

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

by
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Chris at desk in the yearbook room, opens his laptop, puts in earbuds, and starts working intensely.

So much so that he doesn't see Tina coming into the room. Tina notices Chris is plugged in. Unaware. Walks up behind him and -

TINA

Chris!

CHRIS

Ah!

Tina does a little dance or celebratory walk away from Chris. Very proud of herself for having scared Chris.

TINA

Chris, Chris, Chris! Chrrriissss!

CHRIS

What? What do you want?

TINA

Come on C. You gotta be more aware of your surroundings. What if I was a serial killer? Or ISIS?

CHRIS

I don't think ISIS is interested in me. Or the yearbook room at some random school.

TINA

And that, Chris, is how the terrorists win.

Tina sits at the second table. Takes out a bag lunch, plops it on her desk.

TINA (cont'd)

So what's goin' on? What's happenin'? What brings you to the yearbook room at lunch?

CHRIS

Nothing. I'm just trying to get some... work done.

TINA

Great. Cool, cool, cool.

Tina spins around in her chair. Taps on the desk. Full of energy.

TINA (cont'd)

So what do you think of coffee?

CHRIS

What?

TINA

Coffee? What do you think, ya know? Are you a fan?

CHRIS

It's fine.

TINA

So you drink coffee then? You partake in the... java lava.

CHRIS

Um... I don't know. What's Java Lava?

TINA

It's just coffee. I was just... that's my coffee nickname. But it's not like a commonly known name. I just made it up. It's not like a thing that other people say. Yet.

CHRIS

Okay.

TINA

All I'm trying to ask, Chris, is do you drink coffee?

CHRIS

Sometimes.

TINA

Cause I am into it! I never drank it before today. I thought it was gross. I thought it was... habit forming. I thought I didn't need it. Cause like... you don't need it. Ya know? You don't. But! I'm always tired at school. And I fall asleep all the time during Trig because I'm... bad at math and math is boring. Trig is especially boring. To me anyway. And so occasionally I fall asleep in class and then I get detention. And when I get detention I get behind on homework, so I have to stay up late to finish said homework, and then I don't sleep as much and then I'm tired again and thus the vicious cycle continues. And today, I was like, "you know what? Let's try coffee. Maybe you were too hard on coffee."

Maybe coffee's okay. Maybe you and coffee will hit it off." And you know what Chris? We did! I wanna marry coffee! And have coffee kids! Where the hell has this been my whole life! It's fifth period and I'm still like... alert and raring to go. Ya know? I really wish you had told me about coffee C.

CHRIS

Why would I tell you about -

TINA

I know it's not your job to tell me about coffee Chris! It's just a goof! I'm goofin' ya. Chris! Ya got goofed!

Chris packs up his laptop, gathers his things.

TINA (cont'd)

No, no, no! Chris don't leave.

CHRIS

I'm not... I mean not because of you I just -

TINA

You're leaving because I'm talking too much. Cause I'm annoying you. I know. I... I've seen this move before.

CHRIS

It's not -

TINA

Chris I'll be quiet. I'll shut up and I'll work. And you'll work. And all will be well in room 204. I promise. I'm sorry. I will stop.

Chris really wants to leave. But fine. He doesn't. He sits. Opens up his computer. Gets to work.

Tina eats some pop chips from her lunch. She does so pretty loudly.

After a bit... she rolls her chair over to Chris. Chris really tries to ignore her for a bit. But then finally...

TINA (cont'd)

Is everything okay though?

CHRIS

Tina, you said you'd be quiet.

TINA

I know. And I will. I just... and I know I'm being annoying because the coffee is making me a little... diarrhea-mouthed at the moment but... I want to make sure it's just me you're annoyed at. And that it's not something...

CHRIS

It's just you.

TINA

It's not... uh... Faith. You're not like... I don't know if you knew her -

CHRIS

I didn't really. No.

TINA

Cool. I didn't really either.

Chris nods. A beat.

TINA

So it's not that? You just want to work and I keep interrupting you.

CHRIS

Yeah.

TINA

I hear ya. I do. I will... go back to work. I just... thought maybe...

Chris gives her nothing.

TINA (cont'd)

Great. Then I'll go back to work.

Tina wheels over to her desk. But she just sits. Doesn't eat. Doesn't work. Just stares for a bit.

TINA (cont'd)

Actually... I... did know her a little bit.

CHRIS

You did?

TINA

Yeah. Remember home room? Freshman year. How we like... had to go to home room. And how we were assigned... seat-mates. Faith and I were... that. We were seat mates. And for a while we didn't talk. Then we did a little. And then half way through the year we had this inside joke thing or... I don't know what you'd call it, because it really wasn't funny. It was just a thing we did. She would call me Mr. Bottomsworth. And I'd call her Mrs. Bottomsworth. And we'd talk about our weekend like we were rich and British. Like... uh that show. That one that was on PBS.

