

# ARDEN

Season 2, Episode 2

“Brenda Bentley Measures Up!”

Written by Sara Ghaleb & Christopher Dole

Created by Emily VanDerWerff, Christopher Dole, & Sara Ghaleb

## REGULAR CAST:

BRENDA BENTLEY: Tracey Sayed  
BEA CASELY: Michelle Agresti  
BRENDA BENTLEY: Tracey Sayed  
ROSALIND URSULA: Shannon Estabrook  
PAMELA PINK: Charlita Gaston  
ANDY WHEYFACE: Benjamin Watts

## GUEST CAST:

VANESSA DUKE: Julia Schifini  
GABRIEL HAYES: Chad Ellis  
ISABELLE: Tal Minear  
CHARLIE RUSSELL: Daniel Mills  
REPORTER/ATTENDANT: Jennifer Liao  
PRISON GUARD: Mike Bash  
DR. ZODICUS: Benjamin Watts  
RACHEL: Michelle Agresti  
COLLEGE STUDENT #1: Sara Ghaleb  
COLLEGE STUDENT #2: Savanna Parra  
COLLEGE STUDENT #3: Lauren Bancroft  
COLLEGE STUDENT #4: Nelinda Palomino

**CONTENT WARNING: This episode contains adult language, drinking, fighting, gunfire, loud noises, intense action sequences, police sirens, sexual harassment, adult subjects, discussion though not depiction of sex work, and brief prison scenes.**

**GLOSSARY:**

**RED = BRENDA'S NARRATION**

**GREEN = FLASHBACK**

**PURPLE = PRESENT DAY**

**BLUE = ADVERTISEMENTS**

**ORANGE: RADIO INTERVIEW**

**BRENDA: Previously, on Arden.**

**BRENDA: It's your show, Casely.**

**BEA: But, Brenda - !**

**BRENDA: I don't want it anymore. I just don't want it anymore.**

**PAMELA: No, no one knows where Brenda is.**

**BEA: Where are you?**

**BRENDA (over phone): I'm outside.**

**BEA: Yeah, but where?**

**LATE NIGHT HOST: Finally, a missing link! The miiiighty Skunk Ape!**

**ROSALIND: Crabs go on land, Bea. Free your mind!**

**BRENDA IMPERSONATOR/AUDIENCE: NOW HO-HO-HOLD THE PHONE!!!**

**[silence; then]**

**BRENDA: Arden is brought to you by Wheyface Industries. The Good People...and me.**

*[We fade in on the sound of a busy bar - rights-free honky tonk music, people laughing, so on and so forth. It's a fun night out.]*

**BRENDA V/O: I knew she would be trouble the moment she walked into that bar.**

**BEA: Officer Bentley? I'm Bea Casely from The Wave Eureka.**

**BRENDA: I know who you are, Casely. You like yelling at crime scenes.**

**BEA: The truth will not be quiet.**

**[Bea pulls up a chair and joins Brenda]**

**BRENDA (amused): You're wearing your The Wave press badge. So official.**

**BEA: You're wearing your uniform.**

BRENDA: But only because I look damn good in it.

BEA: It suits you. ...Well, um.... I've got my recorder here, shall we get started?

*[CLICK PLAY]*

*[cassette fast forward sound]*

BRENDA: What brings you all the way out here from Boston?

BEA (flattered): How could you tell?

BRENDA (trying to impress her): You have a Red Sox charm on your cell phone.

BEA (not impressed): Oh. Back to the case. Did you look into-

*[cassette fast forward sound]*

*[click play]*

BRENDA: I know where I know you from! I've seen you and your girlfriend at Tally Ho Bar & Cabaret.

BEA: Don't do that.

BRENDA: What?

BEA: Try to get me to go easy on the department because we both... happen to hang out at the Tally Ho Bar. You're not going to distract me. Let's stick to the case. And Hattie's *not* my girlfriend. Wrong again, Detective.

BRENDA: But you two are so cute! Do you wish she was?

BEA: No! She's not my type.

BRENDA: Because you prefer a woman in uniform.

BEA: I did not say that!

BRENDA: So if you and Hattie aren't together that means...she's single?

BEA: Let's get back to the case!

*[click stop]*

*[cassette fast forward sound]*

*[click play]*

(they've been drinking)

**BRENDA:** And with the Capsoms nosing about - not even the Capsoms! They sent lackeys! They sent lackeys to their daughter's search party!

**BEA:** You cannot trust rich people! I've always said that!

**BRENDA:** You make it sound like a conspiracy.

**BEA:** Yes! It's totally an elaborate conspiracy! Like in the movies! Like in that movie Julie did where the sky was gone! TRUST NO ONE!

**BRENDA:** You... know too much about Julie.

**BEA (stunned):** Exactly. I know too much!

*[click stop]*

*[cassette fast forward sound]*

*[click play]*

**BRENDA:** Casely. You can't. You can't make me a joke.

**BEA:** Tell me why I shouldn't. Either you seriously think aliens kidnapped Julie, in which case you shouldn't be on this case, or you've been bullshitting me, feeding me stuff I can't use, steering me off topic or... or flirting! Which is it, Bentley? Are you a lunatic, or did you just want to get me drunk?

**BRENDA:** Whoa! That's not what I'm-

**BEA:** It's insulting! I am a real reporter! I have integrity and credentials! Or I will have credentials once I crack this case.

**BRENDA:** Two minutes ago you were laughing! I thought we were having a nice, friendly time. I agreed to meet with you because I care about this case, okay?

**BEA:** Then why are you protecting them?

**BRENDA:**...Protecting who?

**BEA:** The police, they're fucking this up and you saw first hand. You should go on record about how **THEY** were the ones who blundered this case.

**BRENDA:** If you think a few drinks and some fast talking will make me turn against the people I've been serving alongside for-

**BEA:** Listen, I can protect you okay. Keep you anonymous. But the people need to know what's really going on-

**BRENDA:** Protect me from my friends and co-workers? You're going to flash your little The Wave badge around like you're some big shot? Who do you even think you are? You think you're going to... to solve this in the court of public opinion? News flash: it's not a real court.

**BEA:** Oh, real mature --

**BRENDA:** Don't act like the press hasn't fucked this case up from Day One, from as soon as you barged into an active crime scene like you were owed the answer, yes please, right now, and with a cherry on top. No one owes you an answer, Casely.

*[Click stop]*

*[cassette fast forward sound]*

**BRENDA V/O:** So. It's been awhile. I like to think absence has made the heart grow fonder. Right now, the question you're asking is: What has Brenda Bentley been doing for the last twelve months? Were there shenanigans? Misadventures? Romance? Was I on a spiritual journey? Or have I just been outside? [beat] The answer is: yes.

*[desert wind sound effects]*

**BRENDA V/O:** My travels eventually brought me to Egypt, where I stayed with some of my dad's relatives: the Bensaïds. I went to museums, saw the sights, ate ful medames.... but trouble always finds me. This time by the Pyramids of Saqqara.

*[Gunfire! Thunder! Electricity! Suspenseful music! In the background, a DOOMSDAY MACHINE is ticking down! Oh no!]*

**DR ZODICUS, A HAMMY VILLAIN:** You've failed, Detective Bensaïd! The ancient tablets will be mine! Soon I will have all the powers of Teti, and you and your hot librarian friend will rot forever in the desert! A HAHA HAHA!

**RACHEL, A SAUCY LIBRARIAN:** You caddish fiend! You fiendish cad! There's no word in the English language foul enough for you! Or in Coptic, Demotic, Old Egyptian, Middle Egyptian --

**DR. ZODICUS:** You flatter me, my dear! Join me and rule by my side once we have the powers-

**RACHEL:** The information on those tablets isn't even supernatural, you racist dolt! They're about ancient farming practices! Why does everyone think "Oh, it's in a pyramid, it must be *magic!*" For the love of - it just steams my buns!

**DR. ZODICUS:** ...Well, I say they're magic and we'll see who's right! But it won't matter even if you're right! Because you'll be dead! AHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!

**BRENDA:** But you've forgotten one thing, Dr. Zodicus!

**DR. ZODICUS:** Hodgepodge, I say! I never forget anything.

**BRENDA:** Well, you did this time.

**DR. ZODICUS:** I scored in the 99th percentile on every memory test I took as a child!

**BRENDA:** Good for you - but you forgot... to take away my Wheyface Brand Window Cleaner!

**DR. ZODICUS:** ...I thought that was recalled because it melted windows.

**BRENDA:** That's not all it melts!

[The Wheyface Brand Window Cleaner melts the ropes! Heroic music! Excitement! Will our hero save the day?!]

**DR. ZODICUS:** NOOOOO! THE ROPES I WAS USING TO TIE YOU UP! HOW DARE YOU!

**BRENDA:** Brenda Bentley dares everything!

**RACHEL:** Who?

**BRENDA:** I mean Bisma Bensaïd dares everything! Brenda's some cool lady I know who is definitely not running away from her problems, forget I said anything. I'm just gonna hit him.

[Brenda punches out Dr. Zodicus! Triumphant horns!]

RACHEL: By Jove, you knocked him out with one blow!

[Thunder booms!]

[silence]

[Arriving sirens; romantic music]

BRENDA: Ah, the police. To think it would have all been avoided, save for a chance encounter on the Nile. See, I was running an unrelated errand for my auntie Jamilia, and then POW! The missing jewels and BLAM! The century old conspiracy! I just needed to pretend to be an American tourist who didn't speak fluent Arabic and they completely discounted me. Ha! Ghabi!

RACHEL: Were you trying to say stupid?

BRENDA: My pronunciation is rusty! Well. I suppose that's it. And- you know, you were there.

RACHEL: I... suppose we are. You have an odd habit of summarizing our current situation. Is that an American quirk?

BRENDA:... Yes. And unrelated to my mysterious past I would appreciate it if you gave Arden Detective Agency a positive review on WELP, you'll get a 10% discount on our services --

RACHEL: But will I ever see you again? Perhaps tonight at dinner...?

BRENDA: Why would you be having dinner at my auntie Jamilia's house?

RACHEL: I was asking you out.

BRENDA: Oh wow! Great! Let's do that.

RACHEL: Fantastic!... Did you say Arden Detective Agency? Didn't they do that radio play about the rich girl who didn't really die and then they ruined her life?

BRENDA: ...Arden is actually a very common detective agency name in America.

RACHEL: Phew. Well, I have no reason not to believe you unconditionally, Bisma.

BRENDA: You know Rachel, I think I will actually have to rain check on that date.



**BRENDA V/O:** Sure, Rachel was a saucy librarian who knew more about Coptic farming practices than - I don't have an endgame for that particular comparison. But the open road was calling--

**[Click-stop.]**

**[airport sounds]**

**BRENDA V/O:** Y'know, airline travel is bad. Am I the only one brave enough to say it? I was supposed to be in Maine learning new modern meditations. However, possibly because a gnat farted over the Atlantic, my plane was grounded indefinitely. I decided to relax with some non-podcast entertainment in an airport bar and wait for the next step to find me. And it did.

**GABRIEL (on tape):** I want you to think about responsibility. It's our duty to help our neighbor. But what is a neighbor when compared to a whole neighborhood? We must put aside our feelings of personal responsibility when considering the systems we've created. What do we owe these systems? No. What do *they* owe *us*? Democracy, education, capitalism--

**MUFFLED FEMALE VOICE:** Brenda? Brenda?

**[Brenda takes off the headphones]**

**BRENDA:** What is it, I -- Vanessa? Vanessa Duke, is that you?

**VANESSA:** Brenda Bentley, it has been an age!

**BRENDA:** Get over here, you tall drink of kombucha!

**[the two women hug; noir-y romantic music on soundtrack]**

**BRENDA:** Well, you look --

**VANESSA:** Different?

**BRENDA:** I was gonna say. I really dig the kinda hippie-ish, kinda profesh vibe you've got. Very relaxed business lady who can have it all.

**VANESSA:** Glad to hear you approve. Man, it's been *forever* since the retreat. You look great.

**BRENDA:** Thanks. Sorry I never called --

VANESSA: Oh, we both knew how it was going to work. A classic meditation retreat fling. We found ourselves, we found *each other*--- [beat] Which is a long road to say: how've you been?

BRENDA: Oh, solved a decade-long missing person's case, had to flee the spotlight for a bit.

VANESSA: As one does.

BRENDA: So... tell me about yourself? What've you been up to?

VANESSA: You're the detective. Buy a girl a drink and see what you can guess.

BRENDA: Well, let's have a look. Your nose has those glasses indents. Your hair extensions are new - they look great - so you got them for your trip. But you're not going anywhere in particular so.. You got them because you're not at home. Home being.... Vienna College.

VANESSA: Holy hell, you've leveled up to Sherlock Holmes.

BRENDA: Unfortunately, I lost my violin in the in-flight luggage. ...I spotted your library book.

VANESSA: Ah, Vienna College right on there. Oh shit, this is due. Like, two months ago.

BRENDA: You're teaching there now?

VANESSA: President, actually.

BRENDA: Holy shit, congrats.

VANESSA: Well, you may wanna hold those congrats. Bartender, a champagne cocktail with amaretto and mezcal. One portion of each, with a lemon twist. [beat] So. Brenda. You got time for a long sad story?

BRENDA: Be my guest. My flight got delayed, and I've got nothin' but this two-buck-chuck aspirational-nihilism on tape to listen to. You hear of this guy? Professor Gabriel Hayes --

VANESSA: A Moral Measure? Ugh. Find that in the Hudson News bargain bin? Hayes is a pain in the ass. [holds up hand to silence Brenda] Yeah. I know him. He's my dean of students.

BRENDA: You're kidding. Is this part of your sad story?

VANESSA: Oh boy, is it. Vienna College. Small northeastern liberal arts school, founded in the 1700s by a bunch of very old men with very long beards and a surprising fixation on choir. I've been the President for a few years now. It's a good gig. I let myself get too comfortable.

BRENDA: Define "comfortable".

