



**CATAMOUNT Part 1:
New Neighbors**



Disclaimer

Witchever Path is a horror anthology show with mature themes, adult language, and subject matter that some may find uncomfortable. Listener discretion is advised.

[Content Warning for this episode: Foul Language, Animal Injury, Some Racism]

CHANNEL 5 WPN

[CLOSING, SERIOUS TONE]

With the attorney general ignoring calls for the officers' arrest, the protests are expected to continue.

[SUDDEN SHIFT TO JOY]

When we come back, after months of lockdown, it's not just business that's resurging, but our wildlife. We talk to a local who claims to have seen a mountain lion stalking their backyard! More on this after the break.

[TELEVISION IS TURNED OFF. **MARISOL, 34**, stretches and sighs. One of her dogs, PEANUT, a mastiff/Labrador mix, is low barking by the window.]

Marisol

[talking with her dog like people.]

I don't think they're out there, boy. Pretty sure it's a raccoon or a coyote. Either way, you've already been out, so let's go to bed.

[Peanut gives a grunt and yawn, ears flap as he shakes his head]

Marisol

[little laugh, amused at the big old dog's display]

See, *you're tired*. Let's get up those stairs and call it a night.

[Walking up the stairs with the dog]

[MESSENGER SOUND]

[Marisol UNLOCKS PHONE]

Marisol

[reading aloud under breath]

"Nextdoor app is going off about Mountain Lions.
Is this for real?"

[sound of typing]



Peanut, how's this sound? "Doubt it. It's a big thing around here for people to talk about. Like Bigfoot. "

[no sound from Dog]

Marisol

[amused with herself]
Well, I'm sending it anyway.

NARRATOR

Hindsight is 2020.
Sage Wisdom or Warning?
The first episode of Witchever Path, "CATAMOUNT," begins now.

[quiet street]

[sound of walking up to the porch]

ILA

[happy to see Marisol]
Happy Day Off, Marisol!
See any mountain lions on the way over?

Marisol

[laughs a bit, but enthused]
No, but guess what? There's a new neighbor moving in today on Rampart.

ILA

[AMUSED that this a big deal, given COVID, the year, and how quiet life is in this town normally]
Whoa. This year keeps the hits coming.
When I moved up here from Queens, I wasn't ready for all the non-stop excitement of rural life.

Marisol

[QUIETLY LAUGHING, in on the joke]
Yeah, I didn't even tweet it yet, so you're lucky as hell.
Earlier this morning, I'm jogging down Rampart and this huge moving truck was trying to back down the driveway of that big white house next to the Catamount ST bridge. So, I slow down, which Peanut hates, he starts tugging on the lead, trying to get me to cut into a yard to go around.

The driver sees me and waves and gets the truck down the drive, freeing up the sidewalk.
That's when Peanut and I see the new neighbor.



ILA

[still tickled about the fact that a NEW NEIGHBOR is News]

Did you have a meet-cute in this little town?

What'd he look like? Let me guess, some Keanu-looking guy with a lumberjack beard and a goofy smile.

Marisol

[playfully]

I get drunk watching John Wick one time and I'll never live it down!

Anyway, shut up.

[back to telling the story]

So, standing on the front porch is this woman, in red jeans and a black and white flannel. Her sleeves rolled up to her elbows.

ILA

[laughing]

You're setting the scene, we'll make a poet of you yet, friend.

Marisol

[continuing the story]

So, she catches me staring at her, and nods slowly at me. And besides us, this is like the tenth brown person I've seen in town since moving here. And I wave at her, and that's when Peanut starts to go nuts.

[faint sound of Peanut barking]

Marisol

[firmly to the dog]

Peanut, Heel. Heel!

Marisol

[narrating]

We're across the street and he's pacing back and forth, barking at her, shielding me from the street. I get control of him and we finish our run. But yeah, new neighbor.

ILA

[changing the subject]

Cool. So, I've been texting with the other faculty on campus all day.

One of their dogs ran off a couple of nights ago and hasn't come back yet. A little Pomeranian/mixed thing.



Marisol

[knowing the dog]
Wait, Helen got out?

ILA

[confused at first, then remembering his best friend's job]
How did you -- Oh, right, right. Yeah, she got out and started running around the campus around dusk. Apparently, Joan tried to catch her, but she just kept going. It's happened before, I guess, but Helen usually comes right home.

