

EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY

Episode 209
"Carolina Sphinx Moth"

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COLD OPEN

1 EXT. TENT [CONTINUED FROM 208] - DAY (D21)

1

Exactly where we left off at the end of 208...

MATILDA (O.S.)
SHE SAID YES!!

We SEE... ALEX's hand rip from NICHOLAS. We stay with Alex as he starts to panic, darting into the cabin.

ANGLE ON: Nicholas, who clocks Alex being weird, but focuses on the proposal. GENEVIEVE looks deflated and hungover. BARB hugs TOBY, who is dabbing his eyes with a hanky.

MATILDA and DREA (and a very good DUKE) exit the tent, beaming! Everyone pulls it together for the happy couple.

ALL
Congratulations/Cheers/Beautiful!

Matilda gets right down to business.

MATILDA
Drea and I request no social media posts until after we do.

DREA
Well I don't have social media, but it's important to Matilda, so that means it's important to me.

BARB
(whispering, to Genevieve)
Oh no. I've been posting, I've been posting.

GENEVIEVE
Barb, I feel so sick. Please just delete them.

SUZE
This certainly calls for mimosas!

TOBY
And virgin mimosas!

NICHOLAS
Yes please.

GENEVIEVE
A virgin mimosa is just orange juice.

ALEX

No. Everyone's going to yell: "Alex, get in the photo. *You're family, too.*" And the peer pressure will build, and even though I know it's not the right thing to do -- I'll stand in the photo, and I'll force the heaviest smile.

Alex looks in a random purse, frantically.

NICHOLAS

I don't think your keys are in Suze's bag.

Alex throws the bag down absentmindedly.

ALEX

Then, on their ten year anniversary, people will look at the photo and say: "*Who's that?*" And you'll remember: "Oh! That's that guy I dated because I was grieving, and didn't have any other options."

NICHOLAS

Um, okay... well it's sweet of you to think this marriage is going to last ten years. But also, what they'll definitely say is: "Who's the hot one?" But also...

Pause.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Why are you talking about us in past tense?

Alex stops searching. He stares at Nicholas, getting emotional.

ALEX

Nicholas, please stop doing this to me.

NICHOLAS

What am I doing?

ALEX

Just like, stringing this out. You *know* that we're breaking up, don't you?

This hits Nicholas in the heart. Like a dagger. A dagger through the heart.

NICHOLAS

No, I don't... I don't know that...

Alex finally finds the keys in his hoodie pocket. He takes them out.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I don't.

ALEX

Please don't pretend you can't see it. It's not fair.

NICHOLAS

Please just tell me how I'm supposed to know. I'm not trying to trick you. Please just tell me.

ALEX

Because you... *don't*... love me.

Nicholas begins to get upset. He looks around the room.

NICHOLAS

I just don't know how to tell you how untrue that is.

ALEX

Well, maybe you think you love me, but you don't care about me.

Pause.

NICHOLAS

I'm short-circuiting.

Alex stares Nicholas down.

ALEX

Cool.

Nicholas is short-circuiting.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The only feelings I see from you are when you're "happy," "bored," or you "need to pee."

NICHOLAS

Yes, but if I didn't love you, that list would be different! It would include "I feel sad," and "I'm lonely." I'm happy because I love you. And I need to pee because I'm constantly hydrating my skin so it's nice and young so you don't leave me!

ALEX

You just want me to think you care more than you actually care -- because breaking up is hard and you don't like hard things.

Nicholas shakes his head.

NICHOLAS

When I look back, all I see is us having fun and being in love and being a team.

ALEX

If that's true, then I don't know what else to say. We've been in different movies.

Nicholas sits on the floor. Alex begins crying.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm going now. I'm sorry.

Alex walks out the door and leaves.

NICHOLAS

Bye!
(calling out, pretend cheer)
Love you!

We linger with him for a moment...

CUT TO:

4

INT. CABIN - A LITTLE LATER - DAY (D21)

4

A WESTERN BOXELDER BUG moves toward a small patch of sunlight on the windowsill. We PAN down to find Nicholas, still in shock, sitting on the floor.

SUZE (O.C.)
Nicholas?

REVEAL Suze, in search of mimosa supplies.

