



VOLUME 1, EPISODE 1 - "Home Sweet... Suite? (Part 1)"
OFFICIAL SCRIPT AND COMIC OUTLINE
(Draft 2)

(The episode opens with a series of close-up shots featuring what appears to be a fox girl, wearing a graduation gown. The first shot shows a close-up of her chest, where she holds both ends of a gold cord in both of her fists in anticipation. The second shot shows a close up of her feet, as she ascends a short staircase. The third shot shows her hand reaching out to receive a rolled-up degree as it is handed to her. The fourth shot shows her arm as she raises her degree into the air victoriously in front of a large crowd of onlookers.)

(The scene then finally zooms out to show the fox girl in her entirety for the first time. She is adorned with a cap and gown and stands atop a small stage, which has been set up outside in the middle of what appears to be a school football field. She has messy hair and wears glasses, both of which do nothing to hide the excitement in her face as she continues to hold her degree in the air. The crowd before her cheers as confetti falls around her. After a moment, she lowers her arm and begins to speak.)

BROOKE:

Thank you, thank you, *thank* you everybody!! Oh *man*! You guys would not *believe* how awesome it feels to be standing up here today! Phew, I almost feel like I gotta catch my breath...

(Brooke takes a moment to dial back her own excitement.)

BROOKE:

Hah... It's been one *hell* of a ride, let me tell ya. But you know what, though? Over the four years I spent chasing this degree here, I learned something really important... and I want you all to know it, too.

(The scene shows a shot of the crowd in front of Brooke. Anthropomorphic animals of various species all stand and listen to her as she speaks.)

BROOKE:

This world of Terimalia... it's a big place! And while that may seem intimidating at first, *scary* even, I want you all to know... you can still stand out! You can still make yourself heard despite it all!

(The scene cuts back to Brooke standing on the stage. A random member of the crowd shouts out to her.)

CROWD MEMBER:

We're so proud of you, Brooke!

BROOKE:

And I'm proud of *you*! Because even though each and every one of you may be fighting your own battles, that doesn't mean that your voices don't matter! We *all* can leave our mark!

(The scene switches to show a young child standing amongst the crowd. He eagerly asks Brooke a question.)

CHILD:

Yippee! How are you gonna leave *your* mark, Brooke?

BROOKE:

I'm so glad you asked! I...

(All of a sudden, Brooke hesitates. Everything goes quiet and the confetti stops falling as the confidence quickly leaves her face.)

BROOKE:

...I...

(The perspective of the scene moves just behind and above Brooke's right shoulder, revealing that the crowd she's been speaking to has mysteriously disappeared. The scene then zooms out fully to show that she now stands alone on the stage, in front of a silent, empty field covered in confetti. The scene cuts back to Brooke herself, where the background has turned completely black (apart from the stage) as she tries to speak, but can't find the words. The scene zooms out again, this time to show that the stage has now disappeared as well, leaving Brooke standing completely alone in a pitch black void, illuminated only by a single spotlight directly above her. She finally chokes out three words.)

BROOKE:

...*I don't know.*

(Brooke continues to stand alone in the black void as the scene zooms out further. As the surrounding darkness starts to dwarf her, an echoing voice begins calling out her name.)

ECHOED VOICE:

Brooke? *Brooke?*

(The scene suddenly cuts to the inside of a college classroom. Brooke is revealed to be asleep at her desk, dreaming this entire scenario up. Her professor calls her name.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

Brooke! *Brooke!*

(Brooke awakes with a start.)

BROOKE:

Aah! Ah, uhh... yes, Professor McNulty!

(Brooke smiles awkwardly back at the unamused professor as the surrounding students stare at her speechlessly, some holding back laughter. A line of text appears at the bottom of the panel.)

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~ 2023 ~

(The scene cuts back to the professor.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

...That's what I assumed. I *would* make an example here, but Brooke doesn't seem to be the *only* one of you I see right now with that telltale glazed-over expression. I'll wrap today's class up here, but remember, your reports are due on my desk by 12 PM Tuesday. Late submissions won't be counted!

(The students begin to file out of the classroom. Brooke gets up and begins packing her books into her bag.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

Um, Brooke... could you stay back for a minute, please?

(Brooke pauses, looks down and sighs, then looks back up at the professor with a sheepish smile as she responds.)

BROOKE:

What's up?

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

I'm trying to find the best way to broach the subject here. The thing is... I'm a bit concerned with your attentiveness during class. This isn't the first time I've noticed you dozing off.

