

Return to Highland

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(Author's note: The town of Marfa, TX will stand in for Highland, TX.)

(Note: The song that is playing in the background as they are led to the CEO's office is from "The Simpsons – Songs in the key of Springfield – Who shot Mr. Burns Part One medley.)

"I hate airplanes." Said Tilly, shifting in her seat.

"Relax dear. We'll be on the ground shortly." Said Tristan. He reached over and grabbed his wife's hand. "With the TSA and all of the new safety requirements, flying is safer than ever!"

"They could at least give us fresh peanuts." Said Jane, from the other side of the plane.

"That would require spending money they don't want to spend." Said Daria from the other side of Jane.

"You know they do serve us meals in First Class." Said Tristan, picking up a magazine.

"I've been on enough airplanes to learn you don't eat the food unless you have to. It's almost like high school all over again." Said Jane. "Besides, this flight was too short for meal service for the passengers."

"Bad thing is the pilots actually eat the food." Said Daria. She quickly covered her mouth with her hand when she realized what she had just said. She looked over at Tilly, who was looking even more uneasy.

"Relax dear." Said Tristan. "They don't let both pilots eat the same meal, just in case." Tilly tried to relax, but a sudden jolt of the plane had her holding onto her seat with a death grip. Tristan looked across the aisle at Daria and Jane. "It's too bad we couldn't get the Learjet to bring us down."

"Had it scheduled, but they needed it at the last second. They did at least pay for our tickets down here. Remember, I am here for a story." Daria said.

"Yeah." Said Tristan. "It was nice for them to let me and Tilly tag along."

"The editor said it wasn't a problem. Besides, they want Tilly's input as my sister, and your input as my brother-in-law."

"Don't forget me." Said Jane.

"You're here because you're head of the art department." Said Daria.

"And as your partner." Said Jane, grasping Daria's hand.

"That too." Said Daria with a smile.

"Ladies and gentleman, this is your captain speaking. We are due to land at Midland International Airport within 30 minutes. We are going to turn on the seatbelt sign in preparation for landing. Flight attendants please prepare for landing."

"See?" said Tristan, placing his hand on his wife's. "It'll be over in a few minutes."

"Maybe not the right thing to say..." whispered Jane to Daria. Daria giggled softly.

"See... it wasn't that bad. We are all here, and in one piece." Said Tristan to Tilly as they stood in front of the baggage claim.

"I don't suppose I could convince you to drive me home, do you?" asked Tilly.

"Not really." Said Tristan.

"Besides, it's a long drive back to Boston." Said Daria.

"Let's get our bags, and then see about our rental car." Said Jane.

"I'll go check on that." Said Daria, walking away.

"Do you know why we are here?" asked Tristan. "I mean, I know she was coming down here for a story, but she hasn't said anything about who, what, or where."

"Dunno." Said Jane. "She wouldn't tell me. All I know it has something to do with her origins and her early life. You're from here, aren't you Tilly?"

"I left here before I was a year old. I don't remember much." Said Tilly.

Daria came walking back up. "Okay. They are getting our car ready."

"What did we get?" asked Jane.

"A subcompact." Said Daria. She looked at her family, and saw the looks on their faces. "I'm kidding. We were supposed to get a four door car, but they had to upgrade us to a SUV. They ran out of cars."

"That's funny." Said Tristan.

"Here's our bags." Said Tilly. She stepped forward, through the group of people who were also waiting for their bags. Tristan stepped through the gap with her. When they re-emerged, they had all of their bags.

"I suppose the accounting department wasn't happy about the extra baggage fees." Said Jane.

"They weren't happy, but they paid it. It's just more of a guarantee that we will have the Learjet next time." Said Daria. She picked up her carry on, and took her two checked bags, and stepped away. Jane, Tilly, and Tristan all did the same. "Their rental car place is down here." Said Daria as she walked through the building.

Part 2

"Who wants to drive?" asked Daria as they walked out into the lot to find their rental.

"Who's name is on the papers?" asked Jane.

"All of ours." Said Daria. She looked over at Tristan. "You want to drive? This is a lot larger than my car."

