

PETER AND LISA: PART 13A
DARYL AND JANE: PART 1
THE MASCOT MOTH INTERVENTION
by pwatson1974 and Ms Tiger to You

Note: Last time we saw Daryl and Jane was in Peter and Lisa: Part 13. The Mascot Moth and its occupants are the stars of Ms Tiger to You's Mascot Moth series.

"Are you sure this is it?"

"According to what my dad said, this is it: The Mascot Moth."

"Who thought that name was a good idea?"

"Does it matter?"

"Guess not." Kitty pulls on the gear stick, grinding down as she turns into the lot. She ignores the stray locks of dark brown hair falling over her face, absently puffing them back from her eyes, a silver cat's head pendant bouncing around her neck. "And I can't believe we have to drive a manual!"

"I can't believe Jane's Dad thought sending us to Sin City was a good reward for passing our finals this year. It's not like we can properly enjoy it."

Kitty smiles, "Janey, could you pull that surprise package out of my purse, please? I'm a bit busy here."

Jane reaches in, pulling out a small envelope and dropping out three laminated cards. She looks down at them, seeing her face staring back from its halo of bright blonde hair, "Colorado driving license? But these say you're 23?"

Kitty keeps grinning as the rental lurches to a stop.

"You got fake IDs?" Daryl blurts out. He reaches back to brush his sandy brown hair back from his bronzed, and now crinkled, forehead.

"Well, someone had to. I didn't see either of you making an effort."

"And you really think these'll fool anyone?"

She shrugs. "Won't know till we try." she looks around, "And did your Dad really mean for us to come to such a low-rent dump with such an ugly, ugly sign out front?"

"Apparently."

Val looked up from the ledgers as the tired bell on the door rang, her short blonde hair fading into her pale skin to add to her Nordic look. She smiled her receptionist smile, "Welcome to the Mascot Moth Motel. Do you have a reservation?"

"No, but my dad said we should stay here."

"And you did have the vacancy sign out."

"Sure." *So, at least some magic among them, or the motel wouldn't have let them in. Wonder which one has it?* "How many rooms will you be needing?"

The three share a look, "Just one."

"Just one. Ok. Can I see your ID, please?"

"Oh, sure, sure." Kitty digs into her pocket, passing the fake driver's license over.

Val glances at it and starts typing the details in. Kitty gives a slightly smug smirk at the others.

"Now, if I could just have you all sign in?" she reaches under the desk, pulling back the thick ledger.

"But you've got our details, don't you?"

"Well, sure, but this is sort of a tradition from before we had computers. Everyone who stays here signs in. It adds more flavour than just printing it all out."

"Oh, ok." Kitty picks up the pen, scrawling Kitty Pride in the next blank space. She hands the pen back to Daryl.

He signs in Daryl Peters, the letters all scrunched up together, before handing the pen over to Jane. Jane writes Jane M Thompson.

Val spins the book around. "Thank you." she looks down, raising an eyebrow, "You wouldn't be Tom Soni's daughter, would you?"

"How did you know that??" Daryl asks, "He called ahead, didn't he?"

"I just recognised the name. He's stayed here a number of times, and her signature is similar." she flips through the pages of the ledger, and points to the Arthur H Thompson signature, "See?"

Jane looks over the entry, "Oh, that's the time Dad almost missed my 8th birthday! He was here!"

And that answers both my questions. What a time for Bill to be on the bank run. "Here are your keys. You're in number 7."

A short while later, after assorted bags have been carried from the car to room 7, "Ok. Now what?"

"Well, I thought I saw a bar over there. We could try there."

"Except we're not old enough."

Kitty pulls out the IDs. "These say different."

"Just because they worked on the blonde behind the desk doesn't mean they'll work on the bartender."

"Oh, ye of little faith."

"Try none." he mutters as they head across the parking lot.

"No. The bar is closed. For you, it will be open in two years. Come back then." The scrawny Middle Eastern bartender, thick bandages wrapped into a turban around his head, closes the door firmly in their faces. Through the door, they hear the sound of a stone sliding along the edge of a metal blade. Ssssspp, ssssspp, ssssspp.

"Hey! You didn't even look at our IDs!" Kitty shouts, but the sound continues.

"He seemed to have a pretty good idea how old we were, though. Are you sure your dad didn't call ahead? The lady at the front desk sure seemed to know you."

"Oh, let's just go. There's no point yelling through the door."

The stuffed lizard toy nailed next to the Geeko sign unfurls its tongue in the world's longest raspberry, but when they turn back, it's still staring blankly from its black bead eyes.