BROOKE:

I-I'm sorry professor, I just... stayed up really late last night working on a paper, and-

(Professor McNulty cuts her off.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

Listen. I understand that college can be stressful, especially for freshmen like yourself who aren't completely adjusted yet. But I can't just allow you to come up with excuses every time this happens.

I want the best for you, I really do, but you're never going to achieve that if you can't... *focus*.

BROOKE:

...Look, I... I really try, okay? I just... don't really understand how my brain works, I guess. It's not that I'm not interested or that I don't care. I *want* to succeed! In fact, sometimes... I feel like I want that more than anything in the *world*. But it's like my mind is trying to run off *without* me all the time, and it always makes me lose sight of what's right in *front* of me.

(Brooke pauses for a moment before speaking again.)

BROOKE:

How... how did *you* make it to where *you* are right now? How did you, you know... leave your mark?

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

(sighs) Well... to be honest, I'm... not really sure how to answer that question. In fact, I'm not sure that *anyone* knows if or when they've really "left their mark" so to speak, but... throughout my many years of teaching, I've at least come to understand this. Life has many roads, and it's up to you alone to decide which one you want to follow. You're the master of your own future, Brooke, and even the smallest decision you make could be the one that sets you on the path to success.

BROOKE:

...Thank you, professor. I'll... I'll try to think about that.

(Brooke stands up and shakes hands with the professor. As she makes her way toward the door to leave, he calls out to her one more time.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

Oh, and... one last thing?

(Brooke looks over at him.)

PROFESSOR McNULTY:

Could you try and... get some actual *sleep* tonight? For me?

(Brooke gives him a slight grin.)

BROOKE:

Heh... I'll do my best. Thanks again, professor.

(The scene cuts to outside, where Brooke is walking back to her dorm building. She mulls over Professor McNulty's words.)

BROOKE:

"The master of my own future"... but why does it always feel like I
never make the right... hm?

(Brooke's attention is suddenly pulled away by a group of other students walking together on a path several yards away from the one she is walking along. A kangaroo girl follows closely behind another character, who is surrounded by a small group of sheep and seems irritated by the kangaroo's presence.)

KANGAROO GIRL:

Garrett... I just don't get it. *Why* are you so *against* the story of the Timberhowl Ghost? Don't you find it even the *tiniest* bit neat that our little town of Maplemoon Valley has its own piece of actual folklore?

(Garrett turns around angrily to face the kangaroo girl.)

GARRETT:

Good *lord*, would you just *shut up* about the stupid Timberhowl Ghost already?? A meaningless, made-up ghost story is *not* a piece of "actual folklore"! *Some* of us are majoring in mythology to study *real myths*, so just *can it* already!

KANGAROO GIRL:

But... you *heard* what the professor said to us today! She said that the Timberhowl Ghost is *just* as valid a piece of mythos as *anything* else we've studied. She *said* that!

(The scene cuts back to Brooke, who watches from a distance with concern as Garrett continues to shout angrily at the kangaroo girl. Brooke begins talking to herself, debating on what to do.)

BROOKE:

No, Brooke... every time you try to step in when stuff like this happens, you *always* make it worse. Remember what Professor McNulty said. Even the *smallest* decision...

(The scene suddenly cuts back to the other students. Garrett loses his patience and shoves the kangaroo girl. She falls to the ground, spilling her books. Brooke immediately decides what she's going to do.)

BROOKE:

Oh, fuck *this* guy.

(Brooke steps off her path and storms toward Garrett angrily.)

BROOKE:

HEY, ASSHOLE! Get your hands off her!

(Garrett looks over at Brooke.)

GARRETT:

And heeeere comes the cavalry. Just what part in this do you think *you* play?

BROOKE:

What *part* do I think I play? You just pushed an innocent girl into the *dirt*, and you think I'm gonna just stand over there and do *nothing* about it?

GARRETT:

Oh, don't tell me *you're* about to defend this "Timberhowl Ghost" bullshit too. She's done nothing but *obsess* over that *stupid* story this whole semester so far, and I'm *sick* of it!

BROOKE:

Isn't... isn't taking interest in folklore like that, like... the entire *point* of majoring in mythology though?

GARRETT:

The Timberhowl Ghost is *NOT* folklore!! It's just a fake story some *loser* came up with years ago to make gullible people think something

was actually happening in this deadbeat town for once. It's a *fairy tale*! For like, children!

BROOKE:

And you decided to shove this poor girl to the *ground* over what you think is "just a fairy tale for children"? Sounds like the only child here is *you*.

(One of Garrett's sheep followers steps forward.)

BOBBY (CRONIE #1):

Aight, I'm gonna give her a piece of my mind, Garrett.