"Sure... It'll be nice to drive something this.. small." Said Tristan, taking the keys from Daria.

"That reminds me, when do you get the Jeep back?" asked Jane.

"The shop said the parts will be there Thursday. They should have it back together by the following Tuesday." Said Tristan.

"What are you having done to it again?" asked Tilly.

"Eight inch long arm kit, and 37 inch tires." Said Tristan. "I would have done it myself, but it only came with a one year warranty. If I had the shop install it, the company who makes the kit warranties the parts for life."

"Here's our ride." Said Tilly, pointing to a black Chevy Suburban with dark tinted windows.

"We're going to look like the FBI or the MIB when we roll into Highland." Said Tristan, as he pressed the door unlock button on the key fob.

"MIB?" Asked Tilly. "Men in Black?"

"Sure!" said Jane, opening the rear hatch.

"This has potential." Said Daria. "Last time there was a vehicle like this in Highland, it was when President Clinton was visiting."

"You met Bill Clinton?" asked Tilly as she handed her bags to Tristan.

"Did he try to make you an intern?" Asked Tristan as he put Tilly's bags in the back, and then his own.

"No. I was only 15 at the time." Said Daria, handing her bags to Tristan.

"Perfect age for him from what I hear!" Said Tristan. He was trying his best to keep from laughing aloud.

"Nah. Daria would be too much for him to handle." Said Jane, putting her bags in the back. "That's it.. Close this thing up and let's get on the road."

"Aye aye, Captain." Said Tristan. He closed the hatch, and walked around to the driver's door. "Sweet... Power seats!" he said as he moved the seat back so he could get in. "Hey Daria! Looks like someone your size was driving this thing before we got it!"

"Funny." Said Daria as she climbed in the passenger's rear seat.

"No, what would be funny is to see someone like you driving this thing." Said Jane as she sat into the seat behind the driver.

"No. What would be fun is to see you driving Tristan's truck." Said Tilly.

"Which one?" Asked Tristan as he sat down. He closed the door, and began to adjust the mirrors and such.

"The deuce." Said Tilly. "I drove it once. I thought Tristan was going to have a heart attack!"

"You *really* need to learn how to drive an unsynchronized transmission." Tristan cringed, remembering the day like it was yesterday. He put the key into the ignition, and started the SUV. After checking the gauges, he looked up into the rearview mirror at Daria and Jane. "Everyone ready?"

"Yep." Said Jane.

"Yeah." Said Daria.

"Let's go Jeeves" said Tilly.

"We're off like a herd of turtles." Tristan backed out of the parking spot, and navigated his way off of the airport property, and to the highway.

"How far do we have to go?" asked Tilly of Daria.

"Highland is about three hours south and west of Midland." Said Daria.

Tristan punched in the info into the GPS. "Wow.... 200 miles."

"Yup." Said Daria. "It's out there."

Tristan pulled onto I-20, and started heading west, following the GPS's directions. "There wasn't a closer airport?"

"No." Said Daria. "At least not one that could take a jet."

"More like the beancounters didn't want to pay to put us on a local flight. It's cheaper to get the rental car." Said Jane.

"Not on fuel. It's going to take about a half a tank to get there. Maybe more." Said Tristan.

"The way you drive, it will probably be a full tank." Snarked Tilly.

"Hey, if you don't like how I drive, you're more than welcome to do it."

"That's okay." Said Tilly. "I'm fine here."

They rode in silence for a few minutes, until Jane finally spoke up. "I'm going to the picnic, and I'm bringing... asbestos insulation..."

"I'm going to the picnic, and I'm bringing... asbestos insulation, and brine shrimp." Said Daria. She looked over at Jane, who was looking at Daria. They smiled, and started laughing.

"I'm going to the picnic, and I'm bringing... asbestos insulation, brine shrimp, and the cryogenically frozen head of Walt Disney." Said Tilly with a smile.

Tristan looked up into the rearview mirror. "Am I missing something here?"

"Daria and I went with Trent and Jesse to Alternapalooza in 1997 or 1998. It was shortly after she moved here. Anyway, it was a road game we were playing. You have to name everything that was named before, and then add to it; all in alphabetical order."

