

Episode 02: Twilight of Sanity

OPEN ON: We pan in on the front of the store, where we see Kevin looking out of one of the plate glass windows. As Mark crosses our path, we focus on his back and follow him into the store. Inside, we see Kevin is looking across the street at where Ashley is working. Mark puts the large donut box he was carrying on the counter.

Kevin:

This is torture.

Mark:

(Taking a bearclaw) Leave the torture, take the donuts.

Kevin:

(Still looking) I mean she said she missed us, right? Why is she over at the store doing inventory?

Mark:

(Watching Kevin) Well, the fact that it's a Monday morning might have something to do with that. You know, if you're into that whole 'getting paid' thing.

Kevin:

She could have still come over and said 'Hi'.

Mark:

I'm sure she'll stop by later. If she doesn't see you keeping tabs on her.

A customer walks in, grabbing a donut almost absent-mindedly. When he sees Kevin, he stops in his tracks.

Customer:

Hey Kevin! Long time no see! It's been a couple weeks, how are you doing?

Kevin:

Better, I guess.

Customer:

I bet you are. When's the happy day scheduled for?

Kevin:

(Turning to look at the customer) Which one? (Realizing) Oh. That one.

Customer:

“Oh, that one?” You’ve been going on and on about how you’re going to ask Ashley to marry you! I wanted to see how things finally turned out.

Mark:

(Flatly) You told the customers.

Kevin:

Not all of them, just... (he wiggles his fingers for a moment as he realizes he doesn’t remember the customer’s name.) ... him?

Customer:

Well, there are some who call me... him.

Mark:

(Grinning and saluting) Greetings, Him the Customer. Where’d you leave your staff o’ pyrotechnics?

Customer:

It’s in my other goat’s head cloak.

Kevin:

(Already looking out the window again) You know, our very own flaming stick is coming up the walk now.

Lisa and Todd come in, both looking mildly irritated.

Kevin:

Heh. Burn. (As if suddenly remembering) Hey! Lisa came over to see us. Despite it being Monday morning.

Mark:

Lisa probably lost another job.

Lisa:

(Grabbing a donut) No, no. I’m still working at the kindergarten. I just have to be there in- (looks at her watch) - well, I can still sneak in the back.

Todd:

(Grabbing a creamstick, and holding it suggestively) This is way more important than work.

Mark:

Words you should never say in front of your employers, young Skywalker.

Lisa:

Look, last weekend Todd was helping me edit my latest AMV, and we got talking about stuff. Like the store, movies, what's happening with you and Ash -

Customer:

(Interrupting) What happened with you and Ash?

Kevin:

It's just... a long story.

Todd:

So when we started talking manga, Lise got on this whole kick. She thinks that manga is way better than the novels being put out right now.

Lisa:

Which they are -

Todd:

(Interrupting) They are not! I know some graphic novels have plot lines that kick ass and take names. But I don't think they're BETTER than a good book. I think they're equally good. Especially the stuff I've been reading.

Lisa:

And I might have agreed with the 'equal' thing, but have you seen a bookstore lately? It's like someone loaded up a grenade with concentrated Chick Lit and pulled the -

Todd:

(Interrupting) Like there aren't mangas like that? You went on and on about that 'Fruits Basket' series. And all it is is a dorky girl letting people push her around while they change into farm animals.

Lisa

Animals of the Chinese zodiac...

Todd

(Interrupting) And participate in sparkly staring sequences.

Lisa:

(Admitting it) ...OK, I can't deny the sparkly staring sequences.

Todd:

Besides, books have, like hundreds of years of history on them. That's tons of genuine classics that have been made into everything from audio books to movies. Mangas have maybe 30. Saying that manga is up there with a book is just cocky.

Lisa:

Modern day mangas may only have a few decades under their belt, but their artistic layout is inspired by ancient Japanese art. Even Ash could tell you that that inspiration has created some damn good modern art.

Customer:

(Trying to break in) Speaking of Ash...

Lisa:

(Interrupting) - and before you try it again, don't try playing the 'comics aren't really art' card! Just because I'm defending a modern interpretation, doesn't mean I'm wrong.

Todd:

Doesn't mean you're right. Am I right girlfriend?

Todd sticks his hand up for a high-five. Kevin instantly responds, only realizing a half second later what he did. Kevin freezes, hand still in 'high-five' mode, with a WTF look frozen on his face.

Mark:

So, why'd you guys come here?

Kevin:

(Still not sure what to do with his hand, eventually putting it in his pocket) Especially when one of you should be working.

Lisa:

Well, when you need a car fixed you go to a mechanic. When you get a nasty flu bug, you go to the doctor.

Todd:

And when you have a discussion about the minutia of fandom bull, you go to Mark and Kevin.

Lisa:

And we need an answer in (looks at watch) well, *now*, so I can still keep my job.

Todd:

So, Mr. Parsec, what do you think?

Mark has a moment of consideration - looking at Todd, then Lisa - as he strokes his chin.

Mark:

I think this isn't something we're going to solve with one sentence.

Lisa:

So, I'm going to be late? (Pause) Again?

Todd:

Girl, you've only had the job for three days!

Lisa:

(Chin up, determined to be cheerful) And there's been no explosive firing.

Kevin:

Yet.

Mark:

What I meant is you both brought up valid points. An issue like this needs careful research, on both sides of the debate. After walking a mile in each other's mucklucks, you might get some real perspective.

Todd:

And then we'd see who's right?

Kevin:

Actually, then you'd really start harping like there's no tomorrow.

Mark:

But in the realms of geekdom, starting a long lasting fight is practically like a victory.

Todd:

Granted.

Lisa:

What kind of research should we start doing?

Mark:

Well, you both consider yourselves experts on the side you're defending. What would you recommend to each other? What's a good book - or manga - that will prove your point as well as entertain?

Lisa:

(Rummaging through her bag) Ranma ½ would be a good start. Here.

Todd:

(Taking it as if dismantling a bomb) What's it about?

Lisa:

Wow. Er. Well, there's a lot of stuff that goes on. I guess the best way to sum it up is to say there's this boy that's cursed to turn into a girl over and over again.

Todd:

(Interested) Really? That sounds promising...in a Victor/Victoria kind of way. Well, since you've given me stiff competition, I'll give you one of my all-time favorites! (Pulls out a thick book with a familiar cover).

The Jaws theme music - or similar audio evil - plays for one bar. The lights could also flicker for a noticeable second or two.

Lisa:

(Taking it) Twilight?

Kevin:

Oh hell.

Todd:

You'll love it! It's totally fabulous.

Lisa:

My niece and sister are really into this series. Isn't it just catnip for emo tweens and lonely housewives?

Todd:

Actually, it's, like Harry Potter, only ten times better. Think Harry Potter with romance and hot sex. And the sexual tension? Le Gasp! I've read all four of the books, and I just can't get enough. (Sighs) Oh Edward. (Realizes what he just said) Hey, I like good character development. And he's got one hell of a character on him. Even Ash said so.

Customer:
Will someone tell me what's going on with Ashley?

Ashley comes in

Customer:
Finally. Hey Ash.

Ashley:
(to customer) Hey Phil. (To the corresponding staff and friends) Hey
Todd. Hey Lisa. Hey Mark. (she sees Kevin, and looks slightly uncomfortable.
Reaching forward, she grabs a donut) Hey coz.

**Ashley turns around and leaves. The customer is stunned and Kevin already going back to his
post at the window.**

Customer:
Ta ma de. That was one hell of a wedding.