"Ok, that was weird." she starts to fiddle with her pendant, "Janey, as we can't go to the bar and all, do you think you could, maybe..."

Daryl tenses, his shoulders bunching up, "Why not? I doubt anybody'd notice. This is a magic motel, after all."

"It's a what?"

"Daryl, what are you talking about?"

"Oh, come on, Janey. You don't need to pretend you didn't know. The clerk knows your dad's stage name when he signs in as normal? She just happens to recognise your name? That bartender knows we're underage at a glance?" his voice starts to rise, "How stupid do you and your dad think I am? Daryl will come round, we just have to keep putting him in magic places and rubbing his face in it until he does! First Shekys, now here! We're in the Magic Capital of the World as a REWARD! And you want me to believe you didn't figure out that this is an intervention on poor Daryl so he'll accept things??!!!"

"Daryl, I didn't, I..."

"Oh, good, Moaning Myrtle's at it again. Things were entirely not depressing enough."

"You can shut the fuck up, too! I'm not going to take lectures from someone who's idea of normal is to be covered in fur!"

"And we're supposed take lectures from a scared little boy who can't handle just a little bit of fun? Get real! The only reason you're even here is that Janey for some ridiculous reason loves your ignorant, boring, dull ass!"

"Oh, get back in your litter tray, freak!"

"Stop it! Stop it! STOP IT!!!" Jane screams, tears starting to run down her face, "What is wrong with you two? We're friends! We've been friends for fif-fucking-teen years! And now we can't be in the same room for five fucking minutes before you're at each other's throats or mine! I'm sick of it!"

Do you hear me?! SICK OF THIS! You're spoiling EVERYTHING!"

A round face framed by masses of jet black hair peeks around the doorway to Gecko before the bartender shoos Nuria back to her cleaning duties, and surreptitiously takes her place at the door. Val looks out of the office door and sighs. "Already? And Bill still isn't back."

"Bloody Hell! Who is making so much noise at..." a pause as watches are checked, "...ten in the morning! Some of us need our sleep!" Andrew stomps through the trailer, reaching for the door.

"Uhm, honey, robe?"

"What? Oh, right, right, I'll put something on! And then we are going to be talking to whoever's making all the noise!"

Another pause as clothes are hastily pulled on, "You know, honey, this is probably those kids, you know, those ones. We're not the ones who..."

"We are now, Irene! If Bill isn't going to keep them quiet so I can get some sleep..." The door to the trailer bangs open.

The parking lot of the Gecko, where the volume has not noticeably decreased. Andrew scowls, stomping towards the three screaming teenagers, Irene trotting along behind him. "Now, honey, remember don't..."

"I will be perfectly calm, Irene. Sweetness and light personified."

Irene pretends not to hear the grinding sound of her husband's teeth as he says that, and they reach the teenagers, oblivious as they continue to shout at each other. Andrew's face is already a bright vermilion as he draws in a breath and...

"SHUUUUUT UP!" his wife shrieks before he can get even one syllable out. The teenagers stop.

"Thank you. Over to you, dear."

Andrew visibly swallows, "I take it you are the Tom Soni party?"

"The what?"

"Tom Soni's kid and friends."

"You know who we are?" he turns to Jane, "I knew you and your dad cooked this up! I knew it!"

"Ok, ok, so you knew it. Do you have to be so bloody loud about knowing it?" Andrew mutters.

"I didn't know anything about this! Dad just suggested we stay here! That's it!"

"Of course it is! You think I'm that stupid?! You think I'm going to believe you didn't know about this?!"

"Kid, at the moment, I don't really give a flying whatever who knew what when. I'm just a tired guy who wants his beauty sleep. But," he sighs heavily, "I guess as all the screaming hasn't drawn Bill out yet, I've been elected for the job. Lucky me."

"What job?!"

"What job?!"

Andrew looks helplessly at his wife.

"Guidance counsellors. Honey, why don't I take the girls over to Hamid's for a little girl talk and you can talk to Daryl back at their room, man to man?" She takes Jane and Kitty by the hand, with a grip stronger than either really expected, and leads them back towards the bar.

"But, but, the bartender won't let us in."

"No, probably not, but you weren't with me last time."

"Well, kid, after you, I guess."

Hamid stands in the door to the bar. "No. No. A thousand times no. No underage in my bar."

"Oh, stuff it up your turban, Hamid." at which point there is a loud sucking and Hamid shoots upwards, his very stuffed turban falling to the floor. "Nuria, shut the bar up for a bit, would you? This won't take too long."