"How do you know about this?" asked Tristan of Tilly.

"Daria told me about it once."

"Ahh. Okay... I'm game.... I'm going to the picnic, and I'm bringing... asbestos insulation, brine shrimp, the cryogenically frozen head of Walt Disney, and a dromedary." Said Tristan. Both Daria and Jane busted out with laughter at this point. "WHAT?"

"That was the same answer Trent gave!" said Jane, trying to stop laughing long enough to talk.

"At least I didn't lose my glasses." Daria said, still laughing. "This is going to be interesting."

Part 3

"Are we there yet?" Whined Jane playfully, trying her best to sound like a child.

Daria looked up at the GPS, and then at the road. "Almost."

Tristan looked down at the GPS. "Says about 10 miles." He said. He looked over at Tilly, who was leaning against the window.

"She asleep?" asked Jane.

"Yeah." Said Tristan. "She usually doesn't sleep while riding."

"She feels safe." Muttered Daria.

Tristan looked up. "Why would she feel safe? She's in a rental car in a place she doesn't know."

"We're all here with her." Said Jane.

"Good point." Said Tristan. He began slowing down as he passed a "Highland City Limits" sign, and that was followed by a "Reduced Speed Ahead". "Welcome to Highland." He said.

"Helm, bring us out of warp." Said Daria with a hint of authority in her voice that made her sound like a very convincing ship captain. She looked around. "This town has gotten bigger."

"So, what do we do first?" Asked Tristan.

"Find our hotel." Said Jane.

"Agreed." Said Daria. "I need to get out of this thing, I've been sitting in one place for too long."

"You've sat longer on flights across country." Said Jane.

"That was different. You can get up and walk around on a plane." Daria said, still looking around. "I don't remember half of the buildings here."

"The town has changed a lot in recent years." Said Tristan. He looked up into the rearview mirror only to see two pairs of eyes staring back at him. "I did some research before we left the house. Apparently, this town is now the headquarters for Burger World. Since that happened, more businesses and industry have moved here. The rest just follows. There's our hotel." He said as he pointed to a five story building off to the left.

"That definitely wasn't here when I was." Said Daria. Tristan said nothing as he pulled into the parking lot, and to the front door of the hotel.

"Great. We're here." Said Tilly, eyes still closed.

"Finally decide to wake up?" asked Daria.

"Been awake. Just didn't feel like engaging in conversation." Said Tilly, eyes now open.

"Let's get checked in." said Jane. The SUV came to a stop, and she was the first one out. "Unlock the back, Tristan." He reached down and hit the door unlock button. Jane walked over and grabbed a luggage cart, and wheeled it to behind the SUV. She opened the hatch, and started to load suitcases and bags onto the cart. Meanwhile, Daria and Tilly climbed out of the SUV, both of them stretching like waking cats.

Tilly turned 360 degrees, looking around. "What in the hell are we doing here?"

"In good time, dear sister, all will be revealed." Said Daria, taking her shoulder bag from the SUV, and then closing the door. It was the same grey bag she had in high school, but with numerous patches and repairs to it. It was a stark clash to the outfit she was wearing, which was simple black slacks and a orange colored shirt, covered with a light jacket colored in green.

"When are you going to get rid of that thing?" asked Jane as she closed the hatch to the SUV.

"When they pry it from my cold dead fingers." Said Daria. "I would ask you the same thing." They both looked at the cart, to see an old brown bag, with an equivalent number of patches and repairs as Daria's bag, hanging off the cart.

"One of these days, I am going to steal those bags from you two and put them out of their misery." Said Tilly.

"Only if you have a death wish." Said Daria. She was about to add to it, when something in her bag vibrated and beeped. "Damn phone." She said, digging through the bag, and finally pulling a cell phone from the bag. "Speaking of death wishes." She flipped the phone open. "Hey Quinn."

"Hi Daria. I was just checking to make sure you arrived in one piece." Came Quinn's voice from the other end.

"We're fine. Just the usual issues." Said Daria.

"Ahh. Tilly still doesn't like airplanes?"

"Nope, but then again she doesn't have the time in the air that Jane and myself both have. Are you still coming down?"