VANESSA: Comfortable letting things slide. The students are a good bunch. The parents less so. Lot of legacies. They miss the strict, unforgiving school they went to. I got rid of curfews and drug tests. Surprise, surprise! The grades got better but... people are starting to think we're a party school. No one wants to pay *our* tuition for a party school. Our diplomas mean something.

BRENDA: Okay, I'll bite, what's a diploma?

VANESSA: Oh, stop. At our last annual meeting, the Board really let me have it. They gave me a choice: Start making examples of students until we get a nice cozy atmosphere of fear, or resign. I would take the blame for our "moral decline." And guess who would get my job?

BRENDA: The pain in the ass?

VANESSA: The pain in my ass. That sonuvabitch Hayes. [beat] I took choice C, a sabbatical. I lick my wounds. And look for a way to weasel out of this like the coward I am.

BRENDA: Hey, do you remember cocktail night at the retreat?

VANESSA: Yeah. The Mindful Mimosas.

BRENDA: The guided slinky meditations.

VANESSA: Those monks were frauds, right?[sigh] Is that what you're trying to say? I'm a fraud?

BRENDA: Of course not. I'm trying to say, when you gave me-- Maybe I do owe you one.

VANESSA: I don't know if a detective can help me, but... they found the kid they're going to expel to teach *me* a lesson. If you could clear his name... maybe you could clear mine?

**BRENDA:** I'm good at solving problems. Or changing them. So let's go change your problem.

**[click sound]**

**[car driving; changing radio stations]**

**VANESSA:** Can you pick a station?

**BRENDA:** I once drove cross-country with the "scan" button on. It's my preferred--

**VANESSA:** Pick! A station!

**[radio settling in to... familiar ad music]**

**ANDY (on the radio):** Did you know casinos pump in excessive amounts of oxygen? Now, at first I thought "Isn't there already oxygen everywhere?"

**PAMELA:** Raised oxygen *levels* in the air make people high-

**ANDY:** But then a thought struck me! What if there was no oxygen? If casinos already pump oxygen in why couldn't you put a casino under the ocean?

**PAMELA:** For so many reasons. First of all the pumping oxygen thing is a myth-

**ANDY:** Care to wager on it?

**PAMELA:** Yes. Would you give me money just for knowing basic science?

**ANDY:** Probably! If you too are the betting sort come to the grand opening of the Andy Wheyface Memorial Underwater Casino! I am not dead but I am so confident in this underwater casino that I have declared it my ultimate legacy. It has cocktail shrimp right from the source. Starfish shuffleboard. A wheel we throw knives at, no net. Isn't it incredible that under the ocean there are no laws?

**PAMELA:** That is... extremely not true. Who is approving this?

**ANDY:** I've been emailing my lawyer Malcolm Volio and if he doesn't call me crying it means we're legally in the clear.

**PAMELA:** Malcolm quit months ago. Remember? The job was so stressful he was diagnosed with the first Earthbound case of Space Madness and he moved to a baby goat farm to recover?

**ANDY:** Oh dear, he always seemed so stoic. Oh dear! I've put a lot of money into this casino. I uhh, need to make some calls. ...Finish the ad!

[Andy runs out of the room, door slams]

**PAMELA:** Oh, okay. "The Andy Wheyface Memorial Underwater Casino! It promises to- "well, we can't legally promise any of this. I'll just read the safe words. "Wheel. Craps but with crabs. Cards. Family." -

[long beat to make it clear it's a new topic]

**PAMELA:** "Fun. We lost a Wheyface Brand Dog ™ and he's stolen a submarine?!?" Uhh... "Dice." Why did I tell Bea I'd cover for her while she and Lorena hosted a 1920s Silent Comedian Costume Party where no one's allowed to talk. Are you still recording this? Why. *Why are you still recording this.* No, that doesn't mean continue to record --

[ad music stops very abruptly. Brenda quickly turns off radio]

**BRENDA:** So, tell me about the case.

**VANESSA:** All right. There's a grad student named Charlie Russell. Bright kid. He's also poor as heck, even with some scholarship money. And Vienna College - well, we can't provide our services for free.

**BRENDA:** So what is it? He dealing?

**VANESSA:** Sex work. Not sure if the board hates sex or poor people more, but...

**BRENDA:** He lawyer up?

**VANESSA:** He's got the college advocate - but she is as obnoxiously ethics obsessed as our interim Dean. Charlie needs someone who will fight dirty and get him off - let me rephrase that. Charlie needs someone in his corner who won't play by the rules. And that can't be me.

**BRENDA:** Why not?

**VANESSA:** This is happening because of me. If they know I'm helping him-- I'm a fuck-up.

BRENDA: You were put in a rough spot you weren't ready to handle, but you came back. You're fixing it. That little nagging voice saying you could do more? That's there because you actually give a damn about what happens to other people. You're not a fuck up until you stop caring.

VANESSA: Thank you. [spotting something] My place is just up here.

BRENDA: Oh damn, you live in a *house-house*.

VANESSA: Perks of rural life. Plenty of rooms if you wanted to crash here. Unless you want to start your investigation at the Motel 6.

BRENDA: Really? You think I'll learn anything there?

VANESSA: Nothing you can't learn here.

[they pull up, park at Vanessa's house]

BRENDA: Well then, Madam President. I suppose it is pretty late, isn't it?

VANESSA: I suppose it is. How observant. You're a very good detective.

**BRENDA V/O: I'm going to skip ahead a bit, if you don't mind. Next morning, I found the kid - Charlie - along with his legal counsel at a coffee shop just off campus. He looked like someone getting a masters in engineering. All limbs, and wearing a ratty Battlestar tee-shirt under flannel. Beside him sat his legal counsel, a woman. A bit older, dressed in a very modest pant suit and giving off big hummingbird energy. Neither looked fit to tango with bureaucratic corruption.**

[the sounds of an outdoor cafe, Brenda walks up to Charlie and Isabelle's table]

BRENDA: Hey there kiddo, I am here to solve all your problems!

CHARLIE: You a cop? You look like a cop.

BRENDA: Rude, but impressively spotted --

ISABELLE: Police harassment of my client? I can't believe the college would stoop to this! Dean Hayes will get an earful about this --

BRENDA: *Former* cop. I'm a private detective, emphasis on private, and a friend sent me.

CHARLIE: Oh, a friend! Well, that just clears everything up. Not weird at all! [beat] Fuck off.

ISABELLE: Language, Charlie!

BRENDA: A... president friend. Or a Duke friend.

CHARLIE: ...OK, then don't fuck off.

ISABELLE: Charlie! Wait, President Duke sent you? Well! Of course! Exactly the kind of lackadaisical approach she would take, rather than come in and solve this mess herself.

CHARLIE (excited): Wait, I know you! I follow you on InsterGram!

BRENDA (defensive): That Skunk Ape post was a joke.

ISABELLE: What does any of this have to do with Instagram?

CHARLIE and BRENDA at once: inSTERgram.

BRENDA: OK, yeah. I'm the Skunk Ape's best friend. The detective who fucked up Arden. Shit, sorry. You don't like swearing. I keep assuming it'll get bleeped out. [beat] I'm Brenda Bentley.