(Garrett holds him back.)

GARRETT:

Not now, Bobby. This is kind of entertaining, actually. Just watch, she's gonna try and defend...

(Garrett's voice fades out as Brooke's focus is momentarily drawn back toward the sad kangaroo girl sitting on the ground by herself. A single tear rolls down the kangaroo's face as she stares at her scattered books defeatedly. Brooke looks back up toward Garrett angrily as his voice fades back in.)

GARRETT:

...as if she *really* cares about-

(Brooke cuts him off.)

BROOKE:

Garrett, was it? Okay, Garrett, I'm gonna have a little heart-to-heart with you for a sec. You stand here with your flock of high school bully stereotypes and it honestly paints a pretty vivid picture of the kinda guy you are. I assume you surround yourself with these *yes-men* to distract people from the fact that you're actually a *huge* loser, right? I mean, look at what's happened here! You're so insecure that you tried to pick a fight with a *girl* over a damn *story*! And for what? To try and make yourself look grown-up in front of your dumbass followers who can't even think for themselves?

(Garrett begins rolling up his right sleeve.)

GARRETT:

Alright, you know what? I'm done messin' around. I'm gonna-

(Brooke cuts him off again.)

BROOKE:

The fact you made it all the way to college with the mentality of a *sixth-grader* is *wild* to me. How can you *attack* an innocent person over something so *harmless* and then claim to be *above* them? I don't get it! I don't get *you*! You... you need *help*, dude. Run back to your dorm, call your probably alcoholic mom, cry to her for a while about the failure you've become... I don't *care*! just do *something*! It's not that hard to just... not be a *dick*!

(Garrett and his cronies stand in stunned silence for a moment. Garrett can't seem to find the words to disprove Brooke's claims.)

TODD (CRONIE #2):

Bro, she actually kinda just cooked you for real...

GARRETT:

Shut up, Todd!

(Brooke gets down on the ground and begins helping the kangaroo girl pick up her books.)

BROOKE:

Don't worry. I'll help you pick all this up.

(The kangaroo girl gives a weak smile.)

GARRETT:

Oh, how sweet. I can feel myself getting a toothache over here already. C'mon, guys, let's ditch these ghost-chasing losers before I throw up in my mouth.

(Garrett begins walking away. His sheep cronies stay behind, contemplating their life choices.)

CRONIE #3:

Man... there's no way we're all just a bunch of... *stereotypes*, right?

(Garrett turns back around to yell at them.)

GARRETT:

LET'S GO, MORONS!

(Garrett's cronies quickly hurry away. Brooke turns back around and reaches her hand out to help the kangaroo girl back onto her feet.)

BROOKE:

Here, take my hand. My name's Brooke, by the way! I don't think I got yours.

(The kangaroo girl takes Brooke's hand and stands back up with her.)

AMANDA:

It's Amanda. And... thanks, Brooke. Nobody's ever really... *done* anything like that for me before.

BROOKE:

To be honest, I don't really know where I pulled that out from either... but it felt really good! I swear I could see pee running down that jerk's leg as he left just now.

AMANDA:

Hah! Serves him right... He's been at this all semester, but he's never gotten that... *physical* about it before...

BROOKE:

The guy needs to grow up, for real. He acts like we're all still in primary school. I'm glad you're okay, though!

AMANDA:

Yeah, I'm alright... I'm honestly just glad someone stood up to him for once, even though I doubt he'll actually *learn* anything from it...

BROOKE:

Whatever. That loser won't be bothering you anymore, at least not on my watch. In fact... I was actually just on my way down to the dining hall for some lunch. Wanna come with?

(Amanda's mood visibly lightens up.)

AMANDA:

That... would be nice, yeah!

(The two girls begin walking down the path ahead of them together. The view of the scene follows behind them.)

AMANDA:

You're awfully confident, Brooke... I wish I were like that. How do you find it in yourself to do something like... well, what you just did?

BROOKE:

To be honest... I'm not really sure! But as somebody told me once, like twenty minutes ago... you're the master of your own future. And you know what, Amanda? I've got a *real* good feeling that whatever the future's got planned for the two of us is gonna be **sweet**.

(Smash cut to a time card with a black background and white text.)

~ FOUR YEARS LATER ~

(The time card disappears to reveal a shot of the outside of a staffing agency. The next scene is shot from the perspective of a female interviewer inside the building, who is looking at Brooke's résumé. It isn't very impressive. In the same shot, Brooke can be seen sitting in front of the interviewer's desk as she speaks.)

BROOKE:

Sweet! So that's it, huh?

(The perspective of the shot switches back to third-person as Brooke shakes hands with the interviewer.)

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I must say, this interview has been absolutely *enlightening*, miss... Bridget, was it?

BROOKE:

It's Brooke, heh. I'm down to answer any other questions if you've got any, though!

INTERVIEWER:

I appreciate the enthusiasm Brittany, but I *think* I've got what I need.

BROOKE:

Again, it's Brooke, but... cool! Do you think I, you know... have a chance here?

INTERVIEWER:

We'll... we'll give you a call, Daphne.

BROOKE:

Okay, you weren't even *remotely* close that time... but awesome! I can start...

(The smile suddenly fades from Brooke's face.)

BROOKE:

...Wait. You're... not gonna call me at all, are you?

INTERVIEWER:

Nope. *NEXT APPLICANT, PLEASE!*

(The scene cuts to Brooke defeatedly walking back to the apartment complex she now lives in. She enters the building, talking to herself angrily.)

BROOKE:

There's just no pleasing anyone these days. That was interview number what, like *twelve* now? What is *wrong* with me??

(Brooke unlocks her door and steps inside her apartment.)

BROOKE:

I give college a try and I can't sit through it, I drop out and I can't find work. Damned if I do, damned if I don't. Forget being the "master of my own future"... I don't even know if the future has a *plan* for me anymore.

(Brooke takes a seat on her couch, looking defeated.)

BROOKE:

(sighs) I don't think my life could get much worse than this.

(Just as Brooke finishes speaking, an envelope is slipped under her door. She looks at it ponderously before getting up off the couch and picking it up. Opening the letter, her face drops. It's an eviction notice.)

BROOKE:

...*Shit.*

(The scene cuts to Amanda's parents' house. Amanda speaks playfully to some potted plants in her bedroom as she waters them.)

AMANDA:

Wow, you guys were *thirsty*, huh?

(Amanda's phone begins ringing in her pocket. She checks the caller ID, and is surprised to see that it's Brooke.)

AMANDA:

...Brooke?

(Amanda excitedly picks up the phone.)

AMANDA:

Brooke!! I'm so glad to hear from you again, I don't think we've talked since my graduation party last mon...

(Amanda's excited expression suddenly changes to a more concerned one as she listens to Brooke for a moment.)

AMANDA:

Woah, woah, wait, *what*? Slow down! *What* happened?

(The scene cuts downstairs to the living room in Amanda's house. Amanda's father is sitting on a comfy chair watching TV. Amanda descends a nearby staircase in a hurry and speaks to him.)

AMANDA:

Hey, dad? Could I, uh... ask you something real quick?

AMANDA'S FATHER:

Well of course, sweetie! What'cha got for me?

AMANDA:

Wellllll... you know my good friend Brooke from school? She just called. She's apparently been *really* behind on rent payments the last few months, and today she got evicted from her apartment, and she has no idea what she's gonna do. She says she doesn't have enough money to afford a new place and thinks she's gonna have to live out on the streets or something.

(The scene cuts to Amanda's father as Amanda continues speaking. He looks confused and slightly bewildered at how much she has to say.)

AMANDA:

She can't afford a plane ticket back to her mom's place either and she also *really* doesn't want to have to do that anyway for some reason. Then we sorta got sidetracked and started reminiscing about the days when we were in college together, and that reminded me of all the times she'd spend the night at my dorm whenever we would watch movies and play games and stuff. But then *that* gave me an idea that I figured I'd run by you, and I *hope* it isn't too much to ask.

(The scene cuts back to Amanda.)

AMANDA:

Basically, what I wanted to ask you is... could Brooke maybe... stay here with us for a bit? Just until she gets back on her feet?

(Amanda's father sits silently, trying to process everything he was just told. After a moment, he responds.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

...Wow, sweetheart, I don't think I've heard you say that much at once since... well, ever. But surely you remember what we said about having guests stay with us at the house, right? We all agreed we were never going to let it happen again. Remember that year your uncle Johnny stayed with us?

AMANDA:

...And he kept eating all your Cheez Wiggles?

(Amanda's father recalls this angrily.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

I'll never forgive him for that! He's lucky I didn't *disown* him!

(He calms down again.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

But either way... I'm afraid my answer here is no. It's just... too *risky*.

AMANDA:

But... dad! You know Brooke, and you know how much she's done for me! I wouldn't have made it through freshman year if it weren't for her! We gotta help her somehow, *please*!

AMANDA'S FATHER:

...Sweetie, I-

(Amanda cuts him off.)

AMANDA:

Dad... *please*. She... she's my best friend. My... *only* friend.

(Amanda looks to be on the brink of tears. Her father contemplates for a moment before speaking again.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

(sighs) ...Alright, sweetheart. I'll tell you what I can do. I *can't* just let your friend stay with us, but... your mom and I have been talking. We've wanted to do something special for you for a while now to show how proud we are of you for earning your degree. We just... haven't been able to agree on *what*.

(Amanda's father stands up from his chair. He begins writing something out with a pen on what appears to be a pad of paper. He continues speaking as he writes.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

But I think we've debated things for long enough. I'm taking the reins on this one, even if I'll have to... come clean about it with your mother later. Ask your friend to pool whatever money she's got left with what I'm about to give you, and it *should* be enough for the two of you to live together on your own for a little while. This way your friend will have somewhere to stay while you, you know... help her out of that hole she's dug herself into.

(Amanda's father hands Amanda the slip of paper he wrote out. She looks down at it. It's a check for 7,500 dollars.)

AMANDA:

Wait, you're... you're being... for *real*??

(Amanda suddenly hugs her dad tightly.)

AMANDA:

Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you so *much*, dad!! You have no idea how much this changes things, Brooke's gonna be so *relieved* when I tell her!

(Amanda's father gives a warm smile.)

AMANDA'S FATHER:

You've got a caring heart there, kiddo. What kind of father would I be if I stood in the way of that? I just need your word that you'll pay that money back to your mother and I once you're able to, alright?

AMANDA:

Don't worry, I *promise* I'll pay you back as soon as I can! Tell mom I said thank you too if I'm not home by the time she gets back from work!

(Amanda walks into the branching kitchen and grabs a set of keys off a rack on the wall).

AMANDA'S FATHER:

Wait, where are you going?

(Amanda opens the door to her parents' garage, revealing a rusting, green pickup truck.)

AMANDA:

To pick up Brooke! We're gonna go *apartment hunting*!

(Amanda enters the vehicle and assumes the driver's seat, clicking her seatbelt into place. She speaks confidently to nobody in particular as she grips the steering wheel.)

AMANDA:

Don't worry, Brooke... we're gonna fix this.

(Amanda drives her truck down the street away from her house and toward Brooke's apartment building. On the way, she drives past a billboard that features a pair of older deer, one male and one female, along with the logo for a company called H&H Contracting. The view zooms in to focus on the male deer pictured on the billboard. The scene then transitions to show the same picture of said deer, however it is now a portrait framed on a wall at a different location. The words "Dale Harkins, C.E.O." can be seen engraved under the portrait. A voice with a somewhat angry tone speaks in the background.)

DALE:

Don't try to beat around the bush with me, pal. You know-it-all interns are all the same. You act like you know this business inside and out when in reality you know nothing at all.

(The scene pans out to reveal that the portrait is hanging on the wall behind the desk in Dale's office. He stands behind his desk, angrily talking to someone over the phone.)

DALE:

I don't care *what* the client said to you. If this really *is* the million-dollar deal he claims it to be, then I wanna see the fine print on my desk *first* thing tomorrow morning. Until that happens, I won't be signing *anything*, got it? You've got 16 hours to get those details from him, and that clock is *ticking*, buddy. ***Don't. Screw. This. Up.***

(His anger lets up slightly as he somewhat awkwardly adds one more thing before ending the call.)

DALE:

Oh, and uh... tell Phil from marketing that I said happy birthday.

(He puts the phone back down onto the receiver. He begins quietly and angrily talking to himself.)

DALE:

One day off. I take *one* day off, and those *idiots* from accounting start striking up conversation with our clients like they own the damn place. Aagh! I need a drink before my throat gives out...

(He heads downstairs to the kitchen, where he begins pouring water into a fancy glass. Someone in silhouette walks up behind him as his glass fills.)

SILHOUETTE:

Um... dad?

(Dale turns to see his daughter standing behind him to his right.)

DALE:

Molly.

MOLLY:

Hey. I, uh, was just wondering if I could, um... borrow some money to get myself lunch? I-I'll pay you back as soon as I-

DALE:

Didn't I just buy you lunch last week?

(Molly's once-relatively hopeful expression fades.)

MOLLY:

I mean... yeah, I guess? It's just, we don't really have anything in the pantry besides the stuff mom cooks dinner with, and I-

DALE:

Then my answer is no. I can't just keep lending you money all the time, Molly. You're an *adult* now. You need to be financially responsible for yourself.

MOLLY:

I... I said I would pay you back...

DALE:

Pay me back? With *what*? You and I *both* know you have *no* form of income whatsoever.

MOLLY:

(sighs) You know, you and mom could always just hire me at *your* company if you're so tired of watching me struggle all the time.

DALE:

Hire... *you*?

(Dale laughs out loud as Molly's expression changes to an even more annoyed one.)

DALE:

Why would we waste company money and resources to hire someone who knows *nothing* about the business world? Once you've got eight years' experience and are making six figures a year, *then* come talk with me. H&H Contracting can't afford to waste time on people who don't know how to negotiate with clientele, or sign off on deals.

MOLLY:

With how long you've kept me cooped up in this place, you could have started teaching me about all that stuff *years* ago! Instead, all you and mom do is complain about me not having a job, and then you get mad at me for staying in my room all day applying for them!

DALE:

You *really* expect me to believe you're spending all that time up there job hunting? Please. At that rate you should have had a job *months* ago, considering the connections you have to your mother and I.

MOLLY:

Things *aren't* the way they were back when you started the business, dad! Managers don't *care* who you know anymore, they just don't want to have to spend time training people with no experience like me!

DALE:

Your lack of experience is your own fault, and you know it.

(Laura Harkins (Molly's mother) walks by through the hall behind Molly.)

LAURA:

Your father's right, you know. If your *sister* was able to figure it out, so can you.

MOLLY:

You guys just don't... *Ugh!*

(Molly gives up the argument and angrily heads back upstairs to her bedroom. She sits down in front of her laptop and begins talking to herself in frustration.)

MOLLY:

Every day! Every day with this! I try so hard to just get *on* with my life and get away from all... *this*, and all I have to show for it is...

(Molly scrolls through her recent emails, all of which are job application rejection notices.)

MOLLY:

When are they gonna realize that maybe I don't *want* to waste my whole life away at a job like they do? I don't *need* money or success, I just need... something *else* than that!

(Molly's expression changes from anger to defeat.)

MOLLY:

I just... wish I knew *what*.

(Suddenly, Molly's stomach growls from hunger. Her expression changes from mild surprise at this to a mixture of anger and annoyance.)

MOLLY:

(sighs) But I guess it's easier for them to let me go hungry than try to understand that.

(Molly gets up from her desk and begins silently packing things from her room into a suitcase. Once she's finished packing, she sneaks into her father's bedroom and opens a drawer on his dresser. She pulls out several hundred dollars in cash. She silently considers what she's about to do with a somewhat worried expression, but then closes her eyes tightly, trying to reassure herself.)

MOLLY:

(sighs) No, Molly. You're not going to look the other way again. Whatever it is you're looking for... you're *never* going to find it if you stay here.

(Molly opens her eyes back up, the worry in her face now replaced with determination.)

MOLLY:

This is what I *need*. I *need* to get out of this place... for *good*.

(Molly heads back downstairs with her suitcase. Her mother watches from the kitchen as she silently passes by down the hallway. Hearing the front door close, Laura turns to her husband, who is drinking water from his glass.)

LAURA:

Strange of her to leave with a suitcase like that... all on her own, too. Where do you think she's going, dear?

DALE:

Tch. You think it matters where she goes? She doesn't even have enough money to buy herself a sandwich.

(Dale watches through the window as Molly walks up the road with her suitcase and away from the house.)

DALE:

She'll be back by supper.

(The scene cuts back to Amanda's car as it drives down the road past several buildings. Inside the car, Brooke now sits in the passenger seat.)

AMANDA:

So, tell me more, Brooke! I thought you were still working at that bank, what happened?

BROOKE:

Oh, I quit working there *months* ago. I couldn't stand it anymore. Do you know what it's like to have your *brain* clock out of work *hours* before the *rest* of you does every day? I sorta figured I'd have a better job by now, but...

AMANDA:

The job market sucks, right?

BROOKE:

Yeah, you can say *that* again... Also I *totally* forgot how much of a rust-bucket your car was.

AMANDA:

Hey, don't make fun of my truck! She's not rusty... she's *trusty*!

BROOKE:

Hah! You know I'm just teasing, you dork.

(Amanda smiles.)

AMANDA:

Haha, I know... but anyway, I wanted to check out this place called The Villas at Timberhowl Springs! It used to be a dorm building at MVU, but it got turned into a public apartment complex after everyone complained that it was too far from the rest of campus.

BROOKE:

Wait, Timberhowl Springs? Isn't that where that whole "Timberhowl Ghost" thing went down way back when? You used to talk about that story all the time!

AMANDA:

Yeah, yeah! I mean, the howls from the woods around there stopped years ago, but... either way, the school still owns the property. It had me thinking... maybe they'll offer us a deal on rent since we're technically both alumni!

(A few minutes later, Amanda's truck is shown to be parked outside the apartment building. The two girls enter the lobby.)

BROOKE:

Honestly? This place doesn't look too bad!

AMANDA:

Wait a sec! Is... is that who I think it is?

(The scene switches to show a male squirrel character sitting behind a desk at the other end of the room.)

ETHAN:

Wait... Amanda? Amanda Fitzgerald, is that you?

AMANDA:

Professor Bradford!! I haven't seen you in years!

(The two girls approach the desk.)

AMANDA:

Brooke, this is my old biology teacher, Professor Bradford! I had a class with him sophomore year.

BROOKE:

Hey!

ETHAN:

Oh, don't worry about the formalities anymore, Amanda. I heard your class graduated! You can call me Ethan.

AMANDA:

Haha, thanks Prof- I mean, Ethan. What have you been up to? I don't remember seeing you at graduation.

ETHAN:

Well... I'll be honest with you. The school... they sort of... *laid me off* the year after I taught your class.

AMANDA:

Oh... oh *no*! That's terrible, I'm so sorry!

ETHAN:

It's alright... I wasn't without a job for *too* long afterward, though the road I took to get here wasn't exactly a *smooth* one. First I tried my hand at car repair...

(The scene cuts to Ethan sitting behind a messy desk in what appears to be a mechanic's garage. He stares at a computer screen while talking to a customer over the phone. The scene is shot facing Ethan, so the computer screen is not yet visible.)

CUSTOMER:

(over phone) And can you describe to me what the part looks like?
Pff... just so I know you've got the right one?

ETHAN:

Well, uh... it's got a round, circular-shaped end... And then there's a kind of... *protrusion* that juts out from the top right of the circle, and starts to, uh... slope downward toward the floor at its *tip*...

(The scene then changes to a shot of the computer screen as Ethan looks at an image of the part in question. Its shape is noticeably phallic.)

ETHAN:

Listen, it just looks like a penis, okay??

(The scene then cuts to Ethan, standing amongst the shelves of a gas station convenience store while mopping the floor. A "voiceover" of Ethan speaking in the present-day is readable at the top of the panel.)

ETHAN:

And when *that* didn't work out, I worked as a janitor at one of those gas station convenience stores for a bit...

(A male teenage customer steps out of a bathroom door behind Ethan as he continues to mop.)

TEENAGE CUSTOMER:

Hey man, you ever drop a deuce so bodaciously *grodacious* that you feel like you gotta take a shower after? Well, I'm gonna go home and take a shower now. Later, potater!

ETHAN:

Ugh...

(The scene cuts back to Ethan at the apartment complex.)

ETHAN:

But after a while, I just gave up and came back to the school to see if I could get my old job back. They wouldn't give it to me... but they *did* need someone to look after this place. I didn't really see myself as landlord material, but... whatever puts food on the table, I suppose... Either way, what brings you in today?

AMANDA:

Me and my friend Brooke are looking for an apartment together! We decided we'd look here first, since, um, well...

BROOKE:

We wanna know if rent'll be cheaper since we both went to school here!

(Ethan sits back for a moment, trying to find the words to say.)

ETHAN:

...Oh. Well, uh... *ahem*...

(Ethan then puts on an almost corporately chipper expression.)

ETHAN:

Yes! We offer 10% off monthly rent payments for all active and former MVU students. We're also on average 20% cheaper than all apartments closer to cam-

(Brooke cuts him off with excitement.)

BROOKE:

Haha, yes! Awesome plan, Amanda! Alright Ethan, save your breath. Tell us what we gotta do next!

(Ethan's chipper expression changes to a more relieved one as he slouches slightly in his chair.)

ETHAN:

Ugh, *thank* you. You have no *idea* how exhausting it gets having to recite that whole thing to everyone all the time. It goes on for like, eight more sentences after that.

(Ethan resumes his former upright position.)

ETHAN:

But while I certainly admire your excitement, the both of you won't be able to move on until you fill out... the *paperwork*.

(Ethan slides a stack of paperwork over his desk toward the girls. The two exchange glances. The scene then cuts back to Molly, who now stands with her suitcase atop a hill overlooking the greater part of Maplemoon Valley. She talks to herself nervously.)

MOLLY:

Well... this is it, Molly. The first steps you'll take toward the rest of your life. But what if...

(She glances back toward her parents' mansion on the hill behind her for a moment in contemplation.)

