



S1: E2: Pilot Part Two (Back In The Hood)

Darkwing Duck (Cartoon 1991) · Not Rated · 9581 words

by Arukir

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S1: E2: Pilot Part Two (Back In The Hood)

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Goz tries to track down Lady Blackheart, but runs into a few issues. Quiverhood meets a Firebird villain, and has to deal with mutant politics.

Chapter 1: Previously On The Adventures Of Quiverhood

A recap of last 'episode'.

You can honestly skip this part.

And now on to the show!

"Goz, did you pack your suit already?"

"No, I did. No way my little girl's going away without a way to defend herself!"

-

Goz grabbed her suitcases and ran to the waiting vehicle. "Bye everyone! I love you!"

-

They passed the bridge towers. "We're really leaving... No more Supervillains, no more Darkwing, no more late nights." Goz grinned. "Just peace and quiet and time to figure out what we want to do in life."

"Time to figure out what **you** want to do in life." Honker corrected.

-

"Two adults for the evening train to Firebird, Awrenzona." Goz helpfully stuck up two fingers as a visual.

-

A crash, yells, barking. Goz turned, just in time to be tackled.

-

Goz turned to the Four, "I have to board a train in, I can't have it getting canceled just 'cause four sorta-maybe-reformed but-still-notorious supervillains showed up causing trouble!"

"But we're not here to cause trouble!" Quackerjack insisted.

"Then why are you here?" Honker asked.

"To say goodbye!" The Four yelled, embracing Goz.

-

Goz scooped the three into a hug. If someone had told Goz eight years ago that she'd be fond of Megavolt and Quackerjack's kids? That she'd babysit the mutant spawn of Liquidator and Bushroot? She call them crazy.

But those three had worked their way into her heart, and she was going to miss the little brats.

-

Goz shot up, screaming.

Honker shouted "Gosalyn? What's the matter?!"

"Just a bad dream, I guess." She paused, thinking she'd heard the tune to ***Pop Goes The Weasel***. She looked around. "Hey, where's Screech?"

-

"My jewels! That stupid beast has made off with my jewels!" A rich-looking lady ran, chasing Screech.

"What is that animal doing in the middle of the train?" A train employee asked.

"Uhhh..." Goz shrugged.

-

"At least we're only a few miles off from our destination." Honker consoled, watching the train move away.

"Shut up." Goz grumbled.

-

"See what it's like when you get outside of St Canard, Honker? People are friendlier because it's calmer, peaceful. This is the perfect place for a new start, away from chaos."

"Stop, thief!" A woman shouted. A deer was running away with her purse.

"Ugh, seriously? That's so clichè." Goz pulled out her cellphone. A light shone into the deer's eyes.

The deer froze, allowing a police officer to catch up.

"Hug hug, kiss kiss, you were a great audience!" Gosalyn waved, following Honker across the street.

-

"T-that was a fluke!" Goz insisted. "Nothing more than a little bit of St Canard energy following us."

"Excuse me, have you been to the local Coven yet, dear?"

-

Honker grinned, walking towards his brother's apartment.

Goz followed him. "It's just a fluke, one last day of chaos before we settle into our new, calm, lives. You'll see, from here on out, it'll be smooth sailin-""

A pair of arms lifted her up in a hug.

"Hey... Tank." Goz wheezed.

-

"Why, ya little shrimp!" Tank marched up to Honker.

"At least I'm not an ignorant plebian." Honker matched him step for step.

A few moments passed before they each grinned, laughing as they embraced.

-

Goz laid down under the covers and sighed. Now time for some sleep.

...

Alright, so she couldn't sleep! It wasn't because she was missing superhero work, not. At. All.

She waved at the plants outside her window. She could feel them growing.

That's what she needed to clear her head -- plants!

-

Goz walked through the park, twirling around.

She sensed something wrong. She found a small cactus being crushed by a rock.

She moved the rock, sending a burst of magic to heal the cactus. A purple flower started to sprout. It reminded her of Bushroot. "Aww, you like that Little... Thornroot?"

Goz transfigured the stone into a planter, taking the cactus.

-

Young Gosalyn was walking through a hall of mirrors, distorted reflections around her.

"Should've stayed with Daddy, little girl bluuuuue." The voice came from everywhere at once.

Gosalyn was lifted to meet red eyes and dripping fangs. Her screams were drowned out by laughter, and music from a Jack-in-the-box...

-

Tank pulled her close, patting her back. "Ya wanna talk about it, Red?"

"Not really." Goz admitted. They stayed like that until the feelings from the nightmare were gone.

-

Goz gasped, pain lanced through her. Images flashed quickly in her mind's eye.

Firetrucks zoomed by, sirens blaring, as several explosions went off.

"It's coming from the park!" Goz took to the rooftops.

-

Goz sensed still-burning plants, like hot pokers in her belly. The park had been destroyed. An area of the ground was burnt black, forming a heart, broken into four jagged pieces.

In the middle was a small pink box. Inside were photos, of her, of her friends.

The last photo was her sitting next to herself.

See you soon, Cuz!

XOXO, Lady Blackheart.

Chapter 2: Act One

Goz freaks out, gets a coffee, and comes up with a plan.

We finally get to see Quiverhood!

Points to anyone who can spot the PJ Masks reference.

"This is bad, this is bad, this is sooo very bad." Goz whispered harshly, pacing through Tank's livingroom.

"You've said that already." Honker pointed out, holding his phone to his ear. "My parents still aren't answering. What about yours?"

"I dialed them like fifty times, Honk." Goz shook her head. "I can't get a hold of anyone, not even SHUSH."

"What about the Justice Ducks?" Honker asked. "Launchpad's Duckburg friends? The Four?"

Goz shook her head again. "No-one, Honk. She must've gotten to them."

"It might just be the phones." Honker tried.

Goz dialed a random number, shoving her phone at Honker.

"Uh, I-I'm sorry sir, misdial." Honker stammered, hanging up. "Alright, not the phones."

"I can't believe she's- How is she back?!" Goz groaned, plopping onto the couch. "Lynn left. She disappeared. And now she comes back? Years I searched, and now she comes back..."

"What do you think she wants?" Honker asked quietly, sitting next to her.

"I... Destruction, chaos, the screaming of innocents." Goz shrugged, bitterly adding, "What else could you expect from the daughter of *Negaduck*?"