"Hoping to leave this evening when Trent gets here. My flight is at seven."

"Finally talked him into babysitting for you?"

"Yeah. It will only be until tomorrow afternoon. Jeffy should be home then. His dispatcher was able to get him home for the next week or so." Said Quinn.

"Okay. Oh, by the way. You might want to see if you can find a local flight from Midland to Highland. It is about a three and a half hour drive." Said Daria. "If you do, let us know and we can pick you up. When do you think you will be here."

"Probably tomorrow morning. I will get a hotel for the night in Midland."

"Okay. See you then."

"See you tomorrow." Said Quinn. His voice dropped to a whisper. "Love you, sis."

Daria looked around to see who was watching or listening. She dropped her voice as well. "Love you too, Quinn. Bye." She closed the phone and put it back in her bag. When she looked up, Jane was standing in front of her. "GAH! Where did you come from?"

"Still won't admit in public that you love your sister." Said Jane.

"Tilly's my sister. Quinn is just a pain in my...."

"If that's so, why did you invite her down here with us?" asked Jane

"I'll get back to you on that." Said Daria.

"Hey, if you women folk are done, I'm going to go park this thing." Yelled Tristan from the driver's seat.

"Yeah yeah." Said Tilly, as she took her bag from the passenger's seat, and closed the door. Her bag was the same style she carried in school, just newer.

"Let's go." Said Daria. They walked into the lobby of the hotel, with Jane pulling the cart behind her. They approached the counter, and a young girl stood up from a chair she had been sitting in. She looked to be about 16 or 17.

"Checking in?" asked the girl.

Daria opened her mouth to say something, but Jane quickly clamped her hand over Daria's mouth. "We have reservations for two adjoining rooms. Daria Morgendorffer and Tristan Mathiesen."

The girl punched in the names into the computer. "Okay. Here it is. Uhhh... wait a minute." She jotted something down, and went to another computer, typing in some info. "Oh, okay. Yes. You have the two executive suites on the 5th floor."

"What the hell are you talking about?" asked Daria, finally prying Jane's hand from her mouth. "We requested two king sized rooms, adjoining each other."

"Yes. I see that, and then it was changed to the current suites."

"By who?" asked Jane.

"It doesn't say. The rooms are prepaid as well." Said the girl.

"What... Nevermind. I don't feel like arguing. We'll let the beancounters sort it out later." Said Daria.

"Okay." Said the girl. She punched in a few things, and then retrieved two sheets of paper from a nearby printer. "Okay. I need Ms. Morgendorffer to sign this one, and Mr. Mathiesen to sign this one." Daria signed her name on the line, and pushed the paper back to the girl.

Tristan walked up. "Okay, we're parked."

Tilly took a pen and pressed it into Tristan's hand. "Here. Sign." Tristan signed on the line where Tilly indicated. The girl took the paper, and put it in a file.

"Here are your room keys." Said the girl, handing Daria and Tristan two key cards. "Checkout time is at 11 AM. There are ice machines on each floor, and with your rooms, there are ice makers in the rooms. There also vending machines on each floor. In your rooms, you have free wireless Internet, cable TV, and free local calls. There is also a book in each room listing local restaurants and shopping interests. If you have any questions, you can dial "0" on your room phone to get the front desk. Enjoy your stay!"

Daria looked up from the room cards, and to the girl. "Can I ask you a few questions?"

"Uhh, I guess." Said the girl.

Daria rummaged through her bag and pulled a notepad and pen out. "Do you live here in town?"

"Yep. Born and raised here." Said the girl proudly.

"And you admit that freely?" Snarked Daria.

"Huh?"

Daria continued. "You go to Highland High School?"

"Yeah." The girl looked at foursome. "What? You writing a book or something?"

"Actually, a magazine." Said Daria. "Is it still the same cesspool that is used to be?"

"Huh? No! The new school is awesome!" said the girl.

"Wait.. New school?" asked Daria.

"Yeah. They built a new one a few years ago. About two years before I started there." The girl looked at Daria closely. "Did you used to live here or something?"

"Yeah. I was born here, and lived here until 1996." Said Daria.

