emily, I don't want you to talk about monsters anymore. Let's just...

EMILY

(interrupts)

There's just one, Mommy, and he is real. He told me about Mr. Sanders last week and how bad he was.

Helen STANDS UP QUICKLY with a GASP. She rather lets Emily fall from her lap onto the floor in the quick motion.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Ow, Mommy.

Jim looks very freaked out.

JIM

Oh my God, baby. Emily who told you about Mr. Sanders.

HELEN

That's not funny, Emily! You heard me talking to your Daddy and now you're just making up stories!

Jim stands quickly and paces to Helen and grabs both her shoulders.

JIM

Hey, calm down. Now, maybe this isn't the way to be dealing with this problem.

Helen slaps Jim's arms off of her shoulders.

HELEN

Oh, yeah! Well, how do we cope with this one, Jim? What therapy did you happen to learn? I'd sure like to know because I've been hearing about her damned monster for nearly a year now!

Emily stands up quickly.

EMILY

(shouts)

Stop it!

Jim and Helen turn to their daughter who looks very complacent and focused.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You're not going to believe me until you see him, anyway, so why don't you just quit it.

HELEN

Fine, Emily. Let's see him. He and I need to have a long talk.

JIM

Emily, babe, I promise there's no monster, but yes, I'll go upstairs and see...I'll wait all night for him if I have to, maybe every night.

Emily gets a frustrated look on her face again. She sighs.

EMILY

He's not in my room. He lives outside in the clubhouse.

JIM

A monster is living in the clubhouse that I built for you?

HELEN

Perfect then, there's no way he comes in my house at night, Emily.

EMILY

Yes he does. He said there's a secret key for him outside that he uses every time.

Jim and Helen both get immediately distraught. They look at each other with suspicion and shock.

JIM

What the hell is going on here?

HELEN

Hey, you tell me! You had a lot of drinking buddies at one time.

JIM

Oh, don't give me that crap!

Jim paces over to a pantry in the kitchen, opens it and looks around on the pantry floor until he finds and grabs a big flashlight. He turns it on and starts out of the kitchen.

EMILY

Alright, Daddy's going to see him.

HELEN

Jim, damn it, it's too late for this.

Jim keeps walking. He is focused and irritable.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE IN THE BACKYARD - NIGHT

Jim is pacing his way, already a good ten yards from his house, with another twenty yards to walk to reach the raised up clubhouse that he had built for Emily.

Helen and Emily are almost running until they catch up to Jim and start pacing beside him at the same rate.

HELEN

Jim, this can wait until in the morning.

JIM

Sorry, dear, this is just a little too much right now, and I would like to have this all taken care of.

EMILY

You're going to think he's mean, too, Daddy. He really does stink, too.

JIM

Emily, I don't want to hear anymore about your monster. It's all fake, and I'm about to prove it to you.

HELEN

Jim, what are we going to do?

JIM

I'm going in the clubhouse. What do you think?

HELEN

No, Jim!

Helen stops Jim and turns him face to face with herself.

Emily keeps pacing along the remaining ten yards to her clubhouse.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I'm talking about Emily. I have heard this from her for months, and it's just getting worse. I think she has a real problem, Jim.

Jim's face goes through a range of emotions. He settles back into his original focus.

JIM

I'm the problem...I was. I need to prove that to her...by this or any other means necessary. If this is what it takes to get to her understanding...I'm all for it.

Jim turns and walks towards the clubhouse again.

Helen follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RAISED CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jim steps up to the ladder that goes up seven feet high to the base of the clubhouse.

The clubhouse is the equivalent of a small house, five foot wide, five foot long, a four foot plus roof that vaults up in the middle and of course, it has a small two foot wide ledge with a railing that looks like a porch on the face of the clubhouse. The ladder leads up to the porch. There are two small squares cut into the face of the clubhouse for windows, and there is one doorway cut between the them.

Helen wraps her arms around Emily. Helen is still looking rather unsettled.

Jim grabs the ladder and tugs on it some to test if it's sturdy. He tosses the flashlight up onto the porch and then begins to climb the ladder.

HELEN

Jim, you're really going in there?

JIM

I may as well.

EMILY

The monster wants to talk to Daddy
anyway.

HELEN

(annoyed)
Emily, stop it.

JIM

Oh, see there. I'm being expected.

Jim climbs the ladder and sits up on the porch of the clubhouse. He grabs his flashlight and starts shining it into the pitch black darkness of the clubhouse. He sees nothing but the bare wooden walls and some cobwebs. He turns around, sits down on the porch and looks down at Helen and Emily.

JIM (CONT'D)

Well, either I'm early or too late.
I'm afraid I missed your monster,
babe.

Jim leaves his flashlight on and tucks it under his right arm, the flashlight still shining into the clubhouse at an angle through its doorway.

EMILY

He'll be here.

Jim laughs gently but seems distraught. He looks very tired.

Helen kneels and turns Emily to her.

HELEN

No more, you understand? There is
no monster! You're just having
some very bad dreams! Okay?

EMILY

Mommy...the monster said that Daddy
was bad, and that he wanted him
when he got back home. He'll be
here.

JIM

That's enough, Emily! There's no
monster! You can't keep...

VERY QUICKLY, A HORRIBLE CREATURE'S FACE APPEARS in the flashlight beam from behind Jim in the clubhouse, and a MONSTROUS hand with slime and huge fingernails grabs Jim dragging him into the darkness of the clubhouse.

Helen falls to her rear on the ground SCREAMING, as Emily just stands giggling looking up at the clubhouse.

Jim is heard STRUGGLING AND SCREAMING.

HORRID sounds of the monster and TEARING SOUNDS are continuous as the entire sturdy clubhouse is now shaking violently.

Helen keeps SCREAMING and cannot move from the ground.

Jim lets out one last GROANING SCREAM just as the last TEARING sound is heard. In the same instance, BLOOD DRIPS IMMENSELY from the bottom of the wooden clubhouse floor onto the ground below.

Helen is mute at the onset of the blood. She is trying hard to scream, but can't make a sound. She looks to Emily who has a wicked smile on her face and has come knelt beside her.

EMILY

It's okay, Mommy. He just eats bad people...and he said as long as I feed him, he'll leave us alone.

Emily giggles a little, then gets up and starts skipping off to her house.

CUT TO:

INT. MANDRAKE'S CAR - MORNING

Mandrake is driving along the rural countryside while listening to news radio.

RADIO REPORTER (V.O.)

Sheriff Dyer, have you come to any conclusion on the rash of deaths in the area over the past few months.

SHERIFF DYER (V.O.)

(southern accent)

Umm, yes sir, I have done so. In the state toxicology reports each of the victims were quite intoxicated, beyond the legal limits. Each of them were found, of course, alongside the highway. As it turns out all this highway ever receives in the form of traffic comes from lots of flatbed eighteen wheelers.

(MORE)

SHERIFF DYER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now, most of those trucks are hauling wide loads or oversize loads usually in the form of construction and/or farm equipment. Our coroner has suggested that the massive lacerations to each of the victims is relative to the discs on a common, tractor wide-plow. Those wide framed plows usually hang over a good three feet from a flatbed trailer hauling one. So, it seems we just have an instance of several people who have had way too much to drink taking walks out here on the dark highway. I don't think any truck driver would have seen or felt someone getting hit by the equipment either. It's just a shame that those people had nothing better to do than to drink as much as they had...

Mandrake chuckles a bit as he turns off the radio. He makes an awkward sigh of relief, and then that odd smile of his forms again on his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE