

TFW Episode 4
The Secret

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COLD OPEN

INT. CAFE - MORNING

SAMANTHA stands behind the counter, holding a FLY SWATTER. Her eyes trace the flight path of the insect which has been tormenting her all morning. She is laser-focused. This fly will not win the battle. She is 100% concentrated on her personal search & destroy mission. Focused. In "the zone."

JORDAN sits at a nearby table, doing homework.

TARYN emerges from the kitchen door into the cafe and sees her beloved cafe manager in a hypnotic state, fly swatter in hand. *

TARYN
What are you doing?

Samantha jumps out of her skin and SCREAMS IN ABSOLUTE SURPRISE. *

SAMANTHA
Why? Why did you sneak up on me like that?

TARYN
I didn't sneak up on you. I opened the door and asked you what you were doing.

SAMANTHA
From behind me! You snuck up behind me and now, now I've lost him.

TARYN
Who?

SAMANTHA
(respectful awe)
Him. The Fly.

TARYN
The fly?

SAMANTHA
Not "the fly". The Fly.
(beat)
Bastard's been in here for hours and I haven't been able to get him yet.
(beat)
But I will.

TARYN

Right.

SAMANTHA

As God as my witness, that fly will not survive.

JORDAN

They never do.

SAMANTHA

What?

JORDAN

Flies. They don't live very long. Typical lifespan of a housefly is about a month.

SAMANTHA

Not this one. Today's his last day.

JORDAN

Just saying. Nature has a plan.

Jordan returns his attention to his homework.

Taryn picks up a MAGAZINE, rolls it up and slams it onto the counter, killing the fly.

TARYN

There. I have a plan too.

Samantha and Jordan look at her.

SAMANTHA

How did you do that?

TARYN

What do you mean? I hit him with this magazine.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, on the first try! I've been trying for hours to get him.

(beat)

For hours!

Samantha seems upset that Taryn has accomplished so easily what evaded her for hours. Self-doubt fills her face. Is she so pathetic that a simple housefly bested her? Is this emblematic of all her life will ever be? Losing to a bug??

Taryn picks up on her friend's somewhat over-the-top reaction to this dead fly and moves to reassure her. *

TARYN
Well, maybe it's-

JORDAN
It's simple, Samantha. While the fly was watching you, studying you, anticipating your next move, Taryn just snuck up behind it. *

INT. PROVINCIAL JAIL VISITOR AREA - MORNING

DONNY has spent the night in jail after being picked up for violating his parole curfew. He wears jail-issued ORANGE COVERALLS and clearly didn't sleep well. He sits across a table from his parole officer, ALEX LAPIERRE.

ALEX
So. You want to tell me your side of the story?

DONNY
Not really. *

ALEX
You want to stay here? *

DONNY
Fine. You really want to hear it? *

ALEX
I'm actually curious as to what you were doing in a city park in the middle of the night. In hip waders. *

DONNY
It was only 10:30

Alex gives him a look. *

ALEX
But it was after 9:59

DONNY
Yeah. It was after 9:59

ALEX
And?

DONNY
I was helping my brother. He was
looking for his...a lost...pet.

ALEX
A pet. Like a dog?

DONNY
Kind of. Yeah?

ALEX
Uh-huh.

DONNY
Really! Alex you gotta believe me. I
know the rules, but Dennis needed me
and - look, I need to know. Am I
going back to prison over this?

ALEX
Maybe. You violate your parole and
you end up back in prison. That's
how this all works. And this isn't
your first violation either.
(lists them off)
Fired. Fired. Fired. Fired again. And
now breaking curfew.
(beat)
Well, at least you're starting to
diversify.

DONNY
Oh shit.

ALEX
Excuse me?

DONNY
I have to get to work.

ALEX
Sure you do.