SUZE (CONT'D)
Whaddya doing down there?

Nicholas looks up at Suze, bleary eyed and vulnerable.

NICHOLAS
I'm a floor sitter, now. It's the new
me.

Suze looks down at him and then around the room.

SUZE
I see...

NICHOLAS
Yes. I'm done with chairs.

Suze pulls champagne and orange juice from the fridge.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Alex left. He broke up with me,
actually.

SUZE
He BROKE UP with you?

NICHOLAS
Oh, yeah, yeah. I got dumped.

SUZE
Well... that is incredibly unjust. To
do that here, and now?

Suze is getting fired up.

SUZE (CONT'D)
Why on god's green earth would he do
something like that to someone as
decent as you?

NICHOLAS
He thinks I don't love him.

SUZE

Well that's just absurd. You love him plenty. And he doesn't always make it easy.

NICHOLAS

He said we were "in different movies." Why couldn't I tell? If he didn't feel loved, then I just don't know what hope I have. I've never tried harder to show love to anyone. I gave him my best, that was my best.

SUZE

It appears there was a pretty major disconnect.

NICHOLAS

Yes. That's what I'm trying to say.

Suze starts pouring Nicholas a mimosa.

SUZE

Nicholas, my friend, may I tell a story?

NICHOLAS

Why not!

SUZE

When Drea was seven, I lost my mom. I cried a lot, Drea didn't show much emotion. And she just kept asking "What do you need? What do you need?"

NICHOLAS

That's sweet.

SUZE

It was, but one day I just snapped. I shouted "The only thing I need is to not be the only sad person in this house!" I said that. To a child.

Nicholas laughs, unsure where this is going.

SUZE (CONT'D)

But then she just looked up at me, and said "I feel sad you have more sad than me, which is why I want to help."

(beat)

Drea cared about my mom, and she cared about me, but she just cared in a different way. We know now that's because her brain is different to most people's brains. Not worse, just different. The problem was, most people didn't understand this, and often interpreted her actions more harshly than the truth of her intentions.

(changing the topic)

I made you a mimosa.

Suze hands Nicholas the mimosa.

NICHOLAS

I'm not sure that story offered me the clarity you hoped it would.

SUZE

Well, maybe that's what is happening here...

A long beat as Suze wrestles with something, then...

SUZE (CONT'D)

Nicholas... it's starting to look more and more likely that you are autistic.

A gut punch. Nicholas balks.

NICHOLAS

Suze! What the hell?!

SUZE

Yeah you know what, sorry. Now I'm the one with bad timing! I just wanted to help you feel less confused-

NICHOLAS

Suze, dude. Nah.

Enter Genevieve, hungover.

GENEVIEVE

I didn't know we were allowed to be in here.

Genevieve slumps on the couch, puts her scarf over her eyes.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)
I'm not well. They're so high-pitched. Have you ever noticed that?

NICHOLAS
Alex dumped me, and Suze thinks I'm autistic.

Genevieve rips the scarf off her head.

GENEVIEVE
WHAT?

SUZE
Well, Alex felt disconnected from Nicholas-

GENEVIEVE
No. I'm sorry, Suze. He's not autistic, he's just a bad boyfriend.

NICHOLAS
Thank you.

SUZE
Oh dear, I've created a snowball haven't I?

GENEVIEVE
No! No snowballs!

Toby enters with two large bunches of spinach, oblivious.

TOBY
Oh. Here you all are! Just coming in for the colander! Nicholas, would you mind gra-

SUZE
No, Toby.

TOBY
That's fine, I'll get it-

SUZE
TOBY. Nicholas has just had his very heart torn in two, and carelessly tossed in the dumpster by a deeply inconsiderate Alex.
(adding, as warning)
Who we are absolutely not a fan of.

It's too much for Toby.

TOBY
Oh. Oh no. Oh that's a real shame. I love you two as a couple.
(MORE)

TOBY (CONT'D)

You brought the chaos, and he brought the order. I'm so sorry, Nicholas.

(awkwardly comforting)

The, uh, they say the character of a man is, umm -- well, love is a tricky game, well not a game per se, but uh-

He stops himself, and gets out a hanky, and dabs his eyes.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(he blows his nose)

I'm so sorry, I don't know why this is affecting me so much.

