

A Scene from
The Incomplete Life
& Random Death
Of Molly Denholtz

by
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Michael sits in a waiting room outside a grief counselor's office. He checks his phone, continues to wait.

Nina enters. Sees Michael. Stops in her tracks.

NINA

Oh, I'm -

MICHAEL

Oh. Hey.

NINA

Is this the uh -

MICHAEL

Yeah the uh grief... therapist? Counselor. Or this is the special one they brought in.

NINA

Oh. Well...

Beat. A little awkward.

NINA (cont'd)

I can come back later.

MICHAEL

No, just... go ahead of me.

NINA

No I -

MICHAEL

No, really. You should, of anyone be... you should go ahead of me. Plus if I let you go first, I might miss two periods, not just one, so...

NINA

Right.

MICHAEL

Not that... that's why I wanted to see the - I mean, I... I want to see her too. I'm... all I'm saying is I really think you should go ahead of me.

NINA

Okay. Got it.

Beat. Nina hesitates. Then takes a seat.

After several awkward beats, Michael finally says.

MICHAEL

I... I'm... really sorry. I know you two were... together. For a while. So -

NINA

Yeah. Thanks.

Michael is about to say more. But doesn't. He goes back to his phone. Nina takes out her phone.

MICHAEL

Wait, you and Faith did break up right? Did I get that wrong?

NINA

Yeah, we did. Like end of junior year.

MICHAEL

Right. I -

NINA

It was mutual. Kind of. (Beat) I mean I guess it wasn't. At all. I don't know why it matters now if I say, "she broke up with me." She did. She dumped me. That's... what happened. Force of habit I guess.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I get that. That sucks.

NINA

Yeah.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. Very, extra sorry then.

NINA

Thanks.

Beat. They sit there.

MICHAEL

I don't know why I said extra sorry. That sounded weird.

NINA

It's fine.

MICHAEL

It just sounded McDonalds-y. Like I was ordering a combo... meal. As soon as I said it I was like, "Michael. C'mon. Act like a human being for once."

NINA

It's really not a big deal.

MICHAEL

Okay. I'm not... I guess I'm not very good at the comforting... thing.

Beat. Nina takes out her phone. They sit in silence for a bit.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Do you... or... does anyone...

NINA

What?

MICHAEL

Just to... do they even know... I mean I know it was a car accident but was it...

NINA

Yeah. Apparently the breaks on her car just... stopped working. There's been a huge recall for Corrolas and that's what she was driving so... right when she was getting off the highway, she tried to slow down but couldn't so she swerved and... apparently the car flipped and then the roof collapsed and that was... it. I think it was pretty instant.

MICHAEL

Oh God.

NINA

Yeah it's pretty messed up. I think her parents might even sue.

MICHAEL

They should. I mean... Jesus.

NINA

Yeah.

Beat.

NINA (cont'd)

She wasn't texting. I know that people are saying that and I just... like she wasn't. She wasn't drunk either. She was a good driver. Like very, very safe. And always annoyingly under the speed limit. All the time. For no reason.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

NINA

Not that you think that it was her fault, I just... I feel like I've been spending so much time the past few days screaming at idiots on twitter. Just to be like... "Shut up. You don't know what you're talking about! Shut! up!" Ya know? Why do people feel so entitled to... post about... as if there's a grand conspiracy to cover up the fact that Faith was *really* texting. It's so... infuriating. And that doesn't even account for these random, homophobic monsters... I mean there are so many unhinged wackos out there who seem to get off on... like making fun of dead gay people. It's just really really messed up. And I... I...

Michael nods. Nina is furious. Trying to calm himself done.

NINA (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm not... this is why I'm here. To talk to someone. And not to you... you didn't ask to be... yelled at.

MICHAEL

It's okay. I'm glad I can be of some use I've felt like, uh... well, it's fine. It's okay.

Beat. Nina nods. Looks at the ground as she bounces her knees.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

It's *extra* okay.

Nina looks at him like "really?"

