

Encapsulated Season 4 Episode 9

EXT. OCEAN/BEACH - SUNSET

Waves are crashing, and the coastline is full of people lounging about, playing volleyball, drinking, partying... Some are fishing and strolling along the lit-up pier. Several dozen are surfing, while seagulls fly overhead.

Then, there's a panic. On the horizon, out on the ocean, there's a thick black void. Not a cloud, not a wave, but just sheer nothingness, like a wall of darkness, that stretches all the way to the sky, blocking out the sun.

As it draws closer, people start running and screaming. First it eclipses the seagulls and the surfers: the cawing and crashing of the waves stop abruptly. The darkness mutes anything in its path.

Then it rolls over the beach. The screams are instantly silenced as it swallows the crowd. The lights on the pier are useless - it's completely black.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AREA

The void quickly consumes the high-rises, offices, cars, and frightened pedestrians, like a black tidal wave is erasing the city.

INT. FAMILY HOME

The mother watches through the window in horror as the thick black wall races toward her. Within seconds, she's surrounded by pitch black darkness.

INT/EXT. TRUCK, MAIN ROAD IN THE SUBURBS

The father and son are racing home with bags of batteries and matches they just bought. The void is straight ahead, rapidly closing in on them.

Several cars have pulled over or reversed direction, but the father steps on the gas and turns on his high beams. He and the son brace themselves as the void engulfs them.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - DAY

Cole is sitting at his desk, uploading the pictures from his camera onto the computer. He looks at the ones he took while he was faceless. He seems intrigued and uncomfortable as he scrolls through them.

Suddenly, somebody knocks loudly on the outside door, which reminds him of the previous night. He has a flashback to when he was faceless and alone in the dark, while people were banging on the windows.

He comes back to the present, catches his breath, and cautiously ventures into the gallery. He's relieved to see that it's Murray.

Cole throws his arms up as if to say 'Really, man??'

Murray laughs, then Cole sighs and unlocks the door.

MURRAY

What, did I TRIGGER you?

COLE

Yes, actually. Come in.

Murray steps inside; Cole quickly closes and locks the door behind him.

MURRAY

(chuckles)

Long night?

COLE

Mm-hmm... This was not one of the better ones...

MURRAY

But you're in a history book, remember? This is both completely original and completely logical.

(Cole rolls his eyes)

Also, let's FACE it...

(Cole glares at him)

What? Oh, sorry, are you trying to... Save face?

Cole shakes his head disapprovingly; Murray chuckles.

MURRAY

Fiiiiine. Message received. So. Yesterday was quite the... Face-off...

Cole groans, then stifles his laughter.

COLE

Damn it...

MURRAY

Yessss.

COLE

That was actually pretty good.

MURRAY

Actually? You mean, you didn't expect my jokes to be good? Wow.

COLE

Well, they WEREN'T, until that one...
(chuckles)
That WAS good, though.

MURRAY

Thank you, thank you.

COLE

Hey, I actually got some pictures of it.

MURRAY

Of course you did...

They laugh, then head into the back studio/apartment area. Cole shows him the pictures; Murray isn't impressed.

MURRAY

Eh. Do you have any better ones?

COLE

Do I have any- No! What?

MURRAY

It's just... They're out of focus.

(he sighs)

I expect more from you, being an artist...

COLE

Oh, forgive me that I couldn't focus the camera while my FACE WAS GONE.

MURRAY

Yeah. What the hell...?

(they laugh)

Nah man, that's insane... Yikes...

COLE

Yeah... Where were you?

MURRAY

I was at the hotel. Oh, man, did I tell you? They had to double us up cause there wasn't enough space... LUCKILY, the guy they put me with, Jeff, was super chill. He's in insurance.

COLE

Oh?

MURRAY

Yeah. Apparently, they're not covering any damage from the fires. Because technically, TECHNICALLY, it was caused by the people who live there...

COLE

You're joking...

MURRAY

No, man. Isn't that screwed up?

(chuckles)

But he said the government's probably gonna force them to cover it.

COLE

Well that's good... Still...

Murray nods. There's a pause for a few seconds.

COLE

So what did you guys do, with the, with what happened yesterday?