SUZE

It's because it's sad, Toby.

TOBY

It really is.

NICHOLAS

Oh no. You've just reminded me that I'm about to be quite sad.

Nicholas wells up as Drea and Matilda and Duke come in, giddy.

MATILDA

(alarmed)

Why are people crying?

DREA

They're happy for us!

Everyone looks to Nicholas, who quickly recovers with...

NICHOLAS

Um... YEAH! We're SO happy.

SUZE

Yes we are!

TOBY

We're just a bunch of softies, aren't we, Genevieve?

GENEVIEVE

Positively spineless!

KNOCK KNOCK. It's BARB! She calls through the cabin door.

BARB (O.S.)

Hello? Moss Family? Are you guys hiding from me?

We forgot about Barb.

She enters the cabin.

BARB (CONT'D)

It's um... I noticed that Alex left? And I was wondering if you guys are cool with giving me a ride home?

ACT TWO

5

INT. NICHOLAS' BEDROOM - A NEW DAY (D22)

5

Some time has passed, as Genevieve peeks into Nicholas' now slightly messy bedroom. The curtains are drawn and Nicholas lays on the bed, a pillow over his face. He takes off the pillow and does a sad giggle.

NICHOLAS

Is that my sweet sister, Genevieve? Has she come to rescue me from the feelings?

Genevieve hesitates in the doorway with her laptop, then enters and sits down next to Nicholas.

GENEVIEVE

So, the thing is... maybe you're autistic, though?

Nicholas pulls the pillow back over his head, and hides.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

Did you- have you... did you look into it?

NICHOLAS

(under the pillow)

No! I just got dumped! I don't need to go searching for more feelings.

GENEVIEVE

I thought I knew everything about autism because of Matilda... but actually, I think maybe I don't know much about autism, I just know everything about Matilda? And if you... do you think..? Okay, no, yeah, you can just keep hiding.

NICHOLAS

Thank you.

GENEVIEVE

Right, so... there are these tests, screening tests. And I did them, as you. In character. And, well, they say Me-masquerading-as-You had some autistic tendencies-

Nicholas pops out from the pillow.

NICHOLAS

Genevieve! I'm already gay. I already have ADHD. I don't need more stigmas.

GENEVIEVE

(trying)

You're almost rich enough to call them eccentricities?

Nicholas pulls the pillow back over his head.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

It's just you have 'difficulty interpreting what others are feeling and thinking,' and your social anxiety...

NICHOLAS

Name one social situation you wouldn't be happy to hear has been cancelled.

GENEVIEVE

Also -- how you find it hard to make friends.

NICHOLAS

No adults have friends!

GENEVIEVE

Also you have that strange accent, and also you're an entomologist and you collect insects, Nicholas. You collect insects.

Nicholas stays under the pillow.

NICHOLAS

My accent is Australia.

GENEVIEVE

It isn't though, is it? I've seen *The Crocodile Hunter*, and it ain't you.

NICHOLAS

(trying to sound "more"
Australian)

Crikey.

Genevieve looks at Nicholas, still under his pillow.

GENEVIEVE

Well. Okay. Another time.

A knock. Matilda enters as Genevieve turns her laptop away.

MATILDA
(to Genevieve)
How's he doing? Any better?

Nicholas pops out from his pillow.

NICHOLAS
Matilda, I'm very good! Excited for
the wedding!

MATILDA
Do you have any questions about the
tasks I emailed you?

NICHOLAS
Nope. Got it.

MATILDA
Great! Go team Matilda!

NICHOLAS/GENEVIEVE
(weakly)
Team Matilda!

She leaves, and Nicholas confesses.

NICHOLAS
I didn't read her email! I didn't
read it!

GENEVIEVE
She has you down for an ambitious
amount of carpentry.

CUT TO:

6

INT. NICHOLAS' BEDROOM - A NEW DAY (D23)

6

More time has passed. Alex has returned to collect things left behind. Nicholas slumps on the bed of an even messier room, quiet and awkward.

Alex searches the bedside table, Nicholas a bit in the way.

NICHOLAS
I'm sorry it's so messy. I really
thought I cleaned up, but, well, I
guess I didn't.