DONNY
No seriously, Alex. I have a shift
today at noon. I can't let her -
them down. I have to be there!
(beat)
C'mon. Please? I don't want to lose
this job too-

Alex sits back and thinks for a minute. Parole violations are serious, but Donny is likeable and keeps on getting up, no matter how many times life knocks him down. *

ALEX
Well..... *

DONNY
Please? *

ALEX
OK. *

DONNY
Really? *

ALEX
Yeah, really. *
(beat)
But this is the last time, Donny. *

Alex stands to leave. *

ALEX (cont'd)
Don't screw up again, OK?

DONNY
Absolutely. Thank you, Alex.

Donny stands up. Life is looking bright again. *

ALEX
Where are you going?

DONNY
Um. Out?

ALEX
Not right now you're not.

Donny sits back down. Life has dimmed. *

DONNY
Oh. *

ALEX
There's forms and stuff I've got to fill out.

DONNY
And stuff? How long does "and stuff" take? *

ALEX
 (no big deal)
 Oh, ten, twenty minutes. Tops.

Donny's eyes brighten. *

(beat)
Once I get back to the office. *

Donny's eyes dim again. *

DONNY
 Back to the office?

ALEX
 Yeah. Where I work. *

DONNY
 Right.

ALEX
 Look. You'll be out of here in a
 couple of hours.
 (beat)
 Tops.

DONNY
 OK. Thanks.
 (beat)
 What time is it now?

ALEX checks his watch.

ALEX
 Ha! Isn't that ironic?

DONNY
 What?

ALEX
 (he thinks this is
 funny)
 It's 10:30!

INT. SHEILA'S CAR - DAY *

JULIA sits in the passenger seat as SHEILA drives her to the
 mall. *

JULIA
 Thanks for driving me. I really
 didn't feel like taking the bus all
 the way there. *

SHEILA

Oh don't worry about it. Going shoe-shopping isn't exactly a chore.

JULIA

You're coming with me?

SHEILA

Is that OK?

JULIA

Sure. Yeah. That's fine. I just thought you might be bored.

SHEILA

Bored? Buying shoes is never boring.
(beat)
Expensive. Occasionally uncomfortable. But never boring.

JULIA

My mom loved buying shoes too.

SHEILA

Your mom had great style, Julia.
Great style.

Julia smiles. People really did love her mom.

JULIA

Not sure that I do.

SHEILA

You're your own person. That's what she would want you to be.

Sheila reaches out and holds her hand.

INT. WHEELER'S CAFE - LATER

DENNIS enters the cafe. He is visibly upset and hesitant. TARYN and SAMANTHA are still behind the counter. TARYN sees him and then recognizes her former brother-in-law.

TARYN

Dennis? Is that you?

DENNIS
 (I really wish I
 wasn't doing this.)
 Oh. Hey. Taryn.

TARYN
 Oh my god! Come here.

Taryn comes out from behind the counter and gives him a hug.
 Dennis is slow to 'hug her back' but does so hesitantly.

DENNIS
 Taryn-

TARYN
 What?
 (and then)
 Did something happen to Donny?

Dennis nods.

DENNIS
 Last night...

An emotion crosses Taryn's face. Her ex just came back into
 her life and now he is gone again.

TARYN
 (as shock and grief
 start to set in)
 What? What happened?

TARYN begins to tear up.

DENNIS
 We were out and-

Taryn throws her arms around Dennis and begins to cry.

TARYN
 I can't lose him again

DENNIS
 (oops!)
 No wait, Taryn. Not that!

TARYN
 (confused)
 What?

She pulls back and looks at him.

DENNIS
He didn't die. He's not hurt.

TARYN
(hopeful)
He's okay? *

DENNIS
He's fine
(beat)
-ish

Taryn's grief morphs into irritation. *

TARYN
(...aaand here comes
the bullshit) *
Fine-ish? What does "fine-ish" mean? *

DENNIS
I just came by to tell you that he
wouldn't be able to come to work, um,
today.

TARYN
Is he sick?

DENNIS
No he's fine.