MURRAY

Oh. He left pretty quick, so I just slept until it was over. Apocalypse survival 101.

(they chuckle)

So I was fine...

COLE

That's good. Yeah, I was... Not a good day... But. It's behind us now. And... It won't happen again.

MURRAY

Amen. So, switching gears. Actually, the reason I came over... I am leaving. First thing tomorrow. I'm moving to Dallas.

COLE

Oh. Okay. Because...?

MURRAY

It's a thing I do. I wanna say, maybe every two, three years or so... But something will happen, like Covid, or my place burning, or a divorce, something big... And rather than fight it or try to rebuild, I take it as a not-so-subtle hint from the universe to start over.

COLE

Interesting... Are you being serious?

MURRAY

Yeah. I moved to L.A. in 2020, I was in Atlanta before that. And before that, Detroit, Portland, Boise, Denver...

COLE

Oh wow. I wasn't sure if- I can't always tell when you're joking. Sorry.

(they chuckle)

Okay. Dallas. That's awesome! Is there any particular reason... Or do you pick randomly?

MURRAY

Kind of. I haven't been to Texas yet, but always wanted to, so...

COLE

Gotcha. And you leave tomorrow.

MURRAY

Yes sir. Don't see why not. It's not like I have anything to pack...

COLE

That's true, yeah...

(pause)

And you're planning to stay at the hotel?

(Murray nods)

Well, you are welcome to crash here, since it's just for one more night. And I can drive you to the airport tomorrow. And don't fight me on it.

(Murray sighs)

You have been BEYOND helpful. More than you probably know. It's the LEAST I can do.

MURRAY

Thanks, man... Same, thanks for... You're sure it's not putting you out?

COLE

Not at all. I wish I could do more...

MURRAY

This is a lot. Thanks, man. You're good people.
(chuckles)

Welp. In that case, I am gonna make the rounds, say my goodbyes, and I'll be over later tonight... I'll text you when I'm on my way.

COLE

Sounds good.

MURRAY

I guess we have to FACE the music eventually.

Cole glares at him; Murray laughs proudly.

BEGIN SEQUENCE - IN BETWEEN SCENES OF COLE AND MURRAY,
THERE'S NEWS COVERAGE OF THE LATEST EVENTS.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Murray is maneuvering through the long, restless line of displaced people, clamoring to get rooms. A few of them watch Murray hopefully, but he doesn't make eye contact, and continues toward the elevators.

NEWS ANCHOR (VOICE ONLY)

...Estimate that as much as 10% of the population is homeless. The nation is facing its greatest housing crisis since the Great Depression...

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Cole is cautiously avoiding the horde of panic buyers. He goes to the alcohol aisle and gets a six-pack of beer. Then he goes to the snack aisle and grabs some chips.

Luckily, there are plenty of both; people are buying essential items, not junk food and beer.

NEWS ANCHOR (VOICE ONLY)

The government has deployed the National Guard to construct temporary housing. Experts estimate that it may take a year or more for the housing supply to return to previous levels.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Murray and Jeff (his temporary roommate) are both relaxed on their beds, watching the news. Murray takes a sip from the small bottle of vodka in the minifridge, then passes it to Jeff, who drinks the rest.

NEWS ANCHOR (TV)

Meanwhile, the FBI continues its search for an online figure known as 'The Modern Moses', whom they believe to be behind the latest attack.

(they show his face)

If you have any information on this man, please contact the number below.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - DAY

Cole is rummaging through his closet, which is crammed full of painting/household supplies. He's pulled out several blank canvases, and finally is able to get a folding table that's leaning against the back wall.

NEWS ANCHOR (TV)

In his latest video, which very likely is a warning of what anomaly may come next, he says that people need to stay indoors tonight, or their lives might be in danger. We're going to play a clip from that video now.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Murray is heading out. He and Jeff shake hands, exchange business cards, and then he leaves. Jeff sits back down on the bed and resumes watching the news.

MODERN MOSES (TV)

The time has come to separate the wheat from the chaff. To set apart the true believers from the skeptics.

At midnight Pacific time, tonight, there will be a cry throughout this nation such as has never been before, and will never be again. More than the judgments that came before it. I urge you: STAY INSIDE until it passes!