CHRIS

I don't know what you're talking about.

TINA

Uh... whatever. It doesn't matter. She would just be like "Ms. Bottomsworth, how was the country this weekend" and I'd be like "Indubitably!"

CHRIS

Oh.

TINA

Yeah, like I said. It wasn't funny. Or it wasn't... supposed to be funny to anyone else. It was just a thing we did. Like everyday. And we never talked about it, like why were we doing it. And we weren't friends outside of that. It was just... this weird thing we did.

Chris nods.

TINA (cont'd)

Anyway, I'll shut up. Sorry.

Chris goes back to work. Tina spins in her chair. Leans back.

TINA (cont'd)

Did it... seem like she changed to you? Cause freshman year Faith was so... like, funny. And outgoing. And like she had her... stuff together. But then... sophomore year. I don't know I felt like I didn't see her. At anything. And she was also much more... reserved and angry or something.

CHRIS

I... I don't know.

TINA

I mean I think she came out around that time but that's not like... a gay thing right? Because... I mean who cares? It's 2017 (or whatever year this is) and like... I don't know. Maybe it's still hard to come out. Maybe I just don't get it.

Maybe I'm "straight-splaining." Is that a thing? I know mansplaining is a thing. And that everyone said Ryan Gossling in La La Land was mansplaining Jazz but I was like "I think he just likes jazz," but then I felt like I wasn't being a good feminist so I read some articles on it and saw it again and then was like, "you know what, he *is* mansplaining. I get what jazz is Ryan Gossling! Shut up already!"

CHRIS

Tina... I swear I just... I don't know the answers to any of this. And I'm trying to work so can you please -

TINA

Yes! Sorry. I said I'd shut up and now I... will.

And Tina does. For a bit. But then she wheels her chair over to Chris's.

TINA (cont'd)

The thing is though... when I came in earlier. Right before I yelled your name and scared you in a really awesome way, you... you seemed to be like... going through Faith's Instagram.

CHRIS

Why were you looking at what I was doing?

TINA

Well, I didn't mean to, I just -

CHRIS

You shouldn't do that.

TINA

I really didn't mean to I just -

CHRIS

I was just... thinking about her, I guess. And there's nothing wrong with... looking at someone's Instagram.

TINA

I didn't say there was. I believe that is the entire point of Instagram.

CHRIS

So just... can you just mind your own business! I didn't ask to talk to you at all. You just came in here and started talking about all this stupid stuff and I didn't... I didn't like ask to be talked at. I'm just...

TINA

I know. Look I'm not saying you did anything wrong, all I'm saying is that... if you're looking at her Instagram page, you know, today, of all days, that says to me that maybe you wanted to talk about her.

CHRIS

I don't.

TINA

Well maybe you just need a push.

CHRIS

Excuse me?

TINA

Look I get it! You're quiet. You... keep to yourself. You "think about the words you're going to say before you actually say them." Great. Good for you! But I also think if you don't talk about it... then you're like repressing it and that is a problem. And I think maybe you just have to get over your like... being shy thing.

CHRIS

I'm not... you can't just -

TINA

I mean I get it. It's very easy to be passive and just let other people do all the talking. But if you don't talk about it, it's gonna comeback and bite you in the butt.

CHRIS

You have no idea what you're talking about Tina! You don't... you're not better than me because you talk a lot! You're not even saying anything! You're just talking about coffee and nothing and no one cares! You don't know what's going on in my head! You don't know the things I've done!

TINA

You're right. But -

CHRIS

And I've done... some of it has been bad. Really really terrible. I did... something to - to Faith... that - that... was really bad. And I have to live with that because... that's it. Because she's gone.

TINA

Right but maybe if you talked about it you wouldn't -

CHRIS

I'm not gonna talk about it! You idiot! I don't want to talk to you, you are... not my friend! You're annoying! You're just really really annoying! So just.. Shut up!

TINA

Yeah but -

CHRIS

Shut up Tina! Just shut up! Please! Shut! Up!

TINA

I'm sorry. I didn't... I just... Maybe you're right. Maybe I just wanted to talk and if you don't that's okay I guess. I'm... not... I didn't mean to be so pushy.

CHRIS (cont'd)

You think something's wrong with me because... I'm quiet.

TINA

I didn't -

CHRIS

I'm... the way you act is not like... the way everyone should. I'm fine. I just don't want to talk about Faith and that's normal. Okay! Because I have friends that I can talk to. And you, with all you're blabbing. Don't. I mean... who are your friends Tina?

TINA

Okay. Look, I -

CHRIS

Who?!

TINA

I don't have a lot at this school.

CHRIS

Right. Exactly. So just... leave me alone.

TINA

Okay. I will. Sorry.

Chris picks up his things and leaves. Tina sits at her desk.