TARYN
"-ish" yeah. I get that. Jesus. What
is it, Dennis?

DENNIS
This thing happened.

TARYN
Thing?
(beat)
Don't bullshit me, Dennis. Where is
he?

Dennis hesitates. He really doesn't want to be here under
these circumstances and he doesn't want to tell Taryn what
he is about to tell her. *

DENNIS
He got arrested last night. I think
he's in jail.

TARYN
You think?

DENNIS
Pretty sure, yeah. Jail.

TARYN
(remembering the
chaos that follows
Donny around like a
bad penny)
Dennis, I know I'm going to regret
asking you this question, but what
did he get arrested for? *

DENNIS
He was out past his curfew.

TARYN
His curfew? What is he 12 years old?

JORDAN
Hey!

TARYN
(to Jordan)
Oh relax.

TARYN (cont'd)
What kind of a grown man has a
curfew?

DENNIS
The kind that's on parole.

Taryn is stunned by this word and pulls back. She glances
over to Jordan. *

TARYN
Parole? For what?

DENNIS
Look, that's not really my story to
tell.

Taryn looks at Jordan again. Concern and love fill her
face. She turns to Dennis and the 'lionness' within her
emerges. *

TARYN
For what, Dennis?

Dennis sits down at a table. Head in his hands. He really
doesn't want to do this. Taryn joins him at the table. Firm
but unrelenting. *

TARYN (cont'd)

Dennis?

Samantha approaches with a tray with three cups of coffee
and joins them at the table. Jordan follows.

*
*

TARYN (cont'd)

Sam?

*

SAMANTHA

I'm not missing this.

JORDAN

Me either.

TARYN

Jordan. This is an adult
conversation.

JORDAN

(to Dennis)

Hello. I'm Jordan Singh. My sister
and I live with Taryn.

(beat)

You should know. I have a brown belt
in judo. And I'm not afraid to use
it.

Dennis extends his hand. Jordan shakes it.

*

DENNIS

Hi Jordan. Nice to meet you.
Hopefully it won't come to that.

TARYN

Jordan. Please.

JORDAN

No. You watch out for me and Julia,
I watch out for you. We're family,
Taryn. That's what families do.

DENNIS

Totally agree. That's what families
do.

JORDAN

(a little confused)

Okay, then?

DENNIS

Okay by me.

DENNIS

Oh he's not an addict. Never was. He wasn't buying it for himself.

TARYN

For who then?

SAMANTHA

Whom.

Taryn gives her an icy look. *

TARYN

For whom?

DENNIS

Our mom. *

TARYN

(no effin way)

What? No. That's not possible. I knew your mom. She would never. She wouldn't even... *

DENNIS

She had cancer. And she was in pain. And it was bad. And the drugs weren't helping enough. So Donny decided he needed to help more, so he went out and bought- *

TARYN

Heroin.

DENNIS

Yeah, heroin. From an undercover cop. *

SAMANTHA

From a cop?

TARYN

Oh, Donny. My sweet, stupid Donny. *

They all look at her on the words 'My sweet.' *

TARYN (cont'd) *

What I meant was...Setting out to do a nice thing. A good thing. A helpful thing. Being a total "Donny". And then getting it totally bass-ackwards.

JORDAN

Like not being able to spot a narc on sight?

Taryn gives him a look.

TARYN

Narc? OK. No more internet for you either.

(beat)

Or books.

Jordan looks to Samantha for reassurance, she pats his hand, "it'll be okay."

SAMANTHA

And people think I have issues.

DENNIS

Why would anyone think you had issues?

TARYN

That's why he stopped teaching?

JORDAN

He was a teacher?

DENNIS

Art teacher, yeah. High school.

TARYN

That is so messed up.

DENNIS

I know.

TARYN

So what's going to happen to him?

DENNIS

I don't know. We were out last night. Got stopped and asked for ID.

SAMANTHA

Been there.

DENNIS

And when the cops found out he was past curfew they took him away.