ALEX
Don't worry about it.

NICHOLAS
Is it... do you need me to move?
Standing felt formal, but maybe I'll
stand?

Nicholas stands.

ALEX
Whatever's comfortable. I'll be done
in a minute.

NICHOLAS
Cool. Cool.

Nicholas goes over to Alex's box and peers in, surprised.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
This is all your stuff?

ALEX
Yeah.

Beat.

NICHOLAS
Woah. You like... wait, did you never
move in?

ALEX
I moved in! I just... I mean, it's
not like you ever gave me a drawer.

NICHOLAS
I was supposed to give you a drawer?

ALEX

I think so.

NICHOLAS

But you have a drawer.

ALEX

Eventually... I just took one without asking.

NICHOLAS

Yeah of course, like, why ask? Who cares?

ALEX

I don't know. Just -- maybe with the next guy, offering a drawer would make them feel more welcome.

NICHOLAS

But I never offered a drawer because you had a drawer. Somewhere over there, you go and you fuss about, and you come back in different clothes. It's a good system.

Alex laughs.

ALEX

Do you even know where I kept my stuff?

NICHOLAS

I didn't look into it, because it's not interesting. You go over there and do a menial task, and I sit here and look at my phone. I did not realize this had such emotional stakes for you! There's so much space to put things, just put them where you want.

ALEX

I took up exactly as much space as there was for me, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

Oh! We're doing a metaphor? And the drawer is I didn't open up a part of me for you to put stuff in? See that's really confusing, because you've actually put so much inside of me. And I've taken it. A lot. I know that sounds like I'm talking about penises, but I'm not... but also I probably am?

ALEX
 You're trying to be all cute and clever -- distracting me from my very real and valid feelings. It doesn't work anymore.

NICHOLAS
 Okay, fine.

Matilda enters.

MATILDA
 Are you getting along?

ALEX
 Yes, very well.

MATILDA
 I'm relieved! Because Alex is one of my best friends and Alex, I want you to come to the wedding. I made you an invitation.

Nicholas awkwardly nods as she hands Alex an envelope.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
 It would be weird if you weren't there. Please come to my wedding.

ALEX
 I wouldn't dare miss it.

She leaves. Nicholas and Alex share a knowing smile, which just makes everyone feel worse. Neither has energy left.

NICHOLAS
 I guess we *won't* have sex?

ALEX
 Do you even want it?

NICHOLAS
 I can't tell. Maybe with blindfolds?

Alex walks out with his box. Nicholas is alone, again.

7 INT. BUG ROOM - A NEW DAY - AFTERNOON (D24)

7

Genevieve and Nicholas hide out in the bug room, sitting on the floor in the dark, lit only by small bug-enclosure lights. Genevieve's face is lit by her laptop, as she reads.

GENEVIEVE
Bullies often targeted me in grade school?

NICHOLAS

Very often.

GENEVIEVE

*I can get so absorbed by a detail
that I lose sight of the whole.*

NICHOLAS

Very often.

GENEVIEVE

*I have a hairstyle that others might
consider eccentric.*

Nicholas just stares at Genevieve, she moves on.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

*I prefer to read non-fiction over
fiction?*

NICHOLAS

Often. I don't know how I'm supposed
to care that some made up character
cares about what some other made up
character did.

GENEVIEVE

*I can easily create a picture of
something in my mind.*

NICHOLAS

God, I don't know. How easy is it
supposed to be to create a picture?

GENEVIEVE

Yeah, I don't know.

NICHOLAS

Say something and I'll imagine it.

GENEVIEVE

A bird.

NICHOLAS

Okay. Done. Easy.

GENEVIEVE

What type of bird is it?

NICHOLAS

I don't know! You didn't say! I don't
want to do this anymore.

GENEVIEVE

Okay.

8

EXT. FRONT PATIO - ANOTHER EVENING - NIGHT (N25)

8

Another evening. They continue...

GENEVIEVE

*I know when someone listening to me
is bored.*

NICHOLAS

Never.

GENEVIEVE

*I find it difficult to make and maintain
eye contact.*

NICHOLAS

Very often. Unless I am trying to trick
someone into falling in love with me.