"You were close, once." Honker pointed out. "You never told me what happened, why she went to the dark side..."

"That's because I don't know." Goz sighed. "One day, my dad just showed up with another me for a playdate. She was a disgustingly proper little lady, but I liked her, we got along. Then she shows up crying, babbling about the Friendly Four 'going away'."

"Going away?" Honker asked.

"She never explained what that meant, but I always figured it was something really bad." Goz hugged herself, then hugged Screech when he jumped on her lap -- purring loudly. "She was a young teenager all by herself, another family just gone." Goz snapped her fingers.

"I remember she lived with you for a while." Honker said, after a few moments of quiet.

"Yeah. But she didn't like it." Goz shook her head. "She was breaking, Honk. Going crazy, ranting and destroying things, then crying. Then she ran away. Next time I saw her, she was back with Negaduck. Daddy's little girl. She'd gone from wanting to make the world a better place to terrorizing St Canard."

"And then they both disappeared." Honker thought for a second. "Do you think this means Negaduck's back?"

"I don't know, I don't care." Goz breathed deeply. She stood up, heading for the front door. "Come on."

"What? Where are we going?" Honker asked, following her.

"I don't know, I just need some fresh air." Goz put Screech on her shoulder. "I need time to think and I don't want to leave you alone while Lynn's on some kind of vendetta."

"What about my brother?" Honk asked, looking at his brother's bedroom door. Light snoring could be heard.

"Don't worry." Goz chuckled darkly. "Trust me, the one person she'd never hurt is Tank Muddlefoot."

--

"Welcome to Starduck's, how can I- Goz!" Melody smiled, brown eyes twinkling. "I'm so glad to see you again!"

"Hey, Mel." Goz sighed. "Can I get two hot chocolates, a cookie, and some milk? Oh, and water."

"Coming right up, Goz!" Melody nodded. She frowned, eyeing the goose critically. "What's got you so down?"

"It's just some family drama." Goz shrugged.

"Say no more, I know when not to pry." Melody hummed as she made the drinks. "Did you hear about that explosion earlier? It's already on the news."

"Uh, yeah." Goz leaned on the counter. "An entire park was destroyed, so many lives..."

"Wait, people died?!" Melody spun around, horrified. "I didn't hear about that, though I guess it's only been a few hours..."

"Not- not people." Goz coughed, embarrassed. "I meant the, uh, the plants."

"Oh. Yeah, that's a shame they all burned." Melody raised an eyebrow. "You one of those nature nuts or something? No offense, but..."

"No, I just..." Goz thought about how to phrase it. "I feel a certain connection to plants, you could say. They're calming, peaceful but resilient."

"Yeah, I get that." Melody chuckled, handing over the order. "I feel the same way about the stars, sometimes."

Goz took the order, but didn't move away. "Mel? I know we don't really know each other well, but can I ask you something?"

"Shoot." Melody nodded.

"If you had a family member that did some bad things, like really bad," Goz started, "bad enough that if they were anyone else you'd want them locked up forever, but you still cared deeply about them -- what would you do?"

"I don't really know." Melody answered. "On the one paw, if they're dangerous they need to be dealt with. On the other, family's family."

"And if some of the bad things they did might've been to other members of your family?" Goz asked. "What then?"

"There's no easy answer for that, sweetie." Melody smiled sympathetically, as if she somehow could understand, and patted Goz's hand. "But if someone you care about is being hurt, you've got to protect them. Even if the person doing the hurting is someone else you care about."

"Thanks, Mel." Goz gave a small but real smile. "Sorry for going weird on you."

"No problem." Melody waved her hand, dismissing it. "You come to me if you ever want to talk, alright? I'm a chatterbox, but I'm a good listener too."

"I'll keep that in mind, thanks." Goz chuckled, going outside to sit with Honker and Screech. Something tight in her chest loosened upon seeing them still there rather than kidnapped.

"Thanks." Honker took his hot chocolate.

They sat in contemplative silence for a few minutes, before blurting out at the same time, "I think we should-"

"You first, Honk."

"Q, I think we need to investigate this ourselves." Honker started. "Your cousin's dangerous, and anyone else who could stop her is missing. We're the only one's who can do anything."

"I completely agree." Goz nodded.

"I know you didn't want to suit up, but I think we really to-" Honker cut himself off, blinking. "What?"

"I agree, mostly." Goz explained. Her voice dropped to a whisper. "After your brother leaves for work, we'll gear up and start investigating. But we aren't doing this by ourselves."

"What?" Honker asked, confused. "Who's left we can ask for help?"

"I've been getting visions, Honker. That means it's not just Normie business." Goz pulled what looked a blank piece of paper of her pocket, seemingly reading it. "The local Coven meets in three nights. When it does, we're gonna officially request help dealing with a rogue witch."

"Rogue witch?" Honker asked.

"If I'm a witch," Goz explained, standing up, "chances are that Lynn is too. We just have to find proof."

Night in the city...

"See ya guys later." Tank waved. "Be careful, I heard there's some loon blowin' things up."

"Silly Tankard." Goz grinned. "We're *always* careful."

"Love you, bro." Honker called as Tank left.

As soon as the door closed, Goz's face fell into an angry, determined expression. Green energy flickered across her body, eyes going solid green. "Birth form lost, found as a mask..."

"At least wait until I've got the curtains shut!" Honker complained, rushing towards the window to do just that.

"A disguise finer than I could ask." Goz ignored him, raising her arms as magic swept over her and Screech, changing them. "But now mine form must be true, a mere mask will not do."

Goz took off her scrunchie, let dark green, shoulder-length hair fall loose over light green feathers.

"Mutant form I claim my own," Goz said through a wooden beak, "change mine skin, change mine bone."

Honker raised an eyebrow. "I still say that spell's a little overdramatic."

"It's the only way I can keep my Normie disguise up without focusing all the time." Goz rolled her still-solid-green eyes. "Besides, it's cool. Now come on, we still need to get changed and we're burning starlight."

Goz had gone into her room, but Quiverhood had stepped out. A black mask covered her eyes, matching her utility belt. She wore purple pants and a purple turtleneck in homage to her father (though her bullseye-Q logo was proudly displayed on it), with a dark green cloak to add her own flair. The bottom of the cape was torn, and the inside was bright yellow. Dark green boots and clawed gloves with yellow webbing completed the look.

"You ready, Q?" Honker asked from the living room. No, not Honker -- Arrowhead.