TARYN

Have you heard from him? You know, did he call you, they get to make one phone call don't they? Or is that just in the movies?

DENNIS

They can call. But only collect, which only works on-

JORDAN

Landlines.

TARYN

Really?

DENNIS

Right, they can only call landlines, so I don't really know what's going on.

TARYN

This is so fucked up.

(beat)

How's your mom?

DENNIS

She didn't make it.

Taryn and Jordan both react to this. They have lost loved ones to cancer too.

TARYN

I'm sorry, Dennis.

DENNIS

Yeah, thanks.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry, Dennis.

DENNIS

Thanks, um

SAMANTHA

Samantha.

DENNIS

Samantha.

(beat)

Really nice to meet you, Samantha.

JORDAN

Fuck cancer.

DENNIS

Damn straight, Jordan. Fuck cancer.
Okay well...

Dennis gets up to leave. *

TARYN

Will you let us know if you hear from
him?

DENNIS

For sure. Thanks for giving him a
chance here, Taryn. I know he really
liked working here

TARYN

He did?

DENNIS

He loved it. *

The CAFE DOOR opens and DONNY enters. Showered, dressed,
and ready for his shift.

DONNY

Hey every-
(beat)
-Dennis?

Taryn, Jordan, Samantha and Dennis are thrown off by his
sudden appearance. *

DENNIS

Donny! Hey Bro!
(covering)
I was just...dropping by to get one
of those...great lattes you're always
talking about.
(to Taryn, Jordan,
and Samantha)
Please don't tell him that you know,
OK? He can't know that you know.
(beat)
OK?

Taryn hesitates. Secrets? Secrets are not good things. *

SAMANTHA

You got it, Dennis. Not a word.

(beat)

Right, Taryn?

TARYN

(not sure at all)

Sure. Yeah. Sure. Not a word. *

Dennis takes a last sip of the coffee. *

DENNIS

You were right, bro! These are amazing lattes. OK. Bye, Taryn. Nice seeing you again.

TARYN

(still reeling)

Bye, Dennis.

DENNIS

Bye, Samantha! Bye Jordan! Nice meeting you. Have a good shift, bro! *

Samantha waves to Dennis as he leaves the cafe. *

DONNY

(confused)

What? *

Taryn, Samantha and Jordan all look at Donny. Not quite a look of pity - but genuine compassion and concern. Taryn is almost overcome with the emotion of seeing him after what he's been through. *

DONNY (cont'd) *

What is it? *

(beat)

Oh, wait. He didn't leave without paying, did he? *

INT. SHOE STORE - DAY *

THROUGH THE STORE WINDOW: *

JULIA and SHEILA stand at the cash register in an upscale shoe store. A CLERK smiles and announces the amount. Julia reaches into her purse but Sheila beats her to the punch and hands the CLERK a credit card. *

Julia looks surprised. Sheila smiles at her. *

INT. SHOPPING MALL - CONTINUOUS

JULIA and SHEILA talk as they walk through the mall occasionally looking into the store windows.

JULIA
Um. Thank you.

SHEILA
Don't mention it.

JULIA
I really didn't expect you to pay for these.

SHEILA
I know.

JULIA
I have my own money.

SHEILA
So do I.
(beat)
Probably more than you do.

JULIA
It's really wasn't-

SHEILA
Just don't tell Taryn.

JULIA
(confused)
OK.
(beat)
Why?

SHEILA
It's not really something I want to talk about.

JULIA
Oh. OK.

They walk a little further through the mall. Sheila is bursting to talk.

SHEILA
It's a long story. Such a long story.

JULIA
What is?

SHEILA
Why I don't want Taryn knowing.

JULIA
Oh OK. You're secret's safe with me.
Not another word.

They walk a little further in silence.

SHEILA
Well, if you're going to keep
pestering me, I'll tell you.

JULIA
Alright then.

SHEILA
When I was your age, my mother
wouldn't let me wear heels. She said
they were 'inappropriate'

JULIA
This was in what, the 1950's?