A grinning Nuria slaps a 'Closed for private party' sign on the door and swiftly retreats so that she's only just in earshot.

"What about Daryl? Will he be ok?"

"Oh, he'll be fine. Andrew's bark is much worse than his bite. He's a pussycat really."

Kitty sighs. "Lucky him."

"Fine, fine, if that's all you care about." Jane presses her finger into Kitty's collar. Kitty manages a yowl of surprise before she scampers off onto the stage, her calico tail twitching, the pendant hanging from her collar.

"Thought I recognised that thing. One of the Nelson range, right?"

"I guess."

"Good choice. Now, what seems to be the trouble?"

The threadbare bed creaks as Andrew sits down on it, "Ok, what seems to be the problem here?"

"What makes you think there's problem?"

"Well, a couple of things. Mostly that if there is no problem, you and your girlfriend wouldn't have woken me up with your screaming match this morning. People with 'no problem' do not tend to do that much yelling. Or are you all theatre majors and you were just practising?"

"None of your business."

Andrew shrugs, "So I can go back to bed and expect to get the rest of my sleep undisturbed, then?"

"I...I..."

"I didn't think so, either. So, will you stop pacing and tell me what is going on?"

"I'd offer you a beer to make this easier, but Hamid would kill me." Jane glances across at the turban, "So how about something legal like a Coke while you tell me all about it? And a saucer of milk for your friend?"

"Did my dad put you up to this? Is he trying to interfere in my life?"

"No, I can promise you that your dad didn't put my husband and I up to this." *He put Bill and the girls up to it, but Bill's not here.*

"Oh. Yes; yes; and he hates it."

"I'm sorry?"

"Yes, I'd like a Coke. Yes, a saucer of milk for Kitty would be fine. And he hates it. All of it."

"He who? Your boyfriend?"

"Yes." she sniffs.

Back at room 7, "So you have been acting as the magician? And what? That's not enough?"

"Not enough?" Daryl laughs derisively, "Not enough' isn't my problem with all the crazy."

"The crazy what?"

"All of it. In the act is bad enough, but waking up to find she's left her head on the pillow while she has a shower. So her hair doesn't get wet!"

"I see."

"And it's like that all the time. She never stops!"

"I see."

"He doesn't understand. He wants things to be like they were before, when I just had dreams of doing this. And I can't go back like that. I think I'd rather lose a leg or something before I gave this up. And he keeps trying to make me choose: him or this, this or him. All the time. He doesn't say it, but, well, I just know, you know."

"She doesn't understand. I just want things to be like they were before, when she just had dreams of doing that. And she can't go back like that. I think she'd rather lose a leg or something before she gave this shit up. And she keeps trying to make me change; wants me to like all the weird stuff, like she does. All the time. She doesn't say it, but, well, I just know, you know."

"I see."

"What if he's right? What if you do have to choose? Can you stop doing magic if that's the only way to keep him with you?"

“He's not right. He's just being unreasonable. Like always.”

Irene continues on without acknowledging the interruption, “And can you let him go if that's the only way you can keep doing magic?”

“What if she's right? What if that's the only way you can stay together? Can you change enough to enjoy what she does?”

“That's not the only way. She's just being unreasonable. Like always.”

Andrew continues on without acknowledging the interruption, “And can you let her go if you can't change and she can't stop doing magic?”

“You're sure?”

“Yes. I'm sure.”

“Then let's get together with the boys in the office and tell them.”

“Are you certain?”

“Yes, I'm certain.”

“Then shall we meet with the girls in the office and tell them.”

Daryl pushes the door to the office open. Val remains behind the desk, keeping her eyes firmly on the paperwork. Jane pushes herself up out of her seat as he walks in. Kitty stays seated, toying with her pendant, sulking at being human again.

Andrew and Irene step back, the office door swinging shut in front of them.

“Daryl, I've got something to tell you.”

“So have I. You first.”

“No, you go first.”

“No, you.”

“No, you go on.”

“Oh, for Christ's sake, will one of you say something before I go mad from all the anticipation?”

“I'm sorry, I love you, but, I can't give it up.”

“I'm sorry, I love you, but, I can't deal with it.” They stare at each other, words spilling out at the same time.

“Friends?”

“Friends.”

“I think we'll let Bill tell Arthur about this, don't you, dear?”

“Indeed. I plan on being unavailable for several hours more, catching up on interrupted sleep.”



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