He wore a dark blue, skintight suit with black gloves and boots that showed off the shape of his feet, spurs included. He had a utility belt of his own, and a ridiculous red arrow-shaped hat/mask that had started as a joke, but he fell in love with the design. A labcoat was thrown on over the outfit, gadgets stuffing pockets both visible and hidden.

"Just about." Quiverhood nodded, whistling for Screech. Screech jumped on her shoulder, white pupils shining in purple eyes, yellow cape falling over dark green fur. "Now I'm ready. Let's go."

"Where are we investigating first?" Arrowhead asked, fiddling with a round drone.

"Where else?" She smirked, climbing out a window. "Exactly where my cousin wanted us to."

Chapter 3: Intro

Where the intro be if it was a show.

Athlete. Archer. Witch. Mutant. Orphan. Hero.

(Images of Gosalyn that represent each moniker.)

Who is Gosalyn Mallard? Who could she have been? Who will she become?

(More images of Gosalyn's best moments)

Welcome to a new time.

(Shows grown up Gosalyn)

A new city.

(Pans across an image of Firebird, Awrenzona)

A new story.

(Sequence of images, mostly fight scenes, maybe an almost-kiss?)

A new generation.

(Goz and her team together, laughing around a table)

Nine year old Gosalyn Waddlemeyer wanted a family. Twelve year old Gosalyn Mallard wanted adventure. Twenty year old Goz just wants peace and quiet, a life away from chaos and complications, but the universe has other plans. Peace and quiet aren't on the menu.

(Shows snapshots of Goz's life, some calm things, then the ominous shadow and chuckle of Nega-Gosalyn)

New enemies, new allies, new adventures.

(Series of images that match the phrases)

Goz is on a mission to find out who she is, and she'll do it even if she has to save the world first.

(Shows images of both Goz trying out different things and Quiverhood fighting villains)

It's a good thing she's got help! Though that help's sometimes more of a hindrance...

(Sequence of images showing her allies, such as Honker and Tank, ending on three of them falling on each other while things crash on top of them)

Welcome to the Adventures Of Quiverhood.

(Green letters showing the title with Screech napping on top of it. An arrow flies by, turning the words into the episode name. Screech looks at the camera and opens his green eyes to reveal them glowing).

Gosalyn voiceover "Pilot, Part Two"

Honker voiceover "Back In The Hood"

Chapter 4: Act Two

Quiverhood investigates the park and finds something interesting. Goz has a nightmare that leads to an upsetting realization.

Goz has a lot of nightmares now, and I'm not entirely sure how it happened...

Points to anyone who figures what Goz's nightmare was referencing and why it made her think of the kids.

It still hurt to be back in the park, even if she could no longer hear the screams plants. At least she'd gotten Thornroot out, though she wished she could've saved more.

"We have to be careful, don't want anyone to find us snooping around a crime scene." Quiverhood whispered, her voice different with her proper mutant wooden beak, scratchier. It, coupled with her appearance, made it harder for villains to tell her gender -- a fact she'd exploited more than once, even if her androgynous mutated self had bothered her at first.

GWEN (Gavity-defying Wireless Environment Navigator), Arrowhead's drone, flew above them, taking pictures and scans.

Quiverhood crouched in the dirt by the burnt, broken heart, tasting it. She moved on to the surrounding area, tracking the path the fire took. It had started at the heart, probably to make sure it wasn't put out before the symbol formed. Or as a sick joke.

"GWEN's picking up machine remnants." Arrowhead read the drone's signal on his mask's eye lenses. "The way the fire was controlled -- I hate to say it, but it's impressive."

"She's better at fire than Negaduck." Quiverhood muttered. She'd found evidence that some of the plants had been hacked apart before being burned, though she couldn't tell the purpose of it; to further direct the fire? To leave false clues? As a way to annoy her? A random whim?

More worryingly, it didn't look like Lynn had done it herself. The person had been sloppy, which she never was, leaving a half-melted machete behind. Lynn had minions.

"Mreow?" Screech pawed at the ground at the center of the heart, digging. "Mreow!"

"There's something there." Arrowhead said, having GWEN scan it. "Looks metal, maybe just smaller than a hand?"

"Good boy." Quiverhood patted Screech and knelt at the spot, using her gloves to shovel dirt out of the way. It wasn't too deep in the ground, just enough to not be accidentally found. Quiverhood pulled it out.

It was a metal heart, black on one side with jagged pink lines splitting it into four uneven pieces. The other side was split much more cleanly into four colored sections, each with a different symbol.

Clockwise, she studied them. White with a black outline of a chess rook. Silver with a grey etching of a small object bouncing zig-zagged off a wall and ceiling. Red with a gold circle, connected by lines to eight smaller circles, each with two lines going off the borders. Black with BK scratched in white.

"No machinery or unusual energy signatures." Arrowhead reported. "What are those symbols?"

"I have no idea." Quiverhood shrugged. She'd never seen anything like it, not connected to Lynn at least. "But I don't think Blackheart's working alone." Lynn's code-name tasted like ash in her mouth. Fitting, considering the circumstances.

Quiverhood stood up, about to say more, when Arrowhead stifled a small gasp. "What's wrong?"

"Oh, um, nothing, really." Arrowhead tapped the side of his mask. "Just caught something on a police scanner."

"Yeah, well the police can handle it." Quiverhood said firmly. She wasn't going off and playing superhero, she had to had to stop her cousin. A supervillain. Well, she wasn't playing superhero anymore than she absolutely had to, anyways.

"Yeah, totally, Q." Arrowhead agreed quickly. "I'm sure they can handle a, um- "

"A what?" Quiverhood asked curiously reluctantly.

"Well, from the looks of it," Arrowhead was watching something on his lenses, cringing slightly, "a giant made of living fire?"

Quiverhood blinked. It was with the utmost reluctance and sense of duty that she yelled "Woah, really?! Let's go!"

"Wait, I thought-" Arrowhead squawked, being pulled along by Quiverhood.

"We can't just let the city get burned down, Head!" Quiverhood said in a tone that made it seem obvious. "We'll fight this one bad guy, kick his butt, and stop my cousin -- then it's no more super stuff, just calm, normal lives."

Being pulled in the direction of a fire giant by an overexcited goose, Arrowhead wasn't inclined to believe her.