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - EVENING

Cole has the table set up in the gallery area, along with two folding chairs. The chips are set out with some dip, plates, and napkins. Cole himself is pacing and listening to the video.

MODERN MOSES (VIDEO)

And to the ones in power, the ones who continue to ignore my message. To the scoffers, mockers, and deniers. To the CORRUPT. To the WICKED. Tonight's blood will be on YOUR hands, not mine. REPENT! Turn from your sin! Don't bring this-

END SEQUENCE - THE VIDEO ABRUPTLY STOPS.

SUPER: 9:06 PM.

The gallery space is lit up with warm lighting: both the lights in the ceiling, and the little lights on the wall that normally highlight the paintings (except there are no paintings hanging up right now).

Cole is sitting calmly at the table, with a glass of water, observing the city. The streets are quiet, and the area outside his window is clear.

Further down, at the end of the block, there's a line of people waiting for a place to sleep. The National Guard has several barricades set up; they're walking around handing out food, water, and blankets.

Finally, Murray arrives. Cole motions for him to come in.

MURRAY

(effeminately)

Oh, Cole, you shouldn't have... You spoil me...

(he saunters over to the table)

My stars, is this all for me??

COLE

It is. Anything for my-

(he stops abruptly)

Nope. This is weird. Sorry.

MURRAY

(bursts out laughing)

Come on... You know you like it...

(they both laugh)

Alright, alright. Seriously though, ummm...

(he looks confused by the setup)

What is this for?

COLE

Your going-away party.

MURRAY

But it's just us...

COLE

Oh... I thought you might be bringing people...

MURRAY

Yeah, they all were- it didn't work out.

COLE

Mmm... Well. More chips for us.

(they chuckle)

And I've got beer in the fridge.

MURRAY

Now we're talking.

Cole gets up, goes into the other room, and gets a beer, while Murray looks around the gallery. Cole returns and hands him the bottle.

MURRAY

Hey, so when's your next exhibit or whatever...?

COLE

Probably about a month, maybe two... But I'll definitely let you know.

MURRAY

Yeah man, hit me up.

(he opens the beer and takes a sip)

You having one?

COLE

Nah. I do better sober.

MURRAY

Well shit, I don't want it to be weird..

COLE

You're fine. Doesn't faze me.

MURRAY

If you say so...

He takes another sip, then curiously reads the labels that Cole had put on the walls.

SUPER: 10:47 PM

The two are chatting at the table while smooth jazz plays on Cole's phone. Murray is on his third beer. Cole's still just drinking water.

MURRAY

But see, here's what MY problem is... And like, it's not because he's blaming the elite for it, because some people are like, 'technically, YOU are causing the plagues, so it's YOUR fault', that doesn't bother me though...

COLE

(chuckles)

Okay...

MURRAY

The PROBLEM is, he made ALL of these poor people fricking HOMELESS, and THEN he has the AUDACITY to be like 'STAY INSIDE'. Like, BRO, really?? Nobody has an inside to STAY. Except you, and- And I know they could go in a BUILDING, like, there's still places to BE. But STILL...

COLE

It does seem cruel, even for him.

MURRAY

Ex-ACTLY.

(takes a sip)

Don't get me wrong, I LOVE the dude. Not like, I'm gonna MARRY HIM or something...

(he bursts out laughing)

But he's he's he's, he's CHILL. But yeah, if you burned your house, HOW CAN YOU STAY INSIDE?

(takes another sip)

And ALSO, UMM, what if you don't have YOUTUBE??

COLE

That's another good point...

MURRAY

I've got PLENTY more. Where that... Is from...

Cole chuckles, while Murray eats a handful of chips.

COLE

Do you think he'll stop at ten?

MURRAY

No. He'll stop at MIDNIGHT, idiot. Didn't you watch the VIDEO?

COLE

No, sorry, I meant-

(chuckles)

I meant ten PLAGUES. Like in the original story.

MURRAY

Oh. Ohh... Wait, okay. How many are there?

COLE

This next one is number nine.

MURRAY

Number nine... Number nine...

(they laugh)

So then, if it's TEN, then we'll have ONE more.

