



Episode 95

I Came Here for the Waters

They are in the Brillig family room, Kumar stretched out on the couch, David sitting erect on a straight-backed chair. David's copy of *Sullivan and Gilbert* is in his hand; Kumar's is lying on his stomach.

"I am, like, zonked," Kumar says. "I must be coming down with something."

"Too much traveling looking at colleges?" David asks.

Kumar nods. "We did Mr. Bunbury's C tour this weekend. Cornell, Columbia, Colgate, Chicago."

"All in one weekend? They're all over the map."

"Tell me about it. We did it in cars, out of cars, in planes, out of planes."

"Is Cornell still one of your first choices?"

"It is now my definite first choice. All by itself."

"How come?"

Kumar stares at the ceiling. "I don't really know, if you want to know the truth. You go to a place, and there's just a... feel... about it, like you know you belong there, or you know

you don't belong there. It's like the paint on the walls beckons out to you or something. Ooooh... My stomach." He closes his eyes and moans.

"You really want to rehearse tonight?"

"Maybe in a minute." He sighs. "The thing is, I really do like Cornell. And I'm pretty sure I can get in. That's the big issue, really, getting in or not. I mean, there's no point lusting after some school that you don't have a snowball's chance at, just because it's a prestige school. Some people, they think they have to go Ivy, even if they get to the campus and they hate it."

"The paint on the walls tells them to take a hike?"

"Exactly. But that doesn't stop them. They'll kill to get in, they'll kill to stay in once they get there, and they'll hate the place for four years. I mean, what's the point?"

"My parents are pushing the frequent-study-miles plan."

"Frequent-study-miles?"

"You study hard in high school, you apply to a school that you're better than so they have to take you, and give you a good financial aid package because you're raising the genetic makeup of the place. It won't matter whether I like the school or not, if they offer my parents enough money. The best financial-aid package. That's all they're interested in."

"College does cost a fortune."

"Figure thirty thousand a year for the schools you really want to go, twenty-five for your second tier, ten to fifteen for your safety. And way, way less if you go to a state school. My parents would love that, a state school. Safety and parsimoniousness -- the perfect combination." He shakes his head. "We've got to rehearse, Kumar."

"I really don't feel up to it, David. I really am getting sick. And besides, what's the point? The team is going down the tubes after the Moly anyhow. What difference does it make?"

"How can you say that? It still matters. It isn't over till it's over."

"And it's almost over, David. Hell, I only joined the speech team to have some fun, a few laughs, not to beat a dead horse. Or to get sick to my stomach. Oooooh..."

"There are no fun or laughs on the Nighten team."

"I was misinformed."

"At least not anymore."

"I'm going home. I feel terrible. We're not going to get any rehearsing done tonight. It's not happening."

David sighs. It is definitely not happening.

Down Dooby Do Down Down, Comma Comma

"I am not happy, Gloria. Call me."

The message is waiting on the answering machine when Gloria arrives home from the mall. She rewinds the tape and plays it again.

"I am not happy, Gloria. Call me."

The idea sends a wave of acid into her stomach as she sits down on the edge of her bed. If she had thought he was going to be at the mall tonight, she would never have agreed to meet Buglaroni there. Bark never works Tuesdays. Except today he did. And he saw her with Buglaroni, and now he wants to confront her.

Which is the last thing that she wants to do.

Her phone rings on the table next to the bed. She picks it up. "Hello."

"So you're home. Ignoring my message?"

It's Bark. She would have let it ring if she had known.

"Are you there?"

"I'm here."

"So what's going on, Gloria? Who is that guy?"

"I told you who he is. Ham Buglaroni."

"Bugaroooni. I heard the name, girl. That ain't what I meant."

"What do you mean, Bark?"

"I mean, what are you doing with him? Going out?"

"I can go out with him if I want to."

"So you are going out with him?"

"It's none of your business who I go out with."

"You're wrong there, girl. It is very much my business. You go out with me."

"You don't own me, Bark."

"Since when?"

"What?"

"Since when don't I own you? We are going out, girl."

"Bark, it's over between us."

"What?"

"I said it's over. I want to break up."

"Over that Bugaroooni doofus? You're breaking up with me over him?"

"He is not the reason I am breaking up with you."

"If you're going out with him when you should be going out with me, then he's the reason you're breaking up with me. Jeez!"

"It's just over between us, Bark. It has nothing to do with Ham."