The thing was at least twenty feet tall, a living flame tearing through buildings as easily as a child knocking down sandcastles. If the sandcastles exploded when kicked, it would be a perfect analogy.

Rubble littered the ground, small fires lit here and there, smoke filling the air. Luckily, most of the civilians were already out of the area, with the rest quickly following them. Quiverhood ducked behind a particularly large hunk of rubble.

"What is it with this town and fire?" Quiverhood asked into her earpiece, flicking her expanding bow off her wrist and taking aim at the creature. "What do you think, Hydrarrow or Vacarrow?"

"Neither!" Arrowhead responded over the comms. She could hear him frantically clicking at a keyboard.

"The Foamarrow, then?" Quiverhood asked, narrowing her eyes as the creature hit into another building. It looked like the building has started exploding just before it was hit.

"No, that one's still experimental." Arrowhead said quickly. "Q, that things only giving off too minor a heat signature -- I don't think it's actually made of fire."

"I think you're right, Head." Quiverhood watched as another just-slightly-mistimed explosion went off. Someone was doing a good job of faking this thing's rampage, but she'd been trained to spot the smallest of details. "Have GWEN take some scans, figure out what it really is. I can't stop it if I don't know--"

"Help!" A voice called out. "Help me, please!"

Quiverhood whipped her head around, but she couldn't see anyone. "Familiar, find him!"

"Mreow!" Screech jumped off her shoulder, zigzagging through the rubble. The not-fire giant didn't notice him, flailing its arms and roaring, but... It wasn't really doing much else anymore.

Quiverhood followed Screech, careful to stay out of the giant's line of sight. The cat led her to where a small form, like that of a child, was stuck under the rubble. "Don't worry, stay calm. Help is here."

"Ooooh." The form gave a pained groan. Quiverhood reached in and started pulling him out, using her back to prop up the stone.

"Can you tell if anything's broken?" Quiverhood asked, looking into the face of an adult -- but *extremely* short -- Cayuga duck. He had black feathers with a bright green shine, a grey beak, and dark brown eyes. His headfeathers were messy and he was wearing an orange T-shirt.

"Notin', far's I c'n tell." The duck grunted in a New Donkey accent. "Tanks for pullin' me outta dere, bu' we gotta be runnin' before Infernos Projection gets us!"

"Infernos Projection?" Quiverhood asked. "You mean the giant? He doesn't really seem to be doing anything right now, but better safe than sorry I suppose. Can you walk?"

"I tink so." The duck replied, limping to his feet.

"Okay, follow me." Quiverhood led him past the rubble, towards a clear area where he could get away safely.

"Q, I got something." Arrowhead's voice came through the comms. "GWEN picked a weird fluctuation coming from 'Infernos Projection's' form, along with a particular signal -- I think it's a hologram, albeit a very sophisticated one."

"Ahh!" The duck squawked, falling flat on his face. At the same moment, Infernos turned towards them, roaring. He -- it? -- swiftly moved forward.

"Eggshells." Quiverhood cursed quietly, slipping her bow back on her wrist in Cross-bow Mode. She grabbed the duck, fired an arrow into a nearby building, and pulled them both up just as a fireball the size of a car flew past them, though no heat grazed her feathers. It exploded right where they had been but moments ago.

"Ya saved me again!" The duck hugged her. "Ya're a real hee-ro!"

Quiverhood froze. Between the orphanage and babysitting the kids of supervillains, she had long ago learned to tell the difference between two very important things -- a hug, and someone picking your pockets.

The duck went to move away, but Quiverhood grab him quick as a viper. She growled. "What did you just take?"

"I- I didn' take notin'!" The duck protested, flailing in the air as she lifted him by the back of his shirt. "Pu' me down! Help!"

Pressing a nerve, Quiverhood forced his hand open, watching as one of her poison pellets fell to the ground. "Wanna try that again?"

"Q, GWEN just picked up a signal coming from that duck!" Arrowhead's warning came too late to do anything as Quiverhood was violently rammed to the side, dropping the duck.

"Maybe dat'll teach ya' ta manhandle a genius!" The duck smirked, hopping onto the back of what looked like a smaller, metal version of the fire giant. "Move it, Golem!"

"Have a nice day!" The 'Golem' said in a deep metallic voice and waved to Quiverhood before speeding away, bags of most-probably-stolen goods in its - his? - grip.

"Head!" Quiverhood growled, jumping up and giving chase across the rooftops, Screech going ahead of her. "Who is this creep?!"

"Running facial recognition now." Arrowhead reported. "Wesley Ashfeathers, used to be a technological innovator in New York, before his funding got cut after a series of legal issues. Disappeared a few years ago, a year before 'Infernos Projection' first showed in Firebird. Get this, he specialized in pyrotechnics and AI."

"Because of course that's something a sane person would combine!" Quiverhood muttered. She followed Screech for maybe an hour before he stopped, meowing -- he'd lost the scent.

Quiverhood had some very colorful swears for the night, and Arrowhead, to hear. Finally, she had give up the search, reluctantly retiring to rest.

Goz was sinking, drowning, melting. Everything burned, Darkwing was right there and just letting it happen, he didn't care. Why would he? He'd done this. He'd done this! He'd just let her melt, and didn't even care...

She was frying from the inside out. Her legs burned, she'd ran for hours. Her lungs burned from how long she'd screamed for help, but no help had come. She couldn't think straight, her brain felt like it'd been rewired by an incompetent plumber. And they'd get away with it -- they always did...

Everything she'd worked for was crumbling around her. Her creations called dangerous when all she'd wanted was to make people happy! They weren't dangerous, she wasn't dangerous. Those fools just didn't understand! They never understood! It was enough to drive someone crazy to desperate measures...

She'd felt nothing, it hadn't worked, she was a failure. But then something did happen! She'd changed, it was weird, but it was wonderful. Then they laughed, and she was a failure all over again, never to be noticed. Not by people, but who needed people anyways? After all, she'd always have her plants...

She'd always be alone. They wouldn't care, they wouldn't help, they wouldn't understand, they wouldn't notice. She was better off alone.

Goz awoke not with a scream, but with a sob. The nightmare was still so fresh, but it was hardly the only reason she'd curled up on her bed, letting the tears fall freely.

"Red, ya're late for break-" Tank opened the door, then rushed over to her. "What's wrong?"

"I- I didn't..." Goz choked. The memories, both real and dreamt, swarmed in her head, confusing her. "I didn't even think about them! I just forgot! I just forgot..."