COLE

Well that's what I'm wondering. Will number ten be the last one? Will that be what it takes to finally get the attention he wants?

MURRAY

Mmm... I think it is... Ten is a good number for getting people's at-TEN-tion.

(they laugh)

Get it? At-TEN-tion?

COLE

I do get it. That was solid.

MURRAY

Thank you. Would you say it's a solid-

(pauses dramatically)

TEN out of TEN?

They both burst out laughing. Then they sit quietly and watch the city wistfully. Murray stands up and walks over to the window.

The line of people is mostly gone. Murray steps outside and walks down the sidewalk. Cole follows after him.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AREA - NIGHT

They walk over to where the line was. The trucks for the National Guard are still there though, and appear to be blocking one of the streets.

As they get closer, they see that the street has been converted into a temporary shelter. There's a large half-cylinder structure, like a tunnel, fifteen feet high, that spans the entire road.

Underneath it are dozens of cots - plenty of people are already asleep, while others are talking to the guards or getting food from a makeshift dining area.

MURRAY

(quietly)

Shoot...

COLE

Yeah...

MURRAY

(waves politely to one of the guards)

Makes you think, doesn't it?

COLE

Mm-hmm.

MURRAY

It's like, reminds me of when we all fricking fell asleep, remember that?

(Cole nods)

Geez man... What a time...

COLE

What a time indeed...

SUPER: 11:58 PM

INT/EXT. COLE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Murray is standing outside, while Cole is waiting safely in the doorway.

MURRAY

This is your last chance... Place your bets...

COLE

I still think you should come inside.

MURRAY

And I think that the thing is gonna be that the BUILDING catches fire, not US.

COLE

In which case, I will step outside. But maybe, maybe the ground will turn to quicksand, and you'll get sucked in...

MURRAY

I KNOW! Isn't it exciting?

(he laughs)

Come on, man. It's cold out here.

COLE

Nope. And I really think you're safer in here.

MURRAY

Guess we'll find out...

(chuckles and checks the time: 11:59)

Any last words?

COLE

You're an idiot. Come inside.

MURRAY

And I would like to thank our sponsor for this newest 'anomaly'. Whatever it is.

(chuckles)

Alright, my friend. Time to see who's the wheat, and who's the chaff.

Cole stays put in the safety of his studio, while Murray proudly stretches his arms out.

MURRAY
Lord, TAKE ME AWAY!

The ground starts rumbling.

COLE
Seriously, you should come inside now...

It gets louder.

MURRAY
What?? Little EARTHQUAKE? THAT'S IT??

COLE
Please. I don't think you should-

Suddenly it stops. Murray grins.

MURRAY
That wasn't so bad..
(looks upward)
IS THAT THE BEST YOU GOT?

Cole pulls out his phone. It's still 11:59. He starts breathing quickly, and goes further back into the studio.

12:00. The world goes silent. The two of them suddenly plummet upward.

Cole hits the ceiling, and watches in horror as Murray falls upward into the darkness.

All around the city, hundreds and thousands of people are shooting out into space, flailing and screaming, helpless.

And Cole can see it all through the glass. He screams and bursts into tears, shouting Murray's name repeatedly.

He's terrified to be looking down at the sky, which is now an endless abyss that he could fall into at any moment, separated from death by a layer of glass...

THE ONLY SOUND IS A PHONE RINGING, BUT NOBODY'S ANSWERING

INT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

The darkness has lifted. The mother is pacing anxiously in her bedroom, while her phone rings on the bed.

After a bit, she grabs the phone, hurries downstairs to the garage, and gets in her car.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROADS - DAY

The phone is still ringing. The mother is driving through the aftermath. Dozens of cars are pulled over, and the drivers are wandering around in confusion and relief.

Dozens more are wrecked and smashed into each other.

She starts breathing quickly. The road hasn't been cleared away yet, but she drives as fast as she can through the wreckage and destruction.

Then she gasps, pulls over, stops the car, and runs out, screaming as tears roll down her cheeks.

The father's truck ran into the trailer of a semi. Sadly, neither he nor the son survived.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

The ringing stops. Cole is on the ground again, sobbing, shaking from fear, reeling from loss.

FAED OUT.