"How could it have anything to do with that doofus?"

"He is not a doofus! He's nice."

"He is a doofus, Gloria. Hell, if you're going to break up with me, that's one thing. But to do it over an ugly doofus like that-- Get real, girl."

"He is not an ugly doofus. He's a nice guy. Which is more than I can say for you."

"So all of a sudden I'm not nice? And Bugarooni is? You are trying my patience, girl."

"I don't care about your patience, Bark. We're through. That's it. Done."

"If we're so through, girl, why are you still talking to me?"

Gloria looks at the phone in her hand. Good question, she thinks, slamming it down on the receiver.

The Mint Jelly Would have been Messier

There are no quiet tables at the Craz. There is no place to sit and talk and tell the high school girl that you had an affair with that because of her your wife kicked you out of the house yesterday. So Braun and Cartier are walking along the road, a quiet highway with few vehicles to break the peace of the autumn evening. The full moon is low, an eerie pseudo-daylight.

"They still let you into the Craz," Brett says.

"I've still got the best i.d. this side of the CIA," Cartier answers.

"You don't look like a teenager."

Cartier shrugs. Braun imagines that she doesn't feel like a teenager, either.

"So how have you been?" Braun asks.

"I've missed you, Braun." She takes his hand into hers. His immediate reaction is to pull away, but her grasp tightens, and he yields to the pressure.

"I shouldn't see you again, Cartier." He takes a deep breath. "My wife found out about us," he says.

"Oh?" There is little apparent concern in her bright violet eyes.

"Yesterday," he adds.

She applies more pressure on his hand. "Poor baby."

"You left a notebook at my house. Brett found it."

"What happened?"

"When I got home from work, she threw me out of the house. She also threw a leg of lamb at me."

"Did she hurt you?"

"Not really. Lamb is one of my favorite meals."

"You mean if it was something you didn't like as much, it would have hurt more?"

"No, not at all."

"You mean, if she threw a bowl of spaghetti at you, it would have meant something different from throwing a leg of lamb? I don't understand."

"That is not what I'm saying."

"You can't measure someone's anger by what they have on the stove when they get angry."

"I know that, Cartier. I'm agreeing with you."

"So she threw you out of the house?"

"I'm staying at the Cozy Cot motel for a couple of days. Until I can sort things out."

"Do you want to go back with her? With Brett?"

"She's my wife, Cartier."

"Wives change, Braun."

Cartier steps ahead of Braun and turns to face him, her eyes looking deep into his.

Which is exactly how this started in the first place. Her eyes looking deep into his, so young, so gorgeous, her lips slightly parted, his will power as strong as the backbone of a newt...

They kiss.

And the cycle begins again.

When the Swallows Return to Capistrano.com

H: Hi, Seth. It's Haircut.

S: Hi, Shavena. How did you know I was on-line?

H: How do the birds know that Miami is south of Newfoundland?

S: A sixth sense?

H: Or a simple pager program. I've been thinking about what you were saying.

S: About debating again?

H: Yeah. And about Tara.

S: So what do you want to do?

H: I'm willing to give it a try.

S: You won't regret it, Shavena. Trust me on this.

H: Only a try, Seth. If it doesn't work, I'm out of there. No commitment, no strings.

S: Got it.

H: Good.

S: I'll set something up.

H: Let me know.

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"Tara? It's Seth."

"Hi, Seth."

"I just talked to Haircut. He's definitely in. He definitely wants to debate with you again."

"You're sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. Like I said, Tara, I think he still has some feelings for you. I think that's why he wants to do this."

"I find that hard to believe, Seth, to tell you the truth."

"Look, Tara, it doesn't matter what his reason is, he's doing it. Leave it at that. You do want to debate, don't you?"

"Yes, I do want to debate."

"We'll try to work something out for tomorrow after school. The mall okay? I can't exactly do it at Veil, my relationship with the place being such as it is."

"I gotcha."

"Okay. After school at the mall. I'll tell Haircut."

Will Kumar get healthy enough in time to do a Duo at the Blessed Moly?

Will Gloria maintain her resolve regarding Bark?

If Braun makes the same mistake again, will his wife have to make another leg of lamb?

Will Haircut and Tara survive their first meeting?

Is Hillary really out in 2012?

All this and less in our next episode: "Abacus: Ancient calculator, or candidate for the voice of a Magoo?"