

BUG DEALERS EPISODE 103

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EXT. PARK - DAY

A small brown beetle walks care-free on a tree branch. Rising into view behind him are the eyes of STU. The bug freezes as Stu picks it up, examining it close to his face.

STU

Oh yes. You will do nicely. I'm going to make you into the sexiest Charidotella sexpunctata anyone has ever seen.

FARYN (O.S.)

Do you always talk to the bugs like that?

Faryn peers over Stu's shoulder at the bug, holding containers crawling with bugs of different sizes and genus.

STU

I like them to know how beautiful I'm going to make them. It helps them feel at ease.

FARYN

Yeah...I don't think they speak english...

Stu puts the beetle into one of the containers.

FARYN

How many more do you think you'll need?

STU

Mmmm, just a few more.

Gene runs up to them in a hoodie zipped to the top, a baseball cap, and sunglasses. He's sweating profusely and panting.

GENE

Hey....guys.

FARYN

What's with the hoodie? It's like 80 degrees out here.

GENE

Espionage 101 wear a disguise when doing shady activities, uh duh. Plus, it gives me space to put all the bugs I found.

Gene shoves his hands in the hoodie pockets and pulls out handfuls of bugs.

GENE

You think you can use any of these
Stu?

Stu looks over the bugs crawling around Gene's hands.

STU

Not just use, some of these babies
are going to be the stars of the
show!

INT. STU'S TRAILER - MONTAGE

-Stu takes the containers of bugs and puts them in his freezer.

-Stu sits at his work bench with neatly organized bug pieces in small compartments, he starts placing together pieces to make a whole bug.

-Stu, wearing thick magnifying glasses, pulls up a needle close to his face and threads it. He starts sewing a leg to a body.

-Stu takes the bugs out of the freezer, they are all dead, and lays them on a tray.

-Stu grabs one of the bugs and pulls off it's antennae, putting it on the franken-bug he's working on.

-Stu uses one of the bugs from the stolen collection for reference as he paints the franken-bug. Gene watches over his shoulder, eating from a box of Cap n' Crunch.

INT. STU'S TRAILER - DAY

Stu is finished with his forgery, it looks completely identical to the original. Gene and Faryn look down at the two bugs.

GENE

Stu, you are an artist. A true
artist, man.

FARYN

I can't even tell them apart. You
know which is the real one and
which is the fake right?

Stu nods his head with confidence, smiling at his work.

STU

I always put the fakes on the right side. Aren't they just marvelous?

FARYN

They truly are. So how long do you think you'll need to make fakes of all the bugs?

STU

3 days 7 hours and 42 minutes. Give or take a few minutes.

FARYN

That Private Investigator lady-

GENE

Heidi Haws.

FARYN

Right, Ms. Haws, seems pretty on top of things...we'll have to be extra careful on how we get into the building and replace them this time.

GENE

Yeah, you guys weren't very good the first time. But you've got me now. So let ol' Gene plan out how we do this whole heist and we'll pull it off easy peasy lemon squeezzy.

FARYN

I used to work there too...I could help with the planning...

GENE

As long as I'm the Danny Ocean of the group. Hmm....Gene's Three...not bad, but it could use a little work.

INT. SACRAMENTO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, ARCHIVES - DAY

Gene examines the entryway door, it has an electric padlock that logs the keycards that open it. He unlocks it and crouches down, looking closely at the junction in the wall and the teeth on the door that slide into its place.

He opens the door all the way to reveal HEIDI HAWS standing there, watching him. He jumps back with a scream, slamming the door on her face by reflex.

He gains his composure and opens the door again.

GENE

(clearing throat)

Why Ms. Heidi Haws. PI. I did not expect to find you down here.

HEIDI

I could say the same for you. Don't you have a hole museum to be looking after?

GENE

Yes, well I was thinking my skills would be better put to use in investigating some more into how the burglars got in. Bonus, I can watch over the collections down here at the same time.

Heidi mulls this over.

HEIDI

That's good thinking, for a security guard. We should have someone here on duty every hour through the night to deter those criminals from wanting to try it again.

Gene's face falls.

GENE

Yeah. Oh yeah, yeah my thoughts exactly.

Heidi goes to leave, but remembering something, turns back around and steps uncomfortably close to Gene.

HEIDI

Oh, I've been meaning to ask you something...

Heidi places a light hand on Gene's shoulder. His whole body tenses at her touch.

HEIDI

Your friend mentioned you guys met at a book club and I've been wanting to find a good one to join for a while. Any chance you guys have an extra spot open for me?

She cocks her head with a playful smile. Gene is entranced in her eyes and can't look away from the Medusa.

GENE

Uh...yeah. Sure. We're always looking for more members.