"Wow. You're in for a shock then. From what I've heard from my parents, this town isn't what it used to be." Said the girl. The phone rang. "I have to get this. Enjoy your stay!" The girl picked up the phone and started talking.

Daria nodded thanks to the girl. "Let's go." They walked to the elevator, and pressed the "Up" button. After a minute or so, the doors opened. They boarded the car, and Tilly reached down and pressed the "5" button. The doors closed, and the elevator swiftly rose to the top of its travel. The doors opened

again, and they exited the car. Daria looked down at her room card. "501" She said. She looked up, and saw the door for the room across the hall.

"502." Said Tristan, looking at his card. He looked back up, and saw that 501 and 502 were adjoining each other.

Jane took a card from Daria. "I'll bring their bags to their room, and then bring ours." She gently nudged Tilly toward their room.

"We'll be over in a few." Said Tilly as she walked towards the room.

"Yeah. I wanna find out what's going on." Said Tristan.

Daria pulled the other card from the sleeve, and inserted it into the lock of the door. The light flashed green, and she opened the door. She walked in, letting the door close behind her. She stood and looked at the room. It was at least three times the size of a normal room. It had a full size bathroom, a small living room with a couch, a couple of easy chairs, and a desk. There was also a small kitchenette, and a door, which she assumed let to the room next door. She tossed her bag on the couch and walked to the separate bedroom. She opened the door, revealing a King sized bed, large dresser, smaller desk, and a smaller bathroom. "Wow." Was all she could say. She walked back into the other room, and sat down in one of the chairs, and removed her shoes and socks. She then made fists with her toes in the carpet. After a few minutes, she heard the sounds of a key in the card slot on the door. A moment later, the door opened, revealing Jane with the cart and their bags.

"They said they will be over in a few minutes. They want to get settled in." said Jane as she brought the cart into the room. She took a moment to look around. "Wow."

"You should see the bedroom."

"As long as I have a bed that we can be in together, that's all that counts." Said Jane, smiling at Daria.

Daria stood up, and walked to Jane. She stood on the tips of her toes, and gave Jane a light kiss. "It would be big enough for all four of us."

Jane laughed. "You're enough for me. I would hate to have two of you in the same bed."

"I'm sure Tristan would have something to say about that." Said Daria.

"So would Tilly." Said Jane. She took the bags off the cart, and set them on the floor next to the couch. "Lemme take this cart downstairs. I'll be right back." Jane gave Daria a quick kiss on the forehead, and then took the cart and left the room.

Daria flopped down into the chair again. She took off her glasses, and rubbed her temples. She set them on the table, and closed her eyes.

It didn't last long. A few minutes later, a knock was heard on the door. Just as Daria opened her eyes, she heard the key being inserted into the lock. Jane walked into the room, followed by Tilly and Tristan. They came in, and sat down, with Jane sitting in the other chair, and Tilly and Tristan sitting on the couch. Tilly reached forward, and picked up Daria's glasses. "I can't believe you still wear these things. You know they have surgeries to fix your eyes, right?"

"Yeah. I know." Said Daria. Tilly, still leaning forward, set the glasses back on the table. Daria reached forward and picked them up. "Hand me my bag, will you Tristan?"

"Sure." He took her bag and handed over to Daria's waiting hands.

"Well, I'd imagine you all want to know why we are here." Said Daria. She rifled through the bag, and pulled a envelope from the bag. "I think we all know that me and Jane are here because we are doing a story on my hometown."

"And we're here so Till can see her birth town as well." Said Tristan.

"Yes." Said Daria. "However, there is another reason." She held up the envelope. "This came to me about a month ago. No return address. To summarize, we are here to meet and interview the new CEO of Burger World, and how he has not only brought a failing company back from the dead, but how he turned an end of the line town to a thriving city."

"So, we meet him, play twenty questions, and bolt? Why all this?" asked Tilly.

"He doesn't say. He does say that it will be Thursday before he can be free for the interview. We will be meeting him at the Burger World offices." Said Daria.

Jane looked up at the ceiling. "So that gives us Tuesday and Wednesday to explore."