ISABELLE: I have... (thinking about it) *not* heard of you.

BRENDA: That makes things easier.

CHARLIE (to ISABELLE): She's actually a great detective. If a bit eccentric.

ISABELLE: Oh how fun. An eccentric. Well, we don't need a knight in shining armor. This school has processes. And they work. We just have to trust in the results.

BRENDA: You're not going to beat the school at their own system. You gotta go around them.

ISABELLE: To where? Charlie is facing expulsion, yes, but if the police get involved he could face jail time.

BRENDA: With what evidence? I'm actually asking, "with what evidence"?

CHARLIE: When I was admitted to the graduate program I signed a morality clause, which is oppressive, unfair, rights-violating bullshit.

ISABELLE: You weaken your argument with profanity.

CHARLIE: See, Isabelle here, my brilliant, selfless, pro bono legal counsel who is helping me even though she blushes if I use any colloquial term for fornication - see! Blushing -- even she thinks the morality clause is a frakking joke.

ISABELLE: The wording of the morality clause is too vague to enforce without it being entirely up to the discretion of the college president. Charlie was singled out but this could quickly result in culling any student who makes a mistake.

BRENDA: So why you, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Exactly! Why? Because I have sex with people who find me through a website? Isn't everyone doing that, but for free? Like suckers?

ISABELLE: The board also has that indecent picture.

CHARLIE: That too. One of my pictures online --behind a paywall, I'm not an idiot-- is a picture I took in the campus locker room where you can see the school crest on the tiles.

ISABELLE: The college argues Charlie dragged the school's reputation into his sordid dealings.

BRENDA: And they know it's you? Don't you know to crop your face out of nudes?

CHARLIE: No, when I take nudes I develop my photo film in silver because I was born in 1820.

ISABELLE: Could we all stop saying (whisper) "nudes" (/whisper) in a public coffee shop!

BRENDA: If Charlie's face isn't in the picture, we can go for a mistaken identity approach. I'm sure we can find a guy who looks like you with his head cut off.

CHARLIE: I'm not the only working student on campus. I wouldn't want to throw someone else under the bus. Plus, I already all but admitted it when I told Dean Hayes that if the school doesn't like how I earned my tuition they should give it back.

ISABELLE: The money's gone. You took 90 percent of your classes!

CHARLIE: I didn't pay for the classes! I paid for a fancy piece of paper and a title. That was the deal! I get a diploma, Vienna gets a criminal amount of money out of me, and we



go our separate ways. I held up my end of the bargain. They're the ones screwing me on this.

BRENDA: If the school is arguing optics, I bet I can dig up something way more embarrassing.

ISABELLE: Don't provoke Dean Hayes. He is... difficult.

BRENDA: What a coincidence, I'm difficult!

[Brenda gets up]

ISABELLE: ...And... what? Where are you going?

[click-stop; click-play]

[door crashing open]

GABRIEL: ...Who are you and why did you dramatically burst into my office, Ma'am?

BRENDA: Ma'am? *Ma'am*? You rude little-- I'm here to chat mano a DEAN-ero.

GABRIEL: ...Hand to money?

BRENDA: I speak decent Arabic, isn't that enough, dude?

GABRIEL: Dude?! I'm Acting Dean Gabriel Hayes. Author. Inspirational speaker. Sous chef!

BRENDA: Not just a regular old chef?

GABRIEL: We all have our place.

BRENDA: I'm here on behalf of Charlie Russell.

GABRIEL: I have nothing to say on the matter. It is unfortunate to see any student, especially such a promising one, leave the program, but the code of conduct is quite clear. We have rules and laws for a reason. Usually a good one. [beat] In my book A Moral Measure--

BRENDA: Oh, I listened to that one.

GABRIEL: I love meeting fans. So you understand! We owe nothing to those who break the contract. It's what keeps the wolf from the door --

BRENDA: Oh, the wolves shit?! Whoever does your howling sound effect cheaped out.

GABRIEL: ...That was me. The howls were for dramatic effect.

BRENDA: Look, the kid's just trying to earn a little money to learn. Is that a crime?

GABRIEL: ... Yes?

BRENDA: Come on. You can't be this rigid. I know you gotta sell books but real life isn't black or white. And is it really a huge deal if adults are having consensual hanky panky?

GABRIEL: This isn't an appropriate topic of-

[knocking]

ISABELLE: Forgive us, Dean Hayes! This woman does not represent Mr. Russell!

GABRIEL: Gladly, Isabelle. Although I am shocked you would associate with someone so aggressive. I expected better from you.

ISABELLE: I'm sorry, it was unprofessional.

BRENDA: Don't apologize. Sometimes you gotta ruffle some feathers to get justice.

GABRIEL: I won't be taking professional advice from a woman wearing a t-shirt that reads "Bad Hair, Don't Care."

BRENDA: At least this t-shirt is honest. What are you hiding?

GABRIEL: I've had quite enough of this. Get out of my--

ISABELLE: She makes a good point. The board doesn't seem interested in the facts, only washing their hands of this as quietly as possible. What are they hiding?

GABRIEL: The boy committed a crime! I am being generous not turning him over to the police.

ISABELLE: Allegedly he committed a crime. And his freedom does not depend on your personal whims. That's not justice. This wasn't a scandal until you decided to blow it into one!

GABRIEL: If you were in my position you would have expelled him already! Without a hearing!

ISABELLE: I would gladly switch positions with you! I would use my new position, one of utter dominance over you, with much more tenderness.

GABRIEL: Yet my position offers less flexibility than you might expect. I must be firm with all who might reside under me.

BRENDA: Okay, everybody, no need to get all hot-tempered.

ISABELLE: You keep changing the rules! We both know President Duke would have let this go with a slap on the wrist, but you won't be satisfied until you slap on the handcuffs.

GABRIEL: If anyone is playing dirty it's you, coming into my office all- all-

ISABELLE: All what?

GABRIEL: Emotional! Just like a woman! You make passionate pleas to manipulate me. To get into my head and convince me what's wrong is right. It's a distraction. Argue the facts!

ISABELLE: The *fact* is you've made yourself the law now, so I guess I've gotta appeal to you. Do you want me prostrate on the floor? Begging for your mercy? We both know you'd just do what you're going to do anyway.

BRENDA: Is this how straight people argue? It's very uncomfortable.

GABRIEL: This student body needs a firm hand. President Duke never understood that, and the campus descended into depravity. It makes me sick. Right now, out there, this once-pure institution is descending into depravity, and you offer only a mild tongue lashing.

ISABELLE: A moral man would show some compassion. Show some sign that a heart beats under that sweater vest.

GABRIEL: You think I'm a bad man? [beat] Go on, Isabelle. Call me a bad man.

ISABELLE: You. Are. *Absolutely* wicked.

GABRIEL: But your client -- the *criminal* -- isn't?

ISABELLE: He's a good person who was in a tight spot. I'd give anything to see how you'd handle yourself in a tight spot.