HEIDI

Now, is it Wednesday nights that you guys always meet?

GENE

...yeesss. 8pm sharp, my place.

HEIDI

Great, I'll see you this Wednesday then.

Heidi's softness leaves as she slaps Gene on the shoulder with a force that nearly knocks him over. He stares after her, not knowing how to process what just happened.

INT. STU'S TRAILER - DAY

Stu is diligently at work creating bugs while Faryn peers over a crude hand-drawn schematic of the museum.

Gene comes in through the door, grief stricken.

FARYN

Hey, how did things go today?

GENE

Well...I think I figured out how we can get past the doors.

FARYN

Oh good. If it works, everything else doesn't seem to difficult to deal with.

GENE

Well...we might have a slight problem now.

Stu and Faryn raise their heads in sync to Gene.

GENE

I may have, accidentally, without any intentions, completely and purely by happen chance, not really a choice of mine that I made to do this-

FARYN

Gene will you just tell us?

Gene braces himself.

GENE

I invited Heidi to join our book club.

Faryn and Stu are shocked.

STU

I didn't know we were starting a book club! I've always wanted to be a part of a book club-

FARYN

We don't have a book club Stu. I told Heidi that's where we met each other, but that's not true now is it?

GENE

It gets worse...I told her we meet Wednesday nights at 8, so she's planning on coming to this week's meeting...

Faryn and Stu can't believe what they are hearing.

STU

I don't think I can finish these bugs and read the book by then-

FARYN

That's the night we were planning on replacing the bugs. Gene, what were you thinking?!

GENE

I don't know! I wasn't thinking! She's got like voodoo jedi mind powers. She caught me off guard and I wasn't prepared for her to whip that out of her arsenal!

Faryn tries to rub the frustration out of her eyes as Stu continues sewing some of the bugs together, occasionally looking up to them. Gene picks at a string on his shirt.

GENE

...She also wants to keep a guard
in the archives on 24 hour
surveillance watch...

Faryn puts her hand down and rests her weight on it.

FARYN

Well. We're going to have to figure
something out in the next two days.
I don't think we should wait any
longer to replace the bugs,
especially with Heidi getting so
close to us lately.

They all think in silence for a moment.

GENE

What if...we drugged her like they
did in *Mission Impossible*?

FARYN

I haven't seen that...but drugging
her doesn't sound like the best
idea, she'd know we did it and then
we're busted.

GENE

Just hear me out for a second, I've
got a thought that's really cooking
right now. We assign the most
boring book to read for the book
club, insist that Stu reads some of
the chapters, have refreshments
laced with sleeping pills, she eats
them and falls asleep, we go
replace the bugs, come back and
wake her up from "falling asleep to
the book reading", send her home
and bada-bing bada-boom, she
doesn't realize we even left.

Faryn thinks this over.

STU

Could we have muffins for the
refreshments? I've been craving
some double chocolate chip.

Gene points at Stu's comment, staring at Faryn.

GENE

Muffins. Muffins would be the perfect drug vehicle.

FARYN

Okay, let's say this works. What do we do with the new archive guard?

GENE

I could leave the night bois some muffins, but we put laxatives in instead.

FARYN

That's crazy.

Gene lifts his eyebrows at her.

GENE

So crazy...

STU

It just might work!

MONTAGE:

- Faryn makes two batches of double chocolate chip muffins, putting laxatives in one and grounded up sleeping pills in the other. Stu tries to dip his finger in the batter for a taste, but Faryn smacks his hand away.
- Gene at work, goes through some of the doorways and lays a magnetic strip over the hole the door latches into.
- Gene puts a plate of chocolate muffins in the break room with a note that reads "For the night guards. Love, Deborah".
- Stu finishes the last of the bugs and looks around at all the beauties he has made, pride welling up in his eyes.

INT. GENE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A KNOCK comes from the front door. Gene opens it to Heidi.

GENE

Come on in! Make yourself at home.

Stu and Faryn are seated around the coffee table where the plate of muffins rest. Heidi walks in, checking the place out and sits on the couch across from both of them.

GENE

I'll get us some drinks.

Gene leaves for the kitchen.

FARYN

Glad to have you join our book club
Ms. Haws.

HEIDI

Heidi.

FARYN

Would you like a muffin Heidi?

HEIDI

Oh no, I'm fine. Trying to cut back
on the carbs.

Faryn's eyes widen with panic.

GENE (O.S.)

Oh come on Heidi! You know what
Weird Al always says, "Just eat it!
Eat it! Just eat it!"

A twitch of a smile nearly breaks across Heidi's normally
stony face.

HEIDI

I suppose one muffin would be fine,
wouldn't want to ignore Weird Al's
advice.

