



## Episode 4

*"Lucy, I'm home!"*

"You still haven't told me why you're here," Tarnish Jutmoll says.

Cartier Diamond shrugs and says nothing. Mordred Prentice, sitting beside her, appears ready to burst with the information, but he knows better than to speak about Cartier to anyone at any time, especially when she's sitting right next to him.

"You'll have to do better than that, Cartier. You didn't drive down two hours at six in the morning for no reason whatsoever."

"I want to watch a few LD rounds," she says angrily. "What's wrong with that?"

"You've been in Speech for over three years and you haven't wanted to watch one yet."

"People change."

The impatience rises in Jutmoll's voice. "Cartier?"

She sighs. She still has her sunglasses on, and Jutmoll finds it hard to understand her frame of mind if he can't see her eyes.

"Cartier?" he repeats.

"It's Braun," she says finally.

"Braun?"

"My boyfriend -- ex-boyfriend," she corrects herself quickly.

"Oh."

"The lousy bastard's wife came back."

Jutmoll, who is sipping his coffee, manages by a mere hair not to spit what's in his mouth back into the cup.

"Your boyfriend is married?"

"Separated. At least that's what he told me. Her job took her to the Yucatan -- some kind of archaeological bone dig-up thing, you know the kind -- and they just drifted apart. But last week the rainy season ended, and there she was on his doorstep again."

Jutmoll hesitates to ask his next question, but he must know. "How old is Braun, anyhow?"

"Twenty-eight."

"Uh-huh." Twenty-eight. And Cartier turned eighteen a month ago. A world of commentary flashes through Jutmoll's mind, but like Morrie Prentice, he knows the things one can and cannot say in front of Cartier Diamond.

Cartier's chief forensic activity, by the way, is called Dramatic Interpretation, a specialty for which she is well-suited.

"You want to hear my cases, Mr. Jutmoll?"

Jutmoll looks over at Hamlet Buglaroni, who is folding the tops of his undersocks over the tops of his oversocks while reading a page on a folder open before him and chewing on an already half-digested Bic pen. Thankful for the change of subject, Jutmoll nods. "Go ahead," he says.

Keeping the pen in his mouth so that he sounds as if he's recently swallowed a gerbil, Buglaroni begins to read.

"Whatever it is, I'm against it," he begins. "Because I agree with these words of Professor Wagstaff--"

"Who?"

"Professor Wagstaff."

"Who is he?"

"The president of Huxley College."

Jutmoll's single white eyebrow comes up at one corner. Buglaroni continues, speeding it up in hopes of providing a moving target.

"Because I agree with these words of Professor Wagstaff of Huxley College, I stand to negate today the resolution, resolved, when in conflict, the rights of lawyers should outweigh the rights of their clients. For my first con--"

"The what?"

"The rights of lawyers should outweigh the rights of their clients. For my first con--"

"Where in the name of Plato's mother-in-law did you get *that*?"

"That's the September-October resolution, isn't it?"

Frick and Frank Tarleton can contain themselves no longer, and they begin laughing uncontrollably. Jutmoll looks at Jasmine. "Well?" he asks her.

Jasmine looks at her sister, who merely shakes her head, causing Frick and Frank to laugh even louder.

"It's not funny," Cartier says icily, and the laughter stops instantly. She has that ability, totally balanced, to turn males both on and off like wall switches.

And she hasn't even graduated high school yet, Jutmoll thinks to himself.

Aloud, he says, "The resolution, Mr. Buglaroni, is, resolved, when in conflict, the rights of the individual should be valued above the rights of the community. Where did you get *your* resolution from?"

"That's, like, uh, what I thought it was," Buglaroni replies.

"You two had nothing to do with this?" Jutmoll asks the Tarleton twins.

They shake their collective head, the picture of innocence.

Buglaroni attempts an explanation: "I couldn't come to the meetings because my grandmother's car needs a new battery, so I couldn't stay after school, because the late bus only goes to--"

"Enough!" Jutmoll's voice is soft but sharp. "You will not debate today, Mr. Buglaroni."

"But--"

"No buts. No case, no debate. Do you have any idea what we do around here?"

"You, like, argue."

"We, like, don't use the word like except to express fondness or to make comparisons, for a start. Do you know anything about philosophy? For instance, do you know anything about the social contract?"

"The social contract. Sure. I know that. That's that thing in colleges where if you go on a date you have to get permission from the girl to kiss her."