"Forgot who? Red?" Tank shook her gently. "Gosalyn, it was just a nightmare. I know it seemed real, but-"

"Honker! I need-" Goz had started hyperventilating. "Get Honker!"

But Screech was already running into the room, Honker's glasses clutched in his mouth, said rooster right behind him.

"Bad cat! Give those- Goz?" Honker blinked. "Goz, what-"

"She had a nightmare." Tank explained. "She says she forgot someone."

"Who did you forget, Gosalyn?" Honker asked, holding her face to look her in the eye.

"The kids." Goz whispered. "Honk, I didn't even think about them! What if she got them? Their parents aren't answering, who's watching them? How could I not even..." She broke into crying again, the dream rattling her brain too much to calm down.

"What's she talkin' about?" Tank asked.

"I'll explain later, but I think we need some time alone." Honker didn't look away from Goz, didn't speak again until the door shut behind his brother. "Gosalyn, listen to me. With everything going on, some things are bound to be forgotten. It sucks, but you did nothing wrong. The most we can do for them is to rescue everyone, then either they'll be there or we'll have the Four to help us find them."

Screech purred loudly, meowing in agreement.

Even with Honker's reassurances, it was a while before she was calm enough to move from her room. Long enough for Tank, worried as he was, to have gone to bed.

"I'm sorry, I don't know why I freaked out that badly." Goz sighed. "It's just... How could I not even think of them?"

"You aren't the only one who forgot." Honker said quietly. "Neither of us thought of it. There's nothing we can do, Q. Either they're fine, or they aren't. We can't know until we find everyone."

"Yeah, and how do we do that?" Goz asked, taking the metal heart they'd found out of her pocket. She stared at it. "Where do we investigate next, Honk? Any ideas? Any clue at all? We already scoured the park, there's nothing more there. We've got nothing."

"Goz, that's not-" Honker paused. She was right, they didn't even know where to begin searching next. "The Coven. We still haven't tried them."

"So we're just supposed to wait for two days?" Goz hissed. "Sit here and wait for someone else to help us? Do nothing, while everyone we care about is missing, captured -- who knows what else?" Goz stood, pacing.

"Goz..." Honker sighed. "What else can we do?"

"I... I need some air." Goz muttered, marching out and the door. She didn't slam it, she was too angry to do so.

"Mreow." Screech got a weird, faraway look in his eyes, before racing out the window to catch up to her.

"I guess I'll just stay here, then." Honker muttered, putting his head in his hands with a groan.

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Goz didn't know why, but being around Melody calmed her. Sitting at the Starduck's counter during a slow period, she just chatted with the leopard. And Melody just chatted back, petting Screech and swapping dumb little childhood stories.

It was nice. Calming. Until a news report came on the television propped on the wall behind the counter.

Hello, I'm Rebecca Robinson, reporting for Burning Hot News.

"Ugh, that snoop." Melody muttered. It was the first time Goz had seen her look even mildly angry. "Wonder whose name she's dragging through the mud this time?"

Once again, Infernos Projection has attacked our fair city, putting the 'fire' in 'Firebird'.

Goz looked up, watching video of last night's attack. It was impossible to tell that the explosions weren't perfectly timed on the screen.

Though there were no casualties, dozens of poor civilians were trapped under rubble as they tried to escape, but one was saved by a mysterious newcomer.

Video played of Go- Quiverhood, pulling that blasted runt out of a place he almost-certainly wasn't actually stuck in. She still had scratches on her back from lifting that stone.

Some are calling them a hero, but is this a savior or another mutant menace here to destroy the foundations of our society?

"Pfff, the dame don' know wha' she's squawkin' about!" An old dog barked. "He' ain't no mutant, I know a hero when I sees one."

"And why can't *she* be both?" Melody growled, to Goz's surprise, both because of the tone and the words.

"Pro-mutant trash." The man muttered, walking out rather than causing a fight. No one caused a fight in Melody's Starduck's.

"How you know they're a she?" Goz asked, for lack of something better to say, as Rebecca Robinson friend in the background.

"Those hips, that face -- it's obvious." Melody smirked. "I hope she really is a hero, Firebird could use one."

"You don't mind that she's a mutant?" Goz sipped her coffee, watching as the report played on.

"Of course not." Melody replied, perhaps a bit too quickly. Her voice was weary when she asked "Do you?"

"No." Goz shrugged. Further conversation was halted by a loud gasp from the TV.

This just in, *breaking news!* Another *Infernos* attack at the Firebird Museum Of Really-Dangerous-Why-Was-This-Even-Made-The-Creator-Was-Definitely-Evil Technologies and Biscuit Theater!

"Two *Infernos* attacks in as many days, that's a new-" Melody turned, but Goz and Screech were gone, money for the coffee left on the counter. "Record..."

Quiverhood watched *Infernos* rob the museum, sneaking out bags of loot under the distraction of the 'fire giant'. She watched civilians flee in panic, helped them escape. But she didn't stop him, didn't even try, just kept herself hidden.

When she was a kid, she'd rush in to danger without a second thought, dragging her best friend behind her. Then it would get too big for her, she'd have to wait for Dad and Launchpad to save the day, save her. She could do *nothing*.

Now she was an adult, waiting for someone else to come save her family. There was nothing she could do to speed it up, all she had was a stupid box of photos and a hunk of heart-shaped metal.

But this? This she could do. This she could change. This she could make better. But only if she was careful, patient. Only if she gave a thought to her actions, for once in her life, and didn't drag anyone else into it.

"Mreow." Screech sniffed the air, slowly following the Golem. Quiverhood slunk quietly behind him.

Infernos Projection's lair was an old abandoned mine, just outside town. He stood there in a makeshift lab, cackling over his horde. He had goggles, welders gloves, boots, a red jacket and pants to protect him from the heat as he worked on some spiky bomb-like machine.

"Infernos happy?" Golem asked, sorting the ill-gotten gains into neat little piles.

"Infernos very happy, Golem." The duck smiled, stopping in his work to pat his creation's head affectionately. "Ya did good, my Golem. Da pah'fect accompaniment ta my genius!"

"Some genius." Quiverhood casually stepped out from where she was hiding, grabbing Infernos and hooking a pair of cuffs on him before he even had time to react. "Heya, Wesley. Tell your pet to come quietly, or I'll let you get a closer look at those poison pellets you were so interested in."