GENEVIEVE

*I enjoy collecting information about
the categories of things.*

NICHOLAS

Yesssss.

GENEVIEVE

I am often captivated by running water.

NICHOLAS

What? Really?

GENEVIEVE

Yeah.

NICHOLAS

Isn't everyone? Everyone loves running
water. People love a brook. Don't you
love a brook?

GENEVIEVE

Look, it's really not easy for me to
work out how much I'm supposed to speak
during this.

NICHOLAS

Yeah.

Pause.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

When I was in third grade I used to throw
myself off the top bunk of the bed to try
and break my arm because the kids with
casts were so popular and I thought it
would make me popular.

GENEVIEVE

Okay.

NICHOLAS

Seems pretty misguided.

GENEVIEVE

Yes.

CUT TO:

9 INT. DREA'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - A NEW DAY (D26) 9

Nicholas, Genevieve and Toby sit in the living room, waiting.

SUZE (O.S.)

Alright, is everyone ready for the big reveal?

TOBY

We're ready!

Suze waltzes into the living room wearing a heavily-embroidered burgundy... sack. Far too short and way too wide. It's not as it was advertised online -- she hates the dress, but also thinks it's hilarious.

Nicholas immediately bursts into laughter as Suze models, throwing a few shapes in front of the family.

SUZE

(sarcastic)

Only \$80! Can you believe it?

Nicholas falls over on the couch, laughing.

NICHOLAS

Where did you get that?

SUZE

(sarcastic)

I'll send you the website! Maybe you'll find your dress too, Genevieve.

(fake whispering)

It's a knock-off, but you *can't* tell!

Suze starts cackling along with Nicholas. They're both in hysterics. Genevieve isn't in the moment -- she's watching it, gathering evidence.

Toby isn't sure how to react.

TOBY

Um, are you sure you got the right size, honey?

NICHOLAS
What are you trying to say, Toby?

SUZE
Yes, Toby. Don't you think I'm
pretty?

TOBY
Maybe we should send someone an email.

SUZE
To say thank you?

Nicholas laughs and laughs, as Suze disappears back to her room. Toby wanders off too, leaving Genevieve and Nicholas.

Nicholas' laughter peters out.

GENEVIEVE
So you guys are pretty good friends,
huh? I think they might be your only
friends.

She has a point.

CUT TO:

10

INT. NICHOLAS' BEDROOM - A NEW DAY (D27)

10

Nicholas' room is just an explosion of clothing. Genevieve has cleared a spot for herself on the floor, where she sits, on her computer.

GENEVIEVE
*It's difficult to imagine what it
would be like to be someone else.*

NICHOLAS
Yes, definitely. For example some
people like cats and videos of cats.

GENEVIEVE
I've been trying to be neutral, but I
agree -- you are terrible at it.
(then)
I have to add it up. How are you
feeling?

NICHOLAS
I'm thinking about ordering the
Korean pastries that are shaped like
fish. Do you want one?

GENEVIEVE
Okay...

Genevieve starts adding it up.

NICHOLAS
When I was five, Mum used to take me
to these hearing tests in the city. I
spent so much of that year in a
booth, in headphones, being asked if
I heard a beep. I always heard the
beep. Very good hearing. She was
always so disappointed to learn I
wasn't deaf.

Genevieve looks up from her laptop.

GENEVIEVE
It says you are autistic.

NICHOLAS
Like, a bit autistic?

GENEVIEVE
Umm, quite high. Like, above
borderline.

NICHOLAS
Right.

11 EXT. FRONT PATIO - NIGHT (N27)

11

Nicholas feels the weight of a test score. Genevieve, too.
It's not comfortable. For either of them. They eat their fish-
shaped pastries.

GENEVIEVE
So...

NICHOLAS
What?

GENEVIEVE
What's going on with you?

NICHOLAS

Well, I feel sort of weezle-wozzle, don't I? It's so hard to know if I answered those questions right.

GENEVIEVE

Nicholas, you answered those questions right.