"Yep." Said Daria. She pulled a folder from her bag. "I have a few people I want to track down while I am here."

Jane looked back at Daria. "You're still not seriously going to find those two idiots are you?"

Daria smiled. "If they are even still alive. Plus there is Stewart, and then some of the faculty from Highland High."

"There was that teacher who sent you a letter right after you started college." Said Jane.

"Yeah. Mr. VanDriessen. I also want to find out what happened to Principal McVicker and Coach Buzzcut. Maybe see if I can track down some of the other students."

"You really want to relive this? I thought you wanted to forget this place?" Asked Jane.

"I did, but after this letter and seeing what I have seen so far, it has piqued my interest." Said Daria, giving her trademark smirk that has served her so well throughout the years.

Part 4

"Why are you in such a hurry for? This town isn't going anywhere." Said Daria, as she was being drug along by Tilly.

"You grew up here. I didn't. I want to see what this place is all about." Said Tilly.

"You didn't miss much."

"From what you said last night, this place has changed."

"Yeah. I did. It's not the Highland I remember."

"She always like this in the morning?" asked Tristan of Jane as they walked along behind the two sisters.

"Only when she doesn't want to do something." Said Jane with a smile on her face. "If it is something she wants to do, it would be the other way around."

"I still don't understand all of this." Said Tristan, as he pulled the keys to the SUV from his pocket.

"You don't want to ever go back to your home town? In Florida, wasn't it?" Asked Jane.

"Yeah, that's where I'm from. Commonly referred to God's Waiting Room." Said Tristan. "I'm glad I left there."

"If you don't come up here and help me get her going, that will be the *next* place we go." Said Tilly, who had now resorted to pushing Daria along.

Tristan smiled, and walked up behind Daria and his wife. "C'mon Daria. The sooner we do this, the sooner it is over with."

"Fine." Said Daria. She stopped resisting, and began to walk normally, which caused Tilly to go off balance and stumble. Tristan caught her by the arm, and kept her from hitting the ground.

"It's unlocked." Said Tristan, as he put his hand on the door handle and opened the driver's door. The other three opened their doors as well, taking seats in the same positions as they were on the ride down. They each closed their respective doors, and put their seatbelts on.

"Alright. Let's go get Quinn." Said Daria.

"Aye Captain." Said Tristan. He started the SUV, backed out of the parking spot, and then drove off out of the parking lot. "She is at the airport, right?"

"Yes." Said Daria. "She managed to sweet talk a pilot into flying her down here from Midland. She should be there by now."

"That's Quinn for you. Why pay for something when drooling men will give it to you for free!" said Jane.

"Hey!" said Tristan.

"You never drooled over Quinn." Said Tilly. "At least, not after you broke up with her." Tristan slumped down in his seat, trying to hide.

"The airport shouldn't be far. Just on the other side of town." Said Daria. She had a chance the night before to look up a town map on the Internet. "We should pass by the street I used to live down."

"Side trip?" asked Jane.

"Maybe after we pick Quinn up." Said Daria. They rode in silence for the rest of the trip, with everyone looking around at the sights of the town. Daria had mentioned numerous times that the town was a "cesspool", but everything so far was showing to be the complete opposite. After about fifteen minutes, and a few turns, they were pulling into the airport parking lot.

"There she is." Said Tristan, pointing to the front of the building.

"Does she know what we are driving?" asked Tilly, rummaging through her bag.

"No." said Daria.

"Good." Tilly pulled a pair of dark sunglasses from her bag, and put them on. Tristan pulled the SUV to the curb in front of where Quinn was standing. Tilly rolled the darkly tinted window down slightly. "FBI Ma'am. You're under arrest."

"Ha ha." Said Quinn, immediately recognizing Tilly.

"Damn."

"Get me out of here before that pilot comes back." Said Quinn. Tristan put the SUV in park, unlocked the doors, and then got out. He walked around and took Quinn's bags, putting them into the back of the SUV. Quinn opened the passenger's rear door, and climbed in, with Daria sliding over closer to Jane.

"Hey baby." Said Jane in a low, deep voice.

"Not now." Said Quinn and Daria at the same