"He's naht a pet!" Infernos protested, to Quiverhood's surprise. Then he grumbled. "Golem, do as da liddle hee-ro says."

"Of course." Golem nodded, turning to Quiverhood and allowing himself to be cuffed. "Golem is happy to meet you again, hero. Has hero had a nice day?"

"Not really, but it's gotten better." Quiverhood chuckled, marching out of the lair while carrying Infernos, Golem following. "And the name's Quiverhood."

"Golem is glad Quiverhood's day is getting better." Golem made a happy sound, then noticed his Creator's sour expression. "Infernos not happy?"

"No, Golem, Infernos is naht happy." Infernos snapped. "We jus' gaht caught."

"Golem did poorly?" The -- robot? -- asked, his single eye twisting sadly.

"No, Golem did well." Infernos reassured quickly. He turned to Quiverhood. "Seems I didn' take propah accoun' of ya, Quivahhood. I won' make dat mistake twice."

"Sure you won't, Wes." Quiverhood grinned. It wasn't her cousin, but she did catch a bad guy. She actually *did* something. And if she could do this?

Maybe she could do what really needed to be done.

Chapter 5: Act Three

Goz and Honker finally meet the Coven.

If you don't like gay people, stop reading now, because Lesbians Ahead. (Just to be clear: no smut.)

Any advice on writing accents would be really appreciated.

Saturday was Tank's day off, so they spent it out and about with him. Goz would've protested, but it honestly took her mind off meeting the Coven that night.

Besides, Tank was showing them all the best places! They went to a pizzeria, movie theater, roller rink, and Monster Truck Arena. Who knew Firebird even had a monster truck arena?

"I still don't see the appeal." Honker muttered, eating his vanilla icecream after the show. "It's just a bunch of mindless destruction."

"Yeah, but it's cool mindless destruction!" Goz explained, waving her strawberry cone around.

"And did ya see that one car go shwoom!?" Tank threw his hands in the air, making exploding noises. "But I wouldn't expect a wimp like ya to get it, Honkface. Maybe if they had more nerd stuff, like maths equa-whatevers drawn on the sides..."

"You know the word equations, pronounce it properly." Honker scowled.

"Watcha gonna do about it?" Tank challenged.

"Okay, you boys have fun, I'm gonna go have some girl talk." Goz rolled her eyes as the brothers started shouting in the middle of the street, uncaring about (reveling in) the stares of passerby. She ducked into a side street, climbing up the side of a building.

"Mreow?" Screech asked, tilting his head, as Goz expertly moved from roof to roof.

"It's almost time for the afternoon news." Goz explained. "The arrest should be public knowledge by now, and I want to see Mel- people's reaction."

"Coffee in the afternoon?" Melody tsked playfully, wagging a finger, as Goz came in to Starduck's. "Don't you know that's bad for you?"

"You aren't the best salesperson, are you?" Goz asked, equally playfully. Her eyes flicked to the television behind Melody. "What time does the news come on?"

"Around 17:30, so it should only be a minute or two." Melody responded, looking at a wall clock. "Why?"

"I want to stay well-informed about my new hometown." Goz replied, smiling. They both knew it was a lie, though she didn't know how she knew that, but neither pointed it out. "Can I get a mocha, please? And a water."

"You sure drink a lot of water." Melody smirked, making the coffee. The TV's background noise sharpened as the news started.

Hello, I'm Rebecca Robinson, reporting for Burning Hot News. Today's story is once again about that criminal that puts the flames in our dear Firebird, Infernos Projection. But there's a plot twist -- Infernos is a **little** fire bird himself!

A video turned on, showing Wesley being lead into a police van, Golem right behind him. Wesley was putting up a minor struggle, and Golem was humming.

Wesley Ashfeathers was fired from his prominent tech job years ago for unethical experiments and illegal projects. With well-timed explosives, holograms, and his robotic minion, Ashfeathers has been faking the fire giant we've all come to fear.

"No way!" Melody stared at the screen. "I can't believe they finally caught him. Or that he's not some demon-thing. Just a guy with some tech -- impressive. Terrible, but impressive."

And how was this criminal caught, you may ask? Was it by our dear police department? No, they have once again failed us all. It was the same so-called 'hero' that faced him last time. But is this savior really so? We now bring you video footage just after the arrest.

And there was Quiverhood, standing in front of a camera. A reporter was asking her who she was, what kind of hero she planned to be.

I'm not really a hero. Just a mutant trying to make the world a little better.

Goz grinned as the attention of everyone in Starduck's turned to the screen. Just as she planned with that little line.

You heard it here first, folks. We'll let you decide for yourselves whether this newcomer is the hero they claim to be, or just another costumed mutant menace. I for one believe the latter, for it the unfortunate world we live in today-

"She actually admitted it." Melody whistled, turning to Goz. "That takes guts. Good for her. Firebird needed a hero."

"Yeah, and it got that thing instead." A llama woman grumbled, her friends muttered in agreement, nodding their heads bitterly.

"Hey, they stopped Infernos." A man spoke up. "If that's not hero-work, I'm not covered in feathers."

An argument broke out, though no punches were thrown. It was common knowledge that any violence in that particular Starduck's would earn Melody's wrath, which was apparently enough to keep everyone on line.

Goz's phone dinged with a text.

[Honkman]: Where are you?

[No1Fan]: Starduck's. Why?

[Honkman]: It's almost time to meet the Coven. My brother just turned in for the night.

[No1Fan]: Who'd've thought Tank Muddlefoot would ever be an early rest? On my way, see you soon.

Maybe Goz should've felt guilty, as she slipped her phone in her pocket and moved through the arguing crowds to leave. But she wasn't. Because she was a mutant. She was tall. She was a goose. These were just what she was, and she wasn't going to hide it for a second. Not more than she had to to stay safe, anyways.

"No Normals." The wereduck at the building entrance put a paw in front of Honker, startling the rooster.

"He's with me." Goz informed him, magic crackling lightly around her, eyes solid green. "He has a Visitor's Pass."

"Alright, but just know we hunt down people who have problems keeping their mouths shut." The wereduck glared at Honker, though he avoided eye contact with Goz. "Clear?"

"Oh puh-leeze." Goz scoffed before Honker could say a word, pushing past the wereduck easily. "As if your entire hunting team couldn't be distracted by a *chew toy*."