GABRIEL: I wouldn't degrade myself! I'm surprised to hear you suggest you would! You talk about compromises, do you have an actual dollar amount where you'd-

[ISABELLE slaps him; everyone is shocked]

BRENDA: Okay! Corners, both of you! [muttered] God. Heterosexuals.

GABRIEL: It was a hypothetical! And your reaction proves my point! You admit it's disgraceful, but you defend the same behavior from your client. You're a hypocrite. And you look like you enjoyed slapping me, so let's add violent inclinations to list.

ISABELLE: You provoked me.

GABRIEL: I did, yes. We'll wave this all off as the heat of the moment. I do love our debates.

ISABELLE: I can't believe I-

GABRIEL: It's nothing. Maybe a drink would calm your nerves.

ISABELLE: I don't drink.

GABRIEL: Well yes, neither do I.

ISABELLE: Another hypothetical? You are exhausting, Gabriel!

[She runs off]

GABRIEL (calling after): A pleasure as always, Isabelle.

BRENDA: What the shit was that?

GABRIEL: Oh, you're still here?

BRENDA: That seemed wildly inappropriate for a workplace environment.

GABRIEL: If anyone was being inappropriate it was her. You saw her, getting in my face, flushed with excitement, unable to tear herself away. I suppose I can see how our

debates might seem excessively passionate but that's because we both have such strong convictions.

BRENDA: You didn't seem interested in her convictions, Mr. Morality Clause.

GABRIEL: If I crossed the line, she pushed me. Who's to say which is worse?

BRENDA: Crossing the line is worse. Our whole legal system is built on that.

GABRIEL: Look, our professional dynamic might seem combative to an outsider but our discussions are all in good fun. Playful almost. Practically flirting.

BRENDA: People don't look angry when they're flirting. They don't storm off.

GABRIEL: Come now, haven't you ever met a woman who got your blood pumping? Who you suspected right underneath her prim and proper exterior was -

BRENDA: If I did, I'd leave her alone because what you're describing? It's delusional. It's pathetic. It's one thing to pull a girl's pigtails and it's another to tell yourself she likes it. That's not fun, *dude*. I cannot wait to find so much dirt on you.

GABRIEL: Grow up, Ms ... actually, I have no idea who you are and I really don't care. Get out! Before you let the wolf in the door. [beat... howl]

BRENDA: Your book's a piece of--

[click-stop]

**BRENDA V/O: I went to find Isabelle. I know what you're thinking, too. Was I thinking about some arguments I'd had with someone in my own life? Nope. Not even a little bit. I found Isabelle a few minutes later, calming herself down with an iced tea**

ISABELLE: He makes me so angry! You know working with students we've gone head to head before. He's smart, I thought we shared values, that we both wanted what was best. Oh it's so frustrating arguing with him. Have you ever had someone you can't stop arguing with? And he enjoys it! Oh, I would slap him so hard he'd scream and scream for Mama to make it better.

**BRENDA V/O: Okay, now, I thought about those arguments.**

BRENDA: ... Sadly, I think I get it.

ISABELLE: I wish he were dead. I don't even think I'll be meeting him for lunch tomorrow.

**BRENDA V/O: What more could I say? I returned to my client, hat in hand.**

**[click-stop]**

**[Vanessa bustles around the kitchen, grilling a cheese as Brenda enters]**

**VANESSA: Grilled cheese? I was just making lunch.**

**BRENDA: Guess you're never too old to want one.**

**VANESSA: Too old? If the afterlife exists, it's got a Brie and Apple Grilled Cheese drizzled in caramel waiting for me. But if the afterlife *doesn't* exist, we've got to enjoy what we've got while we're here. [beat] I can tell from the look on your face you've met Gabriel and Isabelle.**

**BRENDA: Yeah. In their natural habitat. [beat] You said he was by the book, not a creep.**

**VANESSA: A by-the-book creep, one who keeps his lechery to the letter of the law. If he has skeletons in his closet I haven't found 'em. You got any instincts? Any detective senses tingling?**

**BRENDA: Other than there may be an angle there, not yet. They seem to have pretty cut-and-dry evidence against the kid.**

**VANESSA: Hm. A shame. Condemned by his desperation to secure his future. Aren't we all?**

**BRENDA: Gee, I hope that's not in your graduation speech.**

**VANESSA (laughs): Oh, God, no. I do wonder who we're churning out sometimes. Doctors, who help prop up a corrupt health care system. Lawyers who make too much money arguing for the wrong people. Aspiring artists, and we all know where that story ends... There's not really a lot we can do for these kids. [beat] Besides take their money.**

**BRENDA: Right. Money. It's always about money.**

**VANESSA: Are you going back? [beat] To Los Angeles, I mean? To Arden?**

**BRENDA: You listened to the show?**

**VANESSA: I read the Wikipedia summary.**

**BRENDA:** ...Honestly, I don't know why I'd go back. Are we supposed to find Julie Capsom again? I know exactly where she is. [beat] Or maybe I should go back. We can fuck up someone else's life and then run away again. It's what I'm good at. Face it. I'm a joke.

**VANESSA:** Oh you're not a joke! You're a very smart woman who--

**BRENDA:** "Now hold the phone!" What, didn't you hear that on every goddamn comedy show this summer? It's my catchphrase, apparently. Right before I say something real stupid....Thanks for the sandwich. Sorry I haven't found a way to help you or Charlie yet.

[Brenda leaves]

[click-play]

**BRENDA V/O:** It was an afternoon of dead ends. Vanessa was right - whatever secrets Gabriel Hayes was hiding were hidden more cleverly than a Skunk Ape's den. I eventually found myself in the college gym, working off some frustration. Which is where I heard her.

[The college gym. Brenda's working over a punching bag real good while the radio's on, and then, on the radio...]

**BEA (on radio):** ...And yes, I am excited to confirm we are indeed working on Season 2.

**REPORTER (on radio):** And what's it going to be about?

**BEA (on radio):** It's a mystery! Oooooo! (laughs, weakly)

**REPORTER (on radio):** Let's talk about the other big mystery. Is Brenda Bentley coming back?

**BEA (on radio):** I... ultimately, it's her choice. Whether or not she's coming back. And whatever decision she makes, I stand behind her.

**REPORTER (on radio):** What would you say to her if she was listening?

**BRENDA:** Oooooh. Yeah, Casely. What would you say?

**BEA (on radio):** I hope she's not listening to me blather on the radio. [laugh; thinks a long time]

[Bea and Brenda's clarinet theme kicks in on the soundtrack]

**BEA:** I hope she's doing great. I hope she's solving crimes and traveling the world, and I hope she's happy. I hope you're happy, Brenda. [beat] That's all.

**REPORTER (on radio):** *Surely* you have some idea where Brenda is.

**BEA (on radio):** Brenda's doing whatever it is she needs to do. Simple as that.

**REPORTER (on radio):** So, about the Skunk Ape --

**ATTENDANT:** Ma'am, are you a student here?

[the music is briefly interrupted]

**BRENDA:** Gotta go!

[Our hero runs away very quickly]

[The Bea and Brenda theme begins again, and continues under Brenda's narration]

**BRENDA V/O:** Again: I know what you're thinking. But time didn't stop. The secrets of the universe didn't unfold. And yet sometimes... just hearing a particular voice... Anyway. I remembered something important that day. Something I had left somewhere along the way: Brenda Bentley had a job to do, and when Brenda Bentley has a job to do, look out for anything that gets in her way. I suppose the good thing about a power-mad predator is they don't come out of nowhere. No, that's actually the worst thing about them. But it means other people must have dirt on Gabriel Hayes. So I went undercover to grad school networking event.