Marisol

[Sucks in air through teeth, assuming the worst]
Oof. Not good.

There's been a leap in missing cat and dog posters on the bulletin board at work. Animal control's been tracking two big coyote families that were pushed up from Bennington to here, and with COVID keeping so many people inside, they're getting a little brazen.

ILA

[whistles at the bad news]
Oh, that's worse than I imagined. Poor Helen.

[changing the subject]

So, the college is staying remote this semester.
All of this-

[slight pause as he gestures around the quiet campus]
is my kingdom for the next three to four months, while I teach poetry to the undergrads over Zoom.

The College is going to start charging us rent again in October, which sucks. But the leaves, they're already turning, and I'll be damned if isn't gorgeous. There's deer that have been jumping around the meadow in front of the music building every morning. I sent a video to some poetry slam friends back home. They're pretty envious, as everything's still shut down out there, while my reboot of Bambi is kicking off.

[energetically happy to bring this up]
Oh, that Virtual Drag/Burlesque thing is streaming tonight!
You still want to watch it?

Marisol

[pretty happy about it, too]
Definitely! Let's do it at my house. I'll make Adobong Sitaw, it'll be a thing.



ILA
[thinking about that food]
Marry me.

Marisol
Do you snore?

ILA
[playful]
I'm a quick study.

Marisol
[laughs]
All right let's go grocery shopping.

[transition to Next Scene]
[TALKING ON THE PHONE, RAINER is cleaning a gun]

RAINER
[annoyed]
You asked me to keep the fucker from eating your pumpkins, Carl. You didn't want him shot, so I put out a trap. We caught him, and your cat fucking tried screwing with him and paid the price. I fail to see how I'm responsible.

[guy's livid]
Well, tell your daughter that's a consequence of nature, I don't see why I'd have to...

[dude refuses to pay]
All right. Well, call animal control next time, then.
If you aren't going to pay, then fuck you.
What's next, are you gonna tell the vet you aren't going to pay for quill removal from your cat's face because your kid's sad the cat suffered?
Ugh, fuck you man.

[hangs up]
Snowflake.
[dogs barking in the backyard]

Rainer
[Annoyed]
What the fuck?
[grunts and stands]
All right, let's see what has you two....



[mountain lion scream]
[dogs barking more wildly]

Rainer

[confused at the noise]
The fuck?

[Runs to the window.]

[sound of ANIMAL fight]

Rainer

[panicked]
Shit! Hold on, boys!

[rummages for rifle]
[opens window]
[SHOOTS]

Rainer

[worried he's about to lose his dogs to getting mauled]
Get the fuck outta here, you cocksucker! Beau, Kip, Leave It!
Leave it!

[Shoots again]
[dog yelps]

Rainer

[shocked, mournful]
BEAU!

[back to MARISOL AND ILA]
[Electric MUSIC]

ILA

[watching Burlesque performer dancing]
[really into the performance and the filmography]
That is *Dope!* They got that postproduction going.
Whoa Whoa whoa, and a split!



Marisol

[impressed]

This music video is *good!* And they filmed this at home?!
Where do they live, Skywalker Ranch?

[PHONE ringing]

ILA

[annoyed at the interruption, more for his friend's peace of mind than anything else]
Don't answer it.

[**STREAM HOST** in background "Let's give it up for Sierra Fist, everybody! and Don't forget you can tip all of the performers tonight via Cash App and VENMO"]

[PHONE ringing]

Marisol

[conflicted]

I have to, it's work.

[PICKS UP]

Marisol

[professionally]

Hello?

[calm but getting informed]

Where was he shot?

[hears the answer]

I meant on his body.

[gets the answer, in the abdomen]

On my way.

[HANGS UP]

Marisol

[keeping it together, barely]

ILA, can you stay here and watch Peanut for me?
I got to get to work right now.



ILA

[Understanding, he heard the whole thing]
I'll be here when you get back, friend.
Good luck.

[VETERINARY HOSPITAL doors open, walking fast]

Marisol

[hurried, adrenaline pumping]
Jeanie, I'm here, I'll get washed up and meet you in surgery.

Rainer

[stands up from bench, immediately agitated]
Wait a minute, where's Dr. Glover?
He sees my dogs.