"That wasn't very nice." Honker whispered after they were inside.

"I can't afford to be nice here, Honk." Goz shook her head. "There are too many Monsters around. I have to play by their standards if we want help. Witches outrank wereducks, I couldn't just let him try to intimidate one of my friends or I'd lose face."

"I'll trust you on this, Q." Honker stayed close to her as they moved through the building, trying and failing to not stare at all the Monsters. The floor plan was a little like a convention center, lots of open spaces and wide hallways.

All around them, Monsters were showing off their latest achievements. A seance was going on in a corner, but it kept getting interrupted by a Summoning Circle that had been drawn a little too close.

"Sssoar above the crowd with our Zephyrboom Carpets!" A vampire yelled out from a stand, eyes spinning slowly. Honker stopped to watch. "Forgeet the earthly traffic of the modern daay and take to the skiesss, traveling in unpaaaralleled ssstyle. Our carpets are voven from rrrrare, maagic-dusted threads, ensssureing the smoothest rrrrides you c'n imagine. Vhy bother vith difficult levitation ssspells or unhealthy elixirsss, when you c'n glide through the skiesss on a carpet of dreeeams? Only three jex!"

"Three jex?!" Goz scowled, pulling Honker away from the salesman. "For a subpar enchantment like *that*?! As if."

"What's a jek?" Honker asked, blinking his eyes quickly as if he'd just woken up.

"Monster money." Goz told him, scanning the crowd for something. "It goes mallers, hallers, crinklz, wix, jex, wali, ojix, kols, then furdis. An old rug like the ones that vamp was peddling are only worth five crinklz, max."

"If you say so." Honker shrugged, following Goz through the crowd. "Um, Q? What are we looking for?"

"A witch or warlock with three or more familiars." Goz told him. "You get the ability to bond to more familiars as you get older. The older you are the more respected you

are. If we want to speak the leader, we've got to talk to the higher-ranked spellcasters first. Preferably witches."

"Why preferably witches?" Honker asked, narrowly avoiding the grasping claw of some creature he'd be having nightmares of for the next few years.

"Witches are more powerful." Goz thought for a moment, figuring out how to explain it. "Basically, witches are in charge of the cultural and magical stuff, and they can kinda do what they want so long as it doesn't break too many Monster laws, because they have more access to and control over their magical abilities. Warlocks lead families and towns, witches lead the people and covens."

"I guess that makes sense?" Honker shrugged, not really understanding anything about Monster Politics. He'd never really been a big part of this side of Goz's life.

"What a looovely mortaaaal you have there." A Spirit grinned, beak filled with sharp teeth. "Hooooow much?"

"I'm afraid he's not for sale." Goz scowled, getting in the Spirit's personal space, magic sparking between them. Screech emitted a low growl. "And if you interrupt my conversation again, I'll seal you in a clock and hang it on my wall. Got it?"

"Uh, y-yesss." The Spirit nodded quickly, teleporting away.

"Did he just try to buy me?" Honker asked. "Is- is that common?"

"The buying and selling of Normals isn't exactly *encouraged*, per se." Goz told him, shrugging. "It's not illegal, though. Stay close to me, you'll be fi-

A wall crashed to the ground, rubble thrown clear across the room along with bolts of energy from the ripped-up protection spells that should've stopped such a thing from happening.

Floating in the middle of the gaping hole left behind was a Monster girl, with glowing red eyes and a beak filled with dripping fangs. She wore a mismatched but regal outfit, offset by hints of a jester aesthetic. Dark brown hair cascaded down her back, two salmon stripes somehow mismatching each other. Her ripped gold skirt featured a half-circled connected by lines to smaller circles, each branching off with two lines of their own. She was the kind of thin you only saw in magazines, with limbs much too long. On her shoulder sat a chameleon, a familiar.

She smirked, then laughed. It was dainty, like bells, but when she talked her voice was deep. Raspy. Echoing. "Heeeelloooo, everyoooooone! Grrrrrreeeeetings from the great Lady Blaaaackheart! I am Marionette MacCaaaaawber. Yes, of THE MacCaaaaawbers. But you can call me Mistressssss Puuuuppetta!" She spread her arms like a showman with a giggle, and two dozen floating marionettes zoomed through the crowd.

"Honker, go get changed." Goz hissed quietly, leaving no room for questions. "Now."

Honker ran off, and Goz dropped the illusion she'd been wearing, revealing Quiverhood underneath; she'd been worried about an attack from the Coven, not on it, but whatever.

"I haaaave just one question." Mistress Puppetta spotted Quiverhood, and her eyes lit up. She giggled again, clapping her hands. "Oh! I wasss gonna ask where you were hiiiiiiding! Now I have a different question. Rrrready to plaaaaay with meeee, Little Girl Bluuuuue?"

That voice. Quiverhood knew she'd recognized it. Icy fear briefly filled her, but it was consumed by burning fury.

"Let's dance." Quiverhood snapped her bow open, firing spelled arrows at her opponent faster than should have been strictly possible.

"Ooooh! You're fuuuuun!" Puppetta laughed, dodging easily. A snap of her claws and every marionette was suddenly divebombing Quiverhood, little spears tied to their arms striking at her. "Toooo bad Mumsy and The Lady are booooth sssso fond of you. We could have soooo much fuuuuun in my rrrrrrealm."

"Flirtin' behind my back, toots?" A newcomer asked. Quiverhood had been too busy with the puppets to notice, but now the voice had distracted her enough for them to grab her and lift her into the air.

On the plus side, this gave her a good view of the voice's owner. She was either a turkey or a chicken, Quiverhood couldn't really tell, with fluffy headfeathers and crystal blue eyes. She wore a shimmering black dress with long gloves and a matching purse. She was gorgeous, except for the sharp robotic talons and the sleek high-tech gun.

"Neeeever, Chicky!" Puppetta protested, floating down to nuzzle her beak across the other's cheek feathers.

"I believe ya, sweetcheeks." The gun wielding lady grinned. She looked at Quiverhood, her expression going crueler. "And now dat we gotcha, we can get to robbin' dis place. Da Lady wants ya to watch, and I don't question da Lady."

"A Normie thinks it can rob us?" A warlock questioned, fingers crackling with power, aiming for the turkey. "I think no-"

He was silenced by a disembodied clawed hand lifting him into the air. Puppetta had red magic swirling around her, eyes solid and glowing. She seemed to grow in size without really doing so, becoming more monstrous without changing. She hissed. "Don't. Touch. My. Thingssssss."