She grabs one and takes a bite. Gene comes back in with
drinks for everyone and sits down.

GENE

Alright, let's get started. Faryn?

FARYN

So this week we've chosen *War and
Peace* for our book title and we
thought we'd have Stu read us the
first few chapters of it.

Stu sits cross legged in his chair and pulls out the thick
book of *War and Peace*.

STU

(clears throat)

War and Peace. By Leo Tolstoy. Part
the First. Thus spoke, in July,
1805, the well-known Anna-

Heidi suddenly slumps head first into the rest of the muffins on the coffee table.

GENE

Oh shit!

Gene jumps up and pulls her limp body back to rest on the couch.

GENE

How many sleeping pills did you put in there?

Faryn shrugs.

FARYN

I don't know...a lot. I'm a museum curator, not a chemist.

GENE

Well, she's definitely out. Time to get to work.

Gene and Faryn start gathering their things. Stu puts the book down. Tempted by the muffins, he reaches for one, but Faryn slaps his hand away and gestures for him to come along.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, SECURITY OFFICE - LATER

The desk is empty except for a half-eaten chocolate muffin.

On the security monitors we see glimpses of Gene, Faryn, and Stu in all black working their way through the museum by blending in with the exhibits and waiting until the cameras turn away. Acting like the Greek statues, hiding behind the large dinosaur bones, posing as neanderthals.

They make it to the securely locked door of the archives.

CUT TO:

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, ARCHIVES - CONTINUOUS

Gene opens the door with ease. He looks back at Faryn and Stu and flips the magnetic strip, looking impressed with himself.

He scans the room before entering. They tiptoe through the aisles.

FOOTSTEPS.

They freeze in their tracks and duck low on the shelves of items.

A SECURITY GUARD shuffles in from the opposite end, rubbing his stomach, looking pale.

The three share concerned looks with one another.

The Security Guard halts. He seems to be looking right at them through all the shelves.

None of them move for a few moments. A loud GRUMBLE comes from the Security Guard's stomach.

SECURITY GUARD

No. No no no no no no-

He spins around and runs with an awkward gait back from where he came from.

They let out their held breaths and keep moving to the bug collections.

The stop by the shelves they took the bugs from and open each empty drawer and start placing the bugs in their correlating spots as Stu directs them.

They fill up each drawer, but there are some bugs left over.

GENE

Wait, a sec, we have some more.

STU

I made a few extra in case some of them got damaged during transport.

A DOOR OPENS close by. They quickly close the drawers and hide behind a nearby shelf to see who came in. High Heels CLACK on the concrete floor, getting closer to where they are hiding.

They finally see that it's DEBORAH, mumbling to herself and eating one of the chocolate muffins.

DEBORAH

..."this'll cost you your retirement at least!" Well Mark, you can just...shut up!

She takes a large bite out of the muffin and stands in front of the bug collection.

DEBORAH

Because of these ugly buggers, I'm not going to need that retirement anyway. Let's see, which drawer, which drawer...

Deborah picks one randomly and opens it up to different butterflies.

DEBORAH

Oh, yes. These should do nicely.

Stu's fist clench, turning his knuckles white. He looks at the other two to see if they should act. They both shake their heads.

Deborah goes to pick one of the butterflies when a loud GRUMBLE and GURGGLING sound comes from her stomach. Panic fills her face. She starts running as fast as she can in her heels to where the Security Guard left.

FARYN

We should get out of here before someone else comes.

As they leave through the door, Gene grabs the magnetic strip with them and the door locks behind them.

INT. GENE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Heidi is sprawled on the couch, mouth open, a significant pool of drool next to her face.

Gene, Stu, and Faryn have changed back into the clothes they were wearing before and are in their original places.

Gene gently tries to shake Heidi awake, she doesn't budge. He shakes her harder until he's nearly jumping on her before her eyes open.

HEIDI

Huh? What happened?

Groggy, she sits up, wiping the dried drool from her face.

GENE

You fell asleep while Stu was reading.

STU

I guess Tolstoy isn't your cup of tea.

GENE

Anyway, meetings over. Got to get to bed so I can wake up early for work tomorrow.

Gene lifts Heidi who can barely stand and drags her to the front door showing her out.

GENE

See you later!

He gives her a small nudge out the door, she stumbles down the stairs towards her car. He shuts the door behind her.

GENE

You guys want pizza? I'm starving.

Gene goes to order a pizza. Faryn, in thought turns to Stu.

FARYN

How many of your fake bugs did we have leftover?

STU

About 15, why?

FARYN

If Deborah can make enough on selling bugs to not worry about retirement, then couldn't we do the same, but with the bugs you make?

FADE TO BLACK.