[the sound of an elegant cocktail party - light chatter. Sounds very boring TBH]

**BRENDA V/O:** I spent an uneventful hour there enjoying mini quiches and asking about people's majors before someone offered me an invite to a real party off campus. I did a keg stand to earn the respect of the youths, and things picked up.

[youths cheering a keg stand]

**STUDENT #1:** The new dean? Boring as fuck. Can't wait for President Duke to come back.

**STUDENT #2:** Morality Clause? I didn't even read that fucking thing.

**STUDENT #3:** You're in law school, Cindy.

**STUDENT #2:** But morality is subjective so it's unenforceable.



STUDENT #3: Aren't all laws subjective?

STUDENT #2: Oh my god, you're right! What am I doing with my life?

STUDENT #4: You know the real reason Charlie's in trouble right? Because he was boning a member of the board, whose husband, bad luck for Charlie, is also on the board.

BRENDA: Bad luck for Charlie.

STUDENT #3: I think we're out of beer?

STUDENT #2: Don't worry, I brought Wheyface Dehydrated Drinks for Adults!

[the party erupts in applause]

**BRENDA V/O: That was my cue to get out of there. Besides, I had an idea. A very dangerous, dumb idea, which means it was exactly the kind of idea that sounded good after a party.**

[Knocking on a door]

BRENDA: Isabelle! Open up! I have a plan!

[door opens]

ISABELLE: What are you doing here? I was about to go to bed, it is past NINE PM.

BRENDA: I've done some digging, and I have evidence exonerating Charlie. Do you have Dean Hayes's number?

ISABELLE: Reliable evidence? Fantastic! I know Dean Hayes will absolutely let Charlie off --

BRENDA: Great.

[Brenda grabs her phone]

ISABELLE: Hey!

BRENDA: I need you, kissy face emoji and I attached the location of a motel.

ISABELLE: What the H-E-double hockey sticks are you doing?

BRENDA: Luring Gabriel out of his office so I can break in and find what he's covering up - I already have most of it, I just need the smoking gun. And once I have it, boom! Busted. Don't give me that irritated look, either. You don't want Casely suing you for stealing it.

ISABELLE: It feels repetitive to keep saying "what" when you speak but, for the record, what?

BRENDA: I promise I know what I'm doing.

[phone ding]

ISABELLE: "Send pics" See, he can obviously tell you are an imposter and is calling your bluff.

BRENDA: Oh, you're so sweet. [typing] "You first" Aural emoji "Horny on Main"

[CARTOON AWOOGA!, Harp sound, car crash, VIKING WAR HORN]

ISABELLE: This is silly. He's one of the sharpest minds I've ever come across-

[phone ding]

BRENDA: If he's so smart why doesn't he know how to light a dick pic?

[suspenseful music begins]

**BRENDA V/O: I was able to break into the administrative building due to my cunning, advanced skill set, and a school mascot uniform I rented. Freddie the Flying Squirrel.**

**So obviously there's a lot of reading and hacking and waving a flashlight around, but it's not very interesting to hear about. The gist is: I followed the money. I found proof that many board members have been using this particular service to sleep with students, like, to the point that it was basically school sanctioned. This is a rich asshole cover up, and that's the Bentley special.**

[Door opens]

GABRIEL: I knew it! Why are you wearing a fur suit?

**BRENDA:** Why are you wearing corruption? I found the paper trail, bucko, and I happen to know some reporters who would be very interested in airing this on a NATIONAL platform so-

**GABRIEL:** Oh. Well. Then I guess you'll have to die.

[Gabriel pulls a gun]

**BRENDA:** Is that a gun?!

[cue action music!!!]

**BRENDA V/O:** And that's when things went to hell. I leapt clear over the desk-

[awkward struggling to get over a desk sounds]

**BRENDA V/O:** Knocked the gun out of his hand with a roundhouse kick-

[kick sound]

[skidding gun sound]

**GABRIEL (annoyed):** Hey, my gun!

**BRENDA V/O:** And things escalated from there. Suffice to say, I found it necessary to make a quick exit via the window [CRASH] gliding on Freddie the Flying Squirrel's wings to safety [WOOSH]. It was the first floor, but a tall first floor! Then I started to run to my car [RUNNING STEPS]. I just needed to find somewhere safe where I could call my trusty assistant Rosalind and then the story would be out. As I reached my car headlights appeared behind me. It was Gabriel! [MOTOR REVVING] He was driving after me! I had no choice, I hopped into my T-bird convertible and gunned it. [ENGINE SOUNDS] I've never sped like that in my life! I might be the only person to ever want to get pulled over by the police so I could get some back up. No luck! I was on my own. Gabriel leaned out the side of his window, pointed his gun at me and [BANG!] shot out my back tire. [POP! SKIDDDDD] I swerved and he crashed into me. [CRASH] He was disoriented long enough for me to kick his gun away [kick, skid. "Hey, my gun!"] and grab him. I held that son of a bitch by the collar and looked him dead in his beady little eyes and spit out "It's over, dirtbag". I had him. I won. That's when the cops finally decided to show up and uhhh, turns out "it's okay, I used to be a cop!" is not as helpful as you'd think when it looks like you're in the middle of felony assault. Worst part of being in the back of a cop car though? The officer was a big talk radio fan.

[turning of the dial]

[Wheyface ad music, serious]

ANDY: We know things have been rough. You thought things would be different this time, and so did we. You believed in us, and we messed up. Sometimes the only thing to do is own up. So here it is. Wheyface Industries is sorry. I'll say it again. We are so so super sorry about --

CANNED, ROBOTIC VOICE: "The Emergency Evacuation at the Andy Wheyface Memorial Underwater Casino".

ANDY: Nothing like this will ever happen again. This will be the last you ever hear about --

CANNED, ROBOTIC VOICE: "Millions in gold doubloons of investors' money being stolen by a pack of sea lions led by a mysterious, eight-legged figure".

ANDY: Wheyface is committed to you, our customers and or our employees, and or the --

CANNED, ROBOTIC VOICE: American.

ANDY: -- people! We've shaped up. We're better now and we're on our hands and knees begging for you to come back. We want you back. Please, please come back. This was totally our bad, you guys. [beat, quickly] This ad is not legally an admittance of fault and we bear no actual responsibility for what happened.

[End Wheyface ad music]

[Brenda is snoring; prison bars open]

BRENDA: Get outta here, I'm sleeping.

GUARD: C'mon. Time to go. You get a lucky break. No charges.

BRENDA: Nah.

GUARD: Ma'am --

BRENDA: Look, buddy. The kinda shit that just went down, a lotta charges get filed against everyone involved. And I'm getting sprung without even a hearing? That's shady.