The warlock nodded vigorously, terrified more of the magic streaking off of her than her claws, and she threw him roughly to the ground. Marionettes came out of every nook and cranny, taking valuables of all sorts. Some of the Monsters tried to fight, but the marionettes were apparently both magic resistant and magic-harming. A few tried to attack the duo directly, but silver and iron bullets drove them back.

Quiverhood struggled to free herself, but she couldn't get loose of the wooden arms gripping her.

"Don't botha, Quivah babe. No one can get outta my goirl's grasp - I shoid know." The gun lady winked, fondly watching Mistress Puppetta fly around scaring people with creepy high-pitched giggling.

"Who even are you?" Quiverhood growled, trying to distract her opponent.

"Name's Martini Steele, though Da Lady calls me Trickshot, so I guess ya shoid too." The turkey shrugged. "And we happen to be membahs of da Black Court."

Quiverhood was going to question what the Black Court was, if only to buy time, when a powerful magical field enveloped them.

"Yaaaagh!" Puppetta screamed, writhing in midair. A spectral banishment charm by the feel of it, though she was apparently much too powerful to actually be forced away.

"Mary? Wot's da matta?" Trickshot ran over to her. "Wot's happenin'?"

"Elderrrr Witch." Puppetta hissed, In obvious pain. "Gotta goooo, Chicky. Pleeeaaasse."

"We're goin'." Trickshot growled at the parakeet that had walked up, the Elder Witch who was doing the spells. "I said we're runnin', so drop it already, will ya!?"

The field dissipated. The Black Court members disappeared in a red flash, but not before one last echo could be heard. "We'll plaaaaay again ssssoon, Little Girl Bluuuuue."

Quiverhood looked up to see Arrowhead standing right behind the Elder Witch.

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"...and that's everything that's happened." Goz sighed. She was sitting in a private office, in front of a large wooden desk. Honker was next to her.

It was a nice office, green carpet and old but sturdy furniture. A wardrobe with ancient runes scratched into it, oil paintings conversing quietly with each other, sunlight streaming from bottles along the walls, bookshelves filled with both tomes and jars of this or that magical ingredient. Pet beds were strewn here and there.

"You've been on quite the adventure, my dear." The Parakeet -- Madam Lafam -- nodded from behind the desk, petting one of her rats. "And after that display, I'm quite in agreement about a rogue witch or two being involved. An attack on a Coven Gathering must not go unpunished."

"So you'll help us?" Goz asked, hopefully. "You'll help us find everyone?"

"Of course!" Madam Lafam sighed. "But know, dear, that it won't be easy. Your family aren't the only ones missing, all of SHUSH has disappeared. We have been casting scrying spells, but something is blocking us. They may have been taken outside this realm."

"With Negaduck, that's definitely a possibility." Honker agreed.

"Not to mention Paddywhack." Goz added, thinking back to Marionette MacCawber. "I can't believe that the rumor about Morgana's husband is true."

"But if Marionette really is Morgana and Paddywhack's daughter, how is she older than you?" Honker asked, but just received a shrug in return.

"Many things are possible when magic is concerned." Madam Lafam told him. "My dear, may I see the metal heart you found? I may be able to use it to craft a scrying spell powerful enough to find its owner across dimensions, if a little theory proves true."

Goz reluctantly handed the heart over, feeling irrationally as if her one lead was slipping through her fingers. "Ma'am? Do you think that the missing people are still...?"

"Whether their souls and bodies are still entwined is anyone's guess." Madam Lafam said, not unsympathetically. "For now, we can only hope."

"Lynn's dangerous." Goz said, quietly. "She's dangerous by herself, she's dangerous with a partner, but now she has a *team*. And she's playing games. I don't have even the beginning of an idea of what she wants out of all this. Why not capture us too?"

"I don't know, dear." Madam Lafam shrugged. "Perhaps it is really just a game, or maybe it's a greater plot. A ritual, or a necessity."

No more could be said, as the wardrobe started shaking, white light streaming from within it.

Madam Lafam was up in an instant, standing in between them and the wardrobe. "Stat back, children. That is a Traveler's Wardrobe -- a portal to anywhere, everywhere, and nowhere. There's no telling what could come out of it."

The wardrobe shook and lurched, nearly falling, rattling loudly as the light got brighter and brighter. Goz readied an arrow, Madam Lafam had a spell on her fingertips, Honker grabbed a desk lamp, and all familiars present readied their claws.

"You don't think it's another attack, do you ma'am?" Goz asked, shouting to be heard over the rumbling of the growing portal.

"Until the protection spells are back up, there's no way to know for sure, dear." Madam Lafam shouted back.

The wooden doors flew open. Blue, green, yellow, black, and white light all swirled together, slightly pushing everything away from it. One last scream of energy, and a large bundle was shot out.

The wardrobe shut itself with a click, then went silent. In front of it was a muddy creature with at least twelve limbs and three heads, leaves and twigs stuck all over its body. it open one of its mouths wide, showing sharp teeth, and screeched.

A lot things happened in quick succession. First, Goz noticed two pairs of mismatched blue-green eyes, and one pair of orange eyes.

Second, Screech jumped from her shoulder and ran to mud monster, meowing happily.

Third, Honker dropped the lamp, a gasp of recognition escaping his beak, letting it shatter across the ground.

Fourth, Madam Lafam shouted "Back, demon!" and threw her spell.

Fifth, Goz and Honker both screamed and threw themselves in front of the spell, with Goz barely throwing up a weak-but-good-enough shield spell up in time. "No, wait! Don't."

"What-?" Madam Lafam tried asking, but Goz wasn't paying attention.

Goz kneeled on the ground, looking closely at the 'mud creature'. It had clumps of orange, grey, and purple fuzz. There was green on one part, and another was sparking. Two long tails waved in the air, while a pool of water collected around just one half of it.

"Guys, please tell me that's you?" Goz said, trying very hard not to cry. It couldn't be...

"Hiya goosey!" The middle head grinned. "Didja miss us?"

Goz felt the tears streaking down her cheek feathers as she gathered the two teens and little girl into a hug, uncaring of the mud and grime getting on her.

Chapter 6: Credits

Just the credits

— end of "S1: E2: Pilot Part Two (Back In The Hood)" —