Jutmoll nods his head. "Exactly." He turns to Jasmine. "Have him watch your rounds this morning. Maybe he'll learn something. And try to explain the social contract to him, if you can. John Locke in one easy sound bite."

"Yes, Mr. Jutmoll."

"It isn't, like, that college deal?" Buglaroni asks.

"No, Mr. Buglaroni, is isn't, like, that college deal." Jutmoll turns to Cartier. "Do you intend to stay here all day?"

"What else do I have to do?"

"So I'm correct in believing that you brought your own car?"

"Daddy's Porsche. My Miata is in the shop."

"My grandmother's car is in the shop too," Buglaroni says. "I wonder if it's the same shop."

"I doubt it," Cartier says. Mordred Prentice finds this hilarious, and starts guffawing loudly.

"And you're just along for the ride, Mr. Prentice?" Jutmoll asks.

He nods as his laughter begins to ebb.

"They also serve... Don't leave the building, either of you. Understand?"

"I understand," Cartier says.

"Good. I'm going to go sign up the novices for the Little Johnson. Your round should begin soon," he says to Jasmine. "Get Mr. Buglaroni over there. See if you can show him how to flow."

"Flow?" Buglaroni asks.

"That's the way you take notes in a debate," Jasmine explains. "You really haven't come to any meetings?"

"My dad works all day and he has the good car."

"He works far away, I'll bet."

"Yes."

"I'm not surprised. Grab your bag and let's go." She smiles at her sister. "See you later, Cam."

Camelia nods, but says nothing, and Jasmine walks off with Buglaroni trailing behind her.

"He's wearing two pairs of socks," Jutmoll says to no one in particular.

"He'll be that much more ready for the deluge," Cartier says huskily.

Jutmoll stands up. "I'm off too. But I'll be back. Stay here."

"We'll stay," Cartier says.

"Mr. Tarleton? Mr. Tarleton?"

"We'll be here."

"Exactly." Jutmoll crabs off through the cafeteria and out the door.

"You know," Frick says -- Frick is the eldest and usually begins these ruminations, "there's no way of knowing for sure that Little Ricky is really Big Ricky's son."

"There was no DNA testing," Frank says.

"No DNA testing. And think about this. Where was Big Ricky all day?"

"At the club."

"At the club. My point exactly. And where was Fred all day?"

"Fred Mertz."

"Fred Mertz. Retired. And in the apartment building all day."

"All day."

"Coming in the back door."

"Lucy, I'm home."

"Fred wouldn't say that. Only Ricky would say that."

"You're right. Only Ricky would say that. But what about Ethel?"

"What about Ethel?"

"Where would she be in all of this? She was always with Fred."

"She was always with Fred. That's right. So they had, like, a thing, the three of them."

"That's disgusting."

"But it's true. And you can prove it if you look at Little Ricky."

"You can prove the three of them were having a thing?"

"No. Even though they were. But what you can prove is that Fred is definitely the father of Little Ricky."

"Fred is definitely the father of Little Ricky."

"Right. Because they're both bald."

"They're both bald."

"That proves it. QED"

"QED II. But what about Little Desi?"

"Little Desi?"

"Little Desi. The real Little Ricky. Big Desi's real baby. He only played Little Ricky on TV. Was Fred his father too?"

"William Frawley was his father."

"Who's William Frawley?"

"Fred Mertz."

"Oh. Fred Mertz."

"Do you people do this all the time?" Cartier Diamond asks. "Or is this just for my benefit."

"Do what?" Frick asks.

"Do what?" Frank asks immediately thereafter.

"Is Fred Mertz really Little Ricky's father?" Mordred Prentice asks.

Cartier Diamond sighs. "Morrie," she says with exasperation. "You're worse than they are."

"I just want to know," he says.

"Ethel is the father. Of all of them." She hands him her coffee cup. "Get me a refill."

"Three Sweet and Lows."

She smiles. "Good memory."

She folds her arms and looks away from the Tarleton twins. Somewhere in this room there has to be something better than them to entertain her.

**Is Fred Mertz really Little Ricky's father?**

**Will Tarnish Jutmoll ever trim his universal eyebrow?**

**Do toilets flush counterclockwise south of the equator?**

**Do clocks run backwards when you're using the toilet south of the equator?**

**Will Buglaroni discover the key to John Locke?**

**None of this and less in our next installment: "Men are from Mars, Women are from New Rochelle!"**