NICHOLAS

I think if you asked me again, I could imagine a specific bird. A rainbow lorikeet -- I'm picturing it. It's rainbow. And I don't like talking to new people, but I don't think anyone does -- do they? And I hate the sound of fans, absolutely I do, but it seems pretty intense to take that and parlay it into me being, quite suddenly, autistic. And to be honest, I don't want to be autistic because then everyone is going to think: "Oh, that's Nicholas. He's autistic." And I used to just be Nicholas.

Everything feels terrible. Because it is.

GENEVIEVE

I thought in this family we were all like, "Autistic Pride" and et cetera.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, we are.

Pause.

GENEVIEVE

So what am I missing?

NICHOLAS

Well it's easier to be proud for someone else than it is to be proud for yourself, isn't it?

CUT TO:

ACT THREE

12 INT. MATILDA & DREA'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - NEW DAY (D28) 12

Matilda is jiggling her key in the lock, *jiggle-jiggle*.

NICHOLAS
Should I try?

MATILDA
No, I need to learn.

She keeps jiggling.

NICHOLAS
Are you curious what I brought?

He holds up a box.

MATILDA
Not yet.

NICHOLAS
It's a picnic.

MATILDA
I'm not hungry.

Jiggle-jiggle. Finally the door opens.

13 INT. MATILDA & DREA'S - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (D28) 13

Nicholas and Matilda are standing in Matilda's new, humble apartment. They are staring at a wall that Matilda has tested many, many different shades of paint on.

There are a few key pieces of new furniture (no chairs), but they are far from moving in.

MATILDA
Which color?

Nicholas stands closer to the wall and really looks at each color, he is taking this very seriously.

NICHOLAS
What vibe are you going for?

MATILDA
Happy, independent, feminine.

Nicholas points at a soft, duck-egg blue. It is next to three other, quite similar shades of blue.

NICHOLAS
I just love this soft blue so much.

MATILDA
Nicholas! That's my favorite too!

NICHOLAS
Stop! Really?

MATILDA
Yes!

NICHOLAS
Get outta town! What's it called?

Matilda looks from the paint samples on the wall to the tins of paint.

MATILDA
We don't know. We forgot to mark down which paint matched which paint. But we have a plan!

NICHOLAS
And that is?

MATILDA
To repaint all the splotches and remember to mark down which is which this time.

NICHOLAS
It's a good plan.

CUT TO:

14

INT. MATILDA & DREA'S APARTMENT - LATER (D28)

14

Nicholas places a picnic rug down in the center of the apartment, and starts pulling out the picnic he packed. Matilda sits cross-legged with him.

NICHOLAS
Can you believe how good this picnic I got is?

MATILDA
I'm not bringing my piano, so I have an excuse to leave if Drea's annoying me.

NICHOLAS
Nothing about the picnic?

MATILDA
It's good... could you get me another one so I can do it with Drea and pretend it was my idea?

NICHOLAS

Yes.

LATER:

Nicholas dips some bread into a ramekin of babaganoush.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Matilda, listen, can I talk about me for a bit?

MATILDA

You don't need to ask permission to not talk about me.

Nicholas lets that fly.

NICHOLAS

Okay, well... I wonder if I could tell you something, to like... maybe get your advice?

MATILDA

Of course.

A beat.

NICHOLAS

I think that... I might be autistic.

Pause. Matilda absorbs the idea.

MATILDA

(dismissive)

No.

NICHOLAS

No?

MATILDA

No. I don't think so. Can you please pass me the quince paste?

Nicholas passes it to her.

NICHOLAS

Well, well wait, though... don't you want to hear why I think that?

MATILDA

You're just messy because you have ADHD, and you can't follow through on things.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, I think the ADHD has been a distraction.

MATILDA
Have you been diagnosed with autism?

NICHOLAS
Well, no-

MATILDA
You're not autistic.

NICHOLAS
But I think I am.

MATILDA
You're not.

NICHOLAS
I might be.

MATILDA
It's very offensive when people who aren't diagnosed pretend they are autistic to get away with bad behavior.

NICHOLAS
I don't think that's what's going on here. Why are you so sure?

MATILDA
Because you are fine, you've always been fine.

NICHOLAS
Umm, well. I guess that's nice of you to think. And I agree I've always been happy and, well...

MATILDA
You aren't autistic, I promise.

NICHOLAS
Well, but I think maybe I am?