Marisol

[calm]
Sir, I'm the head surgeon here.
I'm going to go help your dog.

Rainer

[grief stricken and lashing out]
I don't know you! I want Dr. Glover. I want an actual Doctor. Not some ...

Marisol

[Shutting this down quick]
Your dog is shot in the stomach and you brought it here.
Dr. Glover retired five weeks ago and is in Florida.
The nearest other vet is forty minutes away.
You want me to help or not?

Rainer

[angry and scared]
If you don't If he.

[desperate]

Yes.

Marisol

[running out back,. MEDICAL MACHINES IN THE BACKGROUND]
How bad?



Jeannie

[freaked out]

Bad. We think the bullet's what's keeping him from bleeding out. He's got a big cut on his neck, too, looks like a bite.

Marisol

[Deep breath]

We can do this. Let's get to work.

[talking to distract herself]

Isn't that guy the fucking exterminator whose been shooting coyotes all summer?

Jeannie

[working along]

I'm ready with suction when you need it. Yeah, he's a fucking piece of work. That giant pickup with the ALL LIVES MATTER done in giant stencil stickers that you always see in town? That's him.

Marisol

[deciding to focus on the task at hand]

All right, I'm ready.

Suction.

Beau, buddy, when you wake up, we gotta talk about your dad.

[SOUNDS of THE OPERATING ROOM, will fade back to waiting room]

Sergeant Burke

[trying to get Rainer to confess to shooting his dog on purpose]

So, what happened, though really, Rainer?

Did Beau turn on you? If you tell me now, before the doctor does, I can work it out. We can make sure there's not a charge of cruelty, that you acted in self-defense. Was he rabid?

Rainer

[upset and under more duress than he's been in since IRAQ]

Chuck, do not fucking give me that shit.

I wasn't shooting at *Beau*.

There was a fucking cougar in my backyard.

Beau and Kip were tied up, and the thing attacked. I was aiming for it, but Beau, he was trying to fight the thing off...



Sgt. Burke

Okay, so I want to believe you, Rainer. All right? I've been straight with you a lot. I've come to your house a couple of times for you shooting into the woods, right? And we've been called by your neighbors about you yelling at the dogs. So, you got to tell me the truth. I don't want to get animal rights groups and whoever else coming in here and protesting in our town, which they're gonna do if I find out you're lying. So, did you shoot Beau because he attacked you, or Kip?

Rainer

[Through GRITTED TEETH]
I didn't shoot my dog on purpose. I raised Kip and Beau. You want to come over and take a look at the scene? Get a warrant and get ready to see some tracks.

Marisol

[interrupting]
Mr. Pelletier?

Rainer

[snapping]
What?

Marisol

[clears throat]
You got Beau in really fast, which was good, but there was some real damage. I had to take a length of intestine out. The bullet was lodged by an artery in his leg. It was really hard to navigate, but we got it out and we've sewn him up. This is a really critical time, though. If he can make it through the night, that's a good sign.

Rainer

[relieved and near tears]
You, you did it?

Sgt. Burke

[annoyed for the interruption]
Thanks, Doctor Lin.



Marisol

[cutting him off]

Dr. Suarez.

Sgt. Burke

[knowing his mistake]

Oh Sorry, I got confused with -

Marisol

[not having it]

Dr. Lin? He's a dermatologist, and Chinese. And a man.

Sgt. Burke

[pissed at being called out]

Doctor, I'm talking with Mr. Pelletier here, so why don't you go back and check on the dog and we can talk about your hurt feelings in a moment.

Marisol

[livid, and deciding to choose to help Rainer to spite Burke]

Mr. Pelletier, we also stitched up a large bite on Beau's neck. It wasn't deep, but if you're right, we should send animal control out to your property to check it out. At the very least they can help determine what attacked your dog.

[half a beat goes by]

Rainer

[snapping out of his anger]

Do you know what kind of bite?

Marisol

[reporting the facts]

I'll try to get a better look tonight, but it looks like a bobcat or maybe a coyote bite. I can call when I know more. I don't know what you saw, but he was definitely attacked by something.

Rainer

[realizing what she's doing, defending him in front of a cop]

Thank you, Doctor.

I just want him to pull through.

[to Burke]

Are we done, Chuck?