GUARD: Do you... not want to leave the cell?

**BRENDA:** Tell my benefactor I've had enough of cloak-and-dagger shit for one day.

**VANESSA** (in background, walking up): It's all right, Officer. I'll see Detective Bentley out.

**GUARD:** As you will, President Duke.

**VANESSA:** Hey, you.

**BRENDA** (not friendly): I thought you weren't showing your face on campus.

**VANESSA:** I had to come back. Gotta explain some things. [Beat] You're a star gazer, right?

**BRENDA:** I dabble.

**VANESSA:** Well. I can't believe I haven't taken you to see the observatory--

**[click-play]**

**VANESSA:** ... And just look at the ceiling! The tile work to match the Northern hemisphere is just exquisite. Dates back from 1895 --

**BRENDA:** Yeah, yeah, the rich history of the institution you feel honor-bound to protect or whatever... Are you about to tell me this was all part of your master plan to strike your enemies from the school? You're givin' off that vibe.

**VANESSA:** Your thinking I had a master plan gives me too much credit, honestly. I didn't need a master plan. I just needed a new variable -- so I could step back and see what happened. An old friend from that retreat all those years ago fit the bill nicely. By the way, here.

**[hands over a letter]**

**BRENDA:** ...A resignation letter? This wasn't even about getting your job back?

**VANESSA:** At first it was.

**BRENDA:** I'm confused. See, I have a policy. If I'm going to be someone's fly in the ointment, I'd like to know why. Usually they tell me it's for the greater good.

**VANESSA:** I guess you could say, after a fashion, it is. A bad man will lose his job in an extremely humiliating fashion. Others will go more quietly The school will get some

wonderful new facilities out of its discretion. A good student will complete his education. Isn't that enough?

[opens huge door]

VANESSA: Now check this shit out.

BRENDA: Holy frijole, that's a mother of a telescope.

VANESSA: A Brashear Refractor. Weighs over 20 tons. Certainly gives you quite a view. I would come here every night when I first arrived. Give myself a private tour of the universe.

[Brenda's looking in the telescope]

BRENDA: A piece of machinery like this at my school and I wouldn't have become a detective. Wow. Wow wow wow. [beat] So what were you looking for?

VANESSA: Confirmation. Of how small we all are. I came out here while you were... gallivanting with Gabriel. And I was listening to his tape. And I realized that after all this, they would come back to me begging and pleading to save them... and I don't owe them *shit*. More importantly, I don't owe this *school* shit. After all of this, here's who I owe: me.

BRENDA: You're just gonna fuck things up and run away?

VANESSA: Thought you'd be happy. That's the classic Brenda Bentley move, isn't it?

BRENDA: ...It's different.

VANESSA: You know it's not. I got tired of it. Of what they thought my job was. They thought it was feeding this... beast. That's what life is. So they say. Keep feeding the system. And keeping it fed is so pricey these days. The system's not good, even when good people are in charge. And it's not evil, even when run by villains. No, Brenda. We made it like us. It grows and grows and grows. I tried serving it for a while, but it didn't work. Now, I choose to run away. I choose to stand outside. [beat] Maybe you could come with me. You know how to live on the road, maybe we could do that. Be an island. A bubble.

BRENDA: Do whatever you want.

[melancholy music begins to play]

BRENDA: Do I think you want a second chance? Sure. Do I believe a word you've said to me this whole time? Not on your life.

VANESSA: "Not on your life"? Are you always this cornball?

BRENDA: Wouldn't you like to find out. See you around, Duke. [beat; walk away; turn back] I have one more question. How exactly did Charlie meet those board members in the first place?

VANESSA: How do you think? Networking, after all, is one of the most important services we provide. If sometimes I have to step in and make an advantageous introduction, grease some palms, well, usually everyone is better off for it. That's a bribery thing, not a sex thing. Though sometimes it might also be a sex thing.

BRENDA: ...Of course it is.

VANESSA: What were you looking for in the telescope? Aliens?

BRENDA: Maybe. Whatever it is, it's more than you'll ever see. [yawns] Well. Guess I'm gonna go head over to that Motel Six. Figure I can trust you to lock up.

VANESSA: Brenda. ...Thank you.

BRENDA: All in a day's work. ...Enjoy thinking about how small you are.

[click-play, music continues]

[dawn sounds; CHARLIE's jogging around the college green. It's still, peaceful.]

[Brenda jogs up to him]

BRENDA: Mind if I join you?

CHARLIE: Howdy, Detective. So you had a lot of fun here.

BRENDA: You've heard?

CHARLIE: I got woken up at midnight by an extremely irritated Isabelle ranting at me about fursuits and dick pics and the arts of seduction and CAR CHASES. That sounds like a pretty good night to me, honestly, but she was right about one thing: the morality clause still exists.

BRENDA: On the other hand, I sent the police and a bunch of news organizations the evidence that ex-President Duke has been helping the board broker those “love connections” with students. Hell, those sirens might be them right now. Or maybe not, that was a few hours ago.

CHARLIE: ...No shit?

BRENDA (scoffs): Oh, like Brenda Bentley hasn’t encountered a femme fatale before? Please. I did my due diligence, got her to give her villain monologue which of course I taped --I got plenty of files from Gabriel’s office too if you need any more evidence of what a prick he is-- spent most of the time I was here doing the dirty work of some forensic accounting and BAM, Arrests. All the bad apples at the top. Because Brenda Bentley *is a good fucking detective*.

CHARLIE: So what now? Gonna run off to the next one?

BRENDA: ...Well... yes and no, I guess. I mean, I am leaving. Not really much for me to do around here. But... I do owe some folks an answer.

CHARLIE: What answer?

BRENDA: ...I have no idea. I don’t think I’ll know until I see her. [beat] If she even wants to see me. [beat]But it should... I should give it to her to her face. Least I can do. Besides, can’t keep running.

CHARLIE: Of course you can’t. You’ll get tired. [beat] Besides, that was all bullshit to begin with.

BRENDA: Oh, really?

CHARLIE: The Julie Capsom case. You sure stuck on that for ten years.

BRENDA: Shouldn’t have taken me ten years.

CHARLIE: But you kept at it. And introduced the world to Wheyface-Brand Dehydrated Drinks for Adults, which have made for some AWESOME parties here, let me tell you --

BRENDA: Oooh, boy. Yeah, let everyone hear you say that. I can add “corrupter of youths” to “national joke” and “Skunk Ape enthusiast”.

CHARLIE: You’re not a national joke.

BRENDA: Tell it to “now hold the phone”.



**CHARLIE:** Get over it. Look, maybe “everyone” - whoever the hell “everyone” is - is right about you. Doesn’t mean you’re not who you want to be as well. You can be both. You probably are both already.

**BRENDA** (a hint of a smile in her voice): Fair enough, kid. I’ll see you around.

**CHARLIE:** Hey! Sun’s coming up. It’s a new day here at Vienna College.

**BRENDA:** So it is. I’m glad you go jogging at sunrise, it made this very dramatically appropriate. (beat) It’s a new day for all of us. Hope you have a good one.