SHEILA looks shocked at the suggestion that she was a
teenager over 60 years ago.

SHEILA
The 70's, Julia. I was a teenager in
the 70's.

JULIA
Oh, like a flower-child?

SHEILA
That was the 60's.

JULIA
So like Madonna?

SHEILA
She was the 80's.

JULIA
What was the 70's?

SHEILA
A fashion disaster.
(beat)
With sensible shoes.

JULIA
I'm not quite sure what that has to
do with not telling Taryn that you
bought me shoes.

SHEILA
She thinks I obsess about shoes.

JULIA
Do you?

SHEILA
Of course not.

SHEILA notices a sign in a window.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Oh look! The new line of Choos is
in! We should check them out.

JULIA
More shoes?

SHEILA
Not just shoes, dear. Choos. Jimmy
Choos.

JULIA
Who's Jimmy?

Sheila grabs her by the hand. She's excited. A kid on
Christmas morning.

SHEILA
Come on, Julia! Those shoes aren't
going to buy themselves!

EXT. STORAGE UNIT - LATER

Sheila's car is parked in front of a storage unit. Both
women are standing outside. The car trunk is open. It's
full of newly-purchased boxes of shoes.

Sheila unlocks the STORAGE UNIT DOOR and rolls up the door
revealing GLEAMING SHELVES of SHOEBOXES.

JULIA
You weren't kidding were you?

SHEILA
It's not a problem. I can quit
anytime I want to.

SHEILA (cont'd)
C'mon help me load these in.

Julia begins to pass her the day's purchases. She stops on the third box.

JULIA
I think this was the pair you bought me.

SHEILA
Right.

Sheila has an idea.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Actually, I think I bought you these other ones too.

Sheila begins to reload the shoeboxes back into the car.

SHEILA (cont'd)
And these ones.

JULIA
Um? Sheila?

SHEILA
Remember. Not a word.

Julia smiles and grabs a shoebox.

INT. CAFE - DAY

TARYN, DONNY and SAMANTHA are behind the counter. Samantha is serving FRANZ, who is the 'absent-minded professor type.'

FRANZ
Do you have decaf?

SAMANTHA
We have decaf.

FRANZ
Is it Swiss-water decaf?

SAMANTHA
It is.

FRANZ
Ah.

SAMANTHA
Would you like a cup?

FRANZ
Of coffee?

SAMANTHA
Yes.

FRANZ
I think so.

SAMANTHA
OK.

She turns and prepares the coffee.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)
OK. One cup of Swiss-water decaf.

FRANZ
Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't want decaf.

SAMANTHA
You didn't?

FRANZ
My apologies. I was asking about
your type of decaf to see if you knew
your beans.

SAMANTHA
I know my beans. Try it.

CUSTOMER
(taking a sip)
Excellent. Mmm. What is this?

SAMANTHA
Kauai Blue Mountain.
(beat)
Decaf.

FRANZ
Really?

SAMANTHA
I don't bluff about coffee.

FRANZ
It's really good.

SAMANTHA

Glad you like it.
 (beat)
 That will be \$8.95.

Franz reacts a little to the price, but smiles and pulls out his wallet, takes the coffee and retreats to a table.

DONNY

Decaf, huh?

TARYN

Don't. Just don't.

DONNY

Okay.
 (beat)
 Just saying. There is some really good decaf out there.

TARYN

I'm aware.

She looks at him - pissed off - and then softens.

SAMANTHA

I don't know. I just have a hard time picturing you two being married.

TARYN

Well we were. For like five minutes. A million years ago.

DONNY

We were really young.

Donny opens his mouth to speak but then reconsiders. He notices a fly on the counter and flicks a dishtowel at it.

TARYN

I was young.
 (beat)
 You were just immature.

Taryn rolls up a magazine and kills it.

SAMANTHA

Oh! Now I see it!

FADE OUT