MATILDA
Why?

NICHOLAS
Well, I suppose I appear fine. But that's because I do an embarrassing amount of work to camouflage how confused I am, and how twitchy I am, and generally stopping myself from behaving the way I want to behave. Alex was the first person I let in close enough to see through the performance.

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
 I thought everyone was working as hard as me, but, it turns out, some people -- most people -- *just know how to be*. I never realized.

MATILDA
 Yes.

NICHOLAS
 Do you know the feeling that I'm talking about? I appear fine but it's fake. It's exhausting.

MATILDA
 Yes. Yes, I know it.

A beat as Matilda takes this in.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
 Okay. Fine. You're likely autistic.

Matilda takes some more food.

NICHOLAS
 Yeah...

MATILDA
 Will you get diagnosed?

NICHOLAS
 Well... I don't know if I want to. I don't think I want to.

MATILDA
 Why wouldn't you?

Nicholas is a bit confronted by this question.

NICHOLAS
 Well... I'm an adult, now and...

MATILDA
 I'm an adult now, too.

NICHOLAS

Yes, of course. What I mean is maybe the diagnosis would have been more helpful when I was in school, it could have given me tools. But I don't really feel like I need no tools anymore.

MATILDA

The label is so good!

NICHOLAS

I don't think I want it.

MATILDA

Drea says the label is good because we've put so much work into trying to understand what neurotypical people want from us, and changing ourselves to fit in with them. She says the label helps *them* understand that *they* need to do some of that work, to fit in with *us*. It's good.

This information is more helpful for Nicholas than Matilda realizes. Nicholas nods.

NICHOLAS

Okay, I'll see someone.

Finally, Matilda can talk about herself again.

MATILDA

Great! I want to show you this shower curtain we got made! It has our faces on it.

NICHOLAS

Yes please!

Matilda jumps up and unravels a huge shower curtain with her and Drea's face printed on it.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Very elegant.

15

INT. WAITING ROOM - A NEW DAY (D29)

15

Nicholas sits in a psychologist's waiting room. He looks around at the mixed group of patients: A TEENAGER with their TIRED MOM, A BUSINESS WOMAN, an OLDER MAN (60s). They're all on their phones. From off, we hear Nicholas get called over by the receptionist, and she hands him back his clipboard.

RECEPTIONIST

(quiet, barely-audible)

There are more pages behind the front page, see?

NICHOLAS

Oh, oh I see. Oh there's so many more pages. Nope, yep. Yes I can fill out those pages, but I'm already so late. Should I do them after?

RECEPTIONIST

We need you to do them before the appointment.

Nicholas flips through them.

NICHOLAS

Yep, no. That... that makes total sense.

TAG

16

INT. KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY (D29)

16

Returning home post-diagnosis, Nicholas interrupts some mischief between Genevieve and a large box with a bow.

NICHOLAS
What's this, then? Gimme!!!

Genevieve pushes the box toward Nicholas. He opens it up and we reveal: PANCAKE THE LIZARD.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
It's a lizard!

GENEVIEVE
More specifically, an emotional support lizard.

NICHOLAS
For me?

GENEVIEVE
Yes, for you! To help with your autism.

NICHOLAS
This is my lizard?

GENEVIEVE
Yes!

NICHOLAS
It's just... you're always asking *me* to buy *you* a lizard?

GENEVIEVE
Oh, no. That was just a phase. I've outgrown it.

NICHOLAS
Well that's terrible timing.

GENEVIEVE
I mean, will I babysit when you need me to? Of course.

NICHOLAS
Of course.

GENEVIEVE
Pancake. That's his name.
(then, quickly)
That's just what he responds to. You can rename him. But it could cause anxiety.

NICHOLAS

Okay, Pancake.

GENEVIEVE

It's actually a thoughtful gift --
for you -- because he eats bugs and
you're an entomologist...

NICHOLAS

Right. It just makes sense. How many
times have you heard me say "if you
love something, feed it alive to a
predator?"

But Genevieve is distracted, cooing over Pancake.

GENEVIEVE

A cute little lizard pet? What better
way to make an autistic house an
autistic *home*?

Nicholas nods deeply.

END OF EPISODE