**CHARLIE:** ...Did you park here and jog around the block for this meet-up?

**BRENDA:** You’ll never prove it!

[The score fades out as Brenda, humming “You are My Sunshine”, walks to her car, hops in, and drives off]

**ROSALIND** (fading in over Brenda’s humming): Wow, boss. That was a hell of a story.

**BRENDA** (wistful): Wasn’t it?

**ROSALIND:** None of that tells me what you changed the office wifi password to.

**BRENDA:** Oh no! I completely forget!

**ROSALIND:** Damn. Real anticlimax.. Also, I don’t believe a word you said. You did not have a car chase shootout on a college campus.

**BRENDA:** But you believed the hammy Silver Age super villain in Egypt?

**ROSALIND:** At most I maybe believe a sexy hippie tricked you.

**BRENDA:** Hurtful. I told you the emotional truth of my experience, which some might say is more true. I mean, what IS objective truth?

**ROSALIND:** At least tell me what happened when you saw Bea again for the first time. Did your heart stop? Did you look deeply into each other’s eyes while a trite top 40s song played?

**BRENDA:** Yes, except the last bit. We’d never get the rights.

**[click-play]**

**[The prison parking lot, moments after we last saw Bea and Brenda at the end of 2.01. A light breeze. Neither is quite ready to break the ice for a long moment. Then:]**

**BEA: ...It's been awhile. Where were you?**

**BRENDA: Outside, of course.**

**BEA: Of course.**

**[silence]**

**BRENDA: I went... I went away, see. I... I got lost in the woods. But I found my way out. And I'm ready.**

**BEA: For what?**

**["This Too Shall Pass" by Eric Holm begins to play]**

**BRENDA: To come back. To the show.**

**BEA (a slight, disbelieving laugh): Really? After all this time?**

**BRENDA: If there's still a spot for me.**

**[silence]**

**BEA: Simple as that?**

**BRENDA: Simple as that.**

**[silence]**

**BEA: OK.**

**[And "This Too Shall Pass" takes us into...]**

**EMILY: Arden season 2, episode 2 "Brenda Bentley Measures Up" was written and directed by Christopher Dole and Sara Ghaleb. Our recording engineer was Ernesto Hurtado, and the episode was recorded at the Rebel Talk Network studios in Los Angeles. It was edited by Christopher Dole and Bridge Geene. Our composer is Christopher Hatfield.**

**Arden stars:**

**BRENDA:** Tracey Sayed.

**BEA/RACHEL:** Michelle Agresti.

**ROSALIND:** Shannon Estabrook.

**PAMELA:** Charlita Gaston.

**ANDY/DR. ZODICUS:** Benjamin Watts.

**EMILY:** Our guest stars this week are:

**VANESSA:** Julia Schifini.

**GABRIEL:** Chad Ellis.

**ISABELLE:** Tal Minear.

**CHARLIE:** Daniel Mills.

**REPORTER/ATTENDANT/CANNED ROBOTIC VOICE:** Jennifer Liao.

**PRISON GUARD:** Mike Bash.

**EMILY:** This episode featured the song *This Too Shall Pass* by Eric Holm. Listen to Eric's music all over the internet, including on Spotify and Apple Music. Arden was created and executive produced by Emily VanDerWerff, Christopher Dole, and Sara Ghaleb. Our co-executive producers are Chad Ellis, Libby Hill, and Ernesto Hurtado. Our logo is by Dylan Farr.

This series is produced in Los Angeles County on the ancestral lands of the Tongva, Tatavium, and Chumash. Our website is [ardenpodcast.com](http://ardenpodcast.com). You can also find us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr.

Do you like this show? Do you want to help us make more of it? There are so many ways you can do that! The quickest and easiest way is to toss us a few dollars on Patreon. You'll get access to early episodes, behind the scenes material, and episodic commentary. You can also, for a limited time only, still support us on IndieGoGo, where we still have a number of attractive perks available. You can buy special Arden-related merchandise on TeePublic, including a very festive Skunk Ape T-shirt.

You can rate, review, and subscribe to the show wherever you found it -- Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and other platforms.

["This Too Shall Pass" fades out, taking us into:]

MID CREDITS:

[Gabriel is in a jail cell. Isabelle approaches, Gabriel rushes up to the bars]

GABRIEL: Isabelle! Thank God, I've been waiting for an attorney for so long. I've been set up!

ISABELLE: Oh, I'm aware.

GABRIEL: Good, then we can start planning the defense --

ISABELLE: Oh, I'm not your lawyer. I think you've drawn Lucius.

GABRIEL: Lucius?! That pervert?!

ISABELLE: Two of a kind, wouldn't you say.

GABRIEL: Oh you love it, you sent me some very suggest texts-

ISABELLE: That wasn't me.

GABRIEL: Me neither, I was hacked.

ISABELLE: God, you're so... you're such a shit.

GABRIEL: ...You weaken your argument with profanity!

ISABELLE: Yeah, well, go stick it up your ass. ..This is fun! I should swear more often!

[click-stop]

["This Too Shall Pass" fades back up]

EMILY: But no matter what, congratulations on listening to the whole episode, gentle listeners! You did it! As always, our key grip was Tracey Sayed, who said:

BRENDA: Get over here, you tall drink of kombucha!

**EMILY:** Join us next time for more adventures in Arden. Thank you, and good night.

[“This Too Shall Pass” concludes. Inspiring music fades in:]

**ANDY:** This week and every week, we’d like to thank our Executive Producer Donors: Amy Tate, Danny Bell, and DJ Sutherland, who are more than the Good People. They’re the best.

This week, we’d like to thank our IndieGoGo Backers Andrea Klassen, Andrea Reiher Odom, Andrew Bloom, Ann Woodbridge, Ariane Laxo, Aurora Martinez Del Rio, Ben Letham, Benjamin Caldwell, Benjamin Gemmel, Bethan York, Bethany Bernhardt, Bob Raymonda, Brenda Bentley’s Left Shoe, Brian Allred, and Brittany Albizo, who all won big at the Andy Wheyface Memorial Underwater Casino! Before, of course, the *incident*.

**THIS TOO SHALL PASS, by Eric Holm:**

There's a way a body breaks down  
When y' learn a love ain't gonna last  
Even as a body melts into the floor  
This too shall pass

War is over if you want it  
Hope is dark and deep and vast  
And it's frightening how powerful we are  
This too shall pass

There's a day that's bright and perfect  
Your love is lying in the sun  
And we're all gonna die but nothing passes away  
Love won't be undone  
System's bloodied up and broken  
It's a-headin' for a crash  
That's a threat but honey it's a promise too  
This too shall pass

Remember Time, it ain't a straight line  
More like a shattered looking-glass  
And the Love we made is never really gone  
Time don't work like that  
There's a day that's bright and perfect  
Your love is lying in the grass  
And the universe is humming along

**This too shall pass**

**And a circle has no ending**

**So you never make it home**

**But yer' perfect day is still alive somewhere**

**And you are not alone**

**Yeah that perfect day is still alive somewhere**

**And you are not alone**