MOLLY:

(sighs) ...No. There's no turning back. Not this time! Who cares what mom and dad think? I... I can *do* this!

(Molly begins to make her way down the hill toward the rest of Maplemoon Valley. The scene then cuts back to Brooke, Amanda, and Ethan at the apartment complex, where Ethan is reviewing the girls' filled-out paperwork.)

ETHAN:

Well girls, I don't think I've ever seen anyone else fill this stuff out with such enthusiasm. Looks like it all checks out, too. I gotta say, it's a good thing you've got such good credit, Amanda.

AMANDA:

I do my best, heh... does this mean you can rent us something?

ETHAN:

Definitely! But... there's one *teeny* problem. We don't have any rooms left to accommodate you. At least, not the both of you together. I *could* put you in two bordering singles to compensate, but...

BROOKE:

Hold up, you waited till just now to tell us this??

AMANDA:

I *really* appreciate the offer, but we just... can't really *afford* to pay rent for two separate rooms every month. Is there *anything* else we could do?

ETHAN:

Well... I *do* have one room, on the first floor. It's a four-person suite. But... I'm not exactly *allowed* to rent it out to just two people. I understand your financial struggles... *trust* me... but unless you can find two other people to live with, we're *kinda* in a bind here.

BROOKE:

So... we gotta find two *more* roommates?

ETHAN:

Well, *suitemates*, technically. But... yeah. Otherwise... you're sorta SOL.

AMANDA:

What's...

BROOKE:

It means we're shit outta luck.

AMANDA:

...Oh.

BROOKE:

But not if we can find two more roomma- I mean, *suitemates*! We got this!

(Smash cut to a few minutes later. The girls once again sit in Amanda's car, in the parking lot outside. Amanda looks nervous.)

AMANDA:

I don't think I got this.

BROOKE:

What's wrong?

AMANDA:

I just... for so long it's kinda been just you and I against the world, y'know? I know it sounds selfish, but... I was really hoping things would stay that way. You know how I feel about being around people I don't know...

BROOKE:

I *totally* get that. But trust me, the real world is a *whole* different ballpark than college.

AMANDA:

But, like... what if we start living with these other roommates, and they end up being-

BROOKE:

Just like Garrett?

AMANDA:

Yeah...

BROOKE:

Well... we don't really have any way of knowing if that's gonna happen just yet. But one thing I've learned while being on my own these last few years, is that you gotta just take a shot in the dark every once in a while. Sure, there's a chance you'll miss, but... you'll never make the shot at *all* if you don't at least *try*, right?

(Amanda looks silently at Brooke with a confused expression.)

BROOKE:

...I guess what I'm trying to say is, you've got *nothing* to worry about! People can be super cool if you just, you know... take that shot with 'em! And I promise you, we're gonna find two of the *coolest* suitemates you'll ever meet. Well, maybe not as cool as me, but... still really cool.

(Amanda's expression lightens up a bit as Brooke continues talking.)

BROOKE:

I know you doubt yourself a lot, but I *know* that hiding underneath that shell of yours is the most *awesome* person I've ever met. You just gotta give other people the chance to see that, too! Show them *why* I call you my best friend!

(Brooke gives Amanda a playful punch to the shoulder as Amanda's smile broadens.)

AMANDA:

Haha... okay. I'll give it a try. For you, Brooke.

BROOKE:

That's more like it! And hey, if our suitemates *do* end up acting like Garrett? I'll just kick their asses right out the door myself.

AMANDA:

Hah! But seriously, we both know you're all talk.

BROOKE:

Nah, I'd *totally* do it... but I know I'm not gonna need to! Let's go make some new friends!

(Amanda starts the car again, and the two drive off back down the road in search of their future suitemates. A text card then appears.)

~ Meanwhile, on the other side of Maplemoon Valley ~

(The scene then switches to a view of a small clearing in a forest on the other side of town. In the center of the clearing sits the smoldering remains of what appears to have once been a makeshift home. Most of the site is charred and smoking, but small patches of red fire still burn on. A few feet away from the destruction, a necklace with a small red crystal attached to it lies in the dirt. A single budded rose has sprouted from the patch of dirt surrounded by the necklace. A figure steps in front of the rose, and is revealed to be a mysterious wolf wearing a wooden painted mask and tattered clothes. The wolf picks the necklace up off the ground and looks at it in her hand for a moment, then looks back up toward the destruction. Putting the necklace around her neck, she then turns and pulls a hood over her head as she begins to walk away silently. As she walks away, the solitary rose behind her blooms.)

(The episode ends on another text card:)

~ To be continued... ~

[End]