MICHAEL (cont'd)

I don't know why I said that again. It was just... I was trying to make fun of myself but it doesn't... the whole *extra* thing doesn't seem to be working. I won't do it again.

Beat. Nina studies him. Maybe even smiles a little.

NINA

You're kind of goofy, huh?

MICHAEL

Uh... no. I don't know. Why?

NINA

Nothing I just... I'm having a hard time picturing... you...

MICHAEL

Picturing me what?

NINA

Um. Nothing. Never mind.

Beat. Nina thinks. Finally.

NINA (cont'd)

I know about you and Faith. I know you two had a thing beginning of freshman year.

MICHAEL

You did?

NINA

Yeah. She told me.

MICHAEL

Oh. Well... I wasn't.... I didn't know if you did so I didn't... I mean that makes sense. You two were together for so long I'm not surprised it came up I just didn't know how uh... Faith never really made it up public that we were going out *when* we were going out so I thought maybe she.... didn't tell you? And we were only together for... maybe two months. And most the time... it wasn't... clearly I was just like her final stop on the straight train. Cause... while we had a great time hanging out and stuff once we started hooking up... I think it was pretty clear that men were... not for her. Which I get. I like women too. I wouldn't want to hook up with me either. Yuck. But uh... yeah.

Beat.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

But still I'm not like... I can't imagine what you're going through. I mean she meant something to me but not like what she meant to you, I'm sure. And then to have broken up on top of that. That's a lot.

NINA

Yeah. It's.... break ups in general are so strange. We spent... so much time together. For a year. We talked everyday and I told her things about me I haven't told anyone.

And won't tell anyone. And she said things to me. Really... personal things. And also like really dumb things. We had these... really insanely stupid inside jokes. All these bits and weird nicknames we'd give each other. If I told you about them... A. They would make no sense at all. And B. Would be so cutesy and obnoxious that you'd just vomit. Right here. In my face you'd just vomit cause it was so... gross.

MICHAEL

Like what?

NINA

No! I just said I'd vomit on you! Pay attention! It's too... mortifying. That's... that stuff is for me. And her. And I just didn't... when we broke up I didn't think about how alone I would be. And I guess I... I didn't really think we'd get back together. But I thought... well at some point maybe we'll be friends. And we can talk about... what happened between us and maybe I won't be so angry. I mean she was... my first girlfriend. She was my first a lot of things and... I know myself so much better because of her and I just wish... I never really told her that you know? I feel like she died and she didn't even know... any of the good things I felt. Just the angry, bitter...

Nina is overcome with emotions. She's having a hard time functioning, her hands are shaking.

NINA (cont'd)

Sorry. This has been... a... I'm just exhausted...

MICHAEL

I know. I mean I'm not... you. I didn't date her for like a year but, I get it.

NINA

You don't have to keep doing that.

MICHAEL

Doing what?

NINA

You're like apologizing for... being here. For being sad that Faith's dead because you think... you're in competition with me.

MICHAEL

No, I -

NINA

It's not a competition.

MICHAEL

I know.

NINA

So don't... it actually is nice to know someone is feeling the way I feel. Or that someone else cared. So just stop... apologizing. It's annoying. I dated Faith. You dated Faith. I'm sad. You're sad. That's it. It's not... I don't get a gold medal in grief or anything.

MICHAEL

Okay. I... you're right. I'll stop apologizing.

Paige comes out of the grief counselor's office.

PAIGE

Oh. Hey Nina.

NINA

Hey.

PAIGE

Uh, whoever wants to go next, she's... ready.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

Paige leaves.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Well, she's all yours.

NINA

Yeah thanks.

MICHAEL

I hope it helps.

NINA

Yeah. Me too. And... for you I hope it *extra* helps.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

You're teasin' me. Feels like a tease.

NINA

A little. Yeah.

MICHAEL

Maybe that's our little inside joke.

NINA

Maybe. It kinda feels like one because it's not funny.

MICHAEL

No. It's not.

End of scene.