I have a witness to a bite, and civil cases aren't going your boys' way lately. I'm going to get Kip home, try to calm him down.



[Rainer walks off]

Sgt. Burke

[to Marisol]

You proud of that?

Marisol

[calm]

It's my job.

Sgt. Burke

[Angry, trying bully]

Did you make that up for him? You want to protect that guy?

Do you even know what he does for a living?

Marisol

[Exhausted, angry, slightly afraid]

Sir, my job is to save and treat animals. Yours is to protect the public.

This is a private animal hospital.

I'd like you to leave, please.

Sgt. Burke

[almost taken aback, the really pissed, puts on assertive cop voice]

Miss, I want to see the dog, please.

Marisol

[completely suspicious]

Why?

Sgt. Burke

[puffing up more]

Miss, are you preventing me from seeing the dog? I want to determine that what you stated about his wounds is accurate.

NARRATORS:

Marisol's choices are:

Comply

Offer to take photos

Refuse outright

You can vote today at WitcheverPath.com/vote.

Here's some advice: vote early, and get your friends to do the same.



We'll collect your decisions, and the majority will determine just how Marisol handles this situation. She's in your hands.

Witchever Path is written and produced by Jas and Steven.
Our special Executive Producer for Season Three is Blythe Renay.

Here is our cast for Episode 1:

Marcilena MJ Bailey as Marisol Suarez
D'Lo as Ila Sathiyandra
Tyler Bell as Rainer Pelletier
JD Lauriat as Sgt. Burke
Valerie Von Vice as The Drag Show Host
And Zulynette Morales as Jeannie

Our Theme Song was written and performed by Rydyr.

And for the other music in this episode:

Psychobilly Full by Shutter Bug Music

Arches by Zap Splat

Foley Effects were by Witchever Path, Audio Hero, and Zapsplat.

We want to thank our Patreon and Indiegogo patrons for all your help to make this our best year yet. As our Indiegogo winds down, we wanted to give big love to one of our amazing folks, Kelso McNaught as part of our Heralds of the New Age tier by reciting the following.

Kelso supports the artists and performers
That elevate Queer and BIPOC voices
And Show That Our Stories Are Universal.
And to stand by your choices.
We love you, Kelso!

Also, thank you to Sara on our Patreon for joining our Wanderer tier. If you want to support us and help pay our actors, artists, and crew, you can hit us up on Patreon.com/WitcheverPath. We now have annual subscriptions at a discount that gives you access to our exclusive content.

Your help is integral. If you can't donate, spread the word. Give us a glowing review on Podchaser, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, or wherever you get podcasts. Tweet about us! Get more people to Choose the Path.

We will be back in three weeks. Don't forget to vote and Sleep With a Clear Consequence.
Choose the Path.

[end episode]



[Trailer for Oracle of Dusk]

(Beep. Music fades in)

I saw you in the store today. I didn't follow you in or anything like that. I was already there. Then you walked it, and I saw you. Once I did, I'm sorry, but I couldn't look away.

I was getting some medicine. You see, I've been having trouble sleeping lately. The... the dreams... are getting harder to ignore. They've been getting more intense and more frequent. I've never fully understood them. And even if I did, that doesn't mean I would know what to do. I just know that if I sleep deeply enough, I don't dream. Or--at least--I don't remember my dreams, and that counts for something. So for a while, I tried something I started calling sleep cycling. I'll be awake for twelve hours and sleep for two. When you're freelancing, a sleeping schedule like that isn't impossible. It's just not advisable. And you're right, the numbers aren't adding up on that front. It's the only thing that has worked so far, though. Even if it's not sustainable.

Or it did work, for a while. But now I'm dreaming of you again. I don't know what to do.

Melatonin is supposed to help you sleep, right? That's Plan B. And it's a completely safe as a plan B. Maybe it's not the best Plan B I could have. I know what I should do. But I can't do that. It would be too hard for me. I know what I can do, though. The question is:

(Music cuts) are you listening? (music fades in)

(Music fades out. Beep.)

The Oracle of Dusk is a production of Miscellany Media Studios with music licensed from the Sounds like an Earful music supply. It was written, edited, produced, and performed by MJ Bailey. And if you like the show, tell friends about it or the quasi-friends that are still on your social media feeds because social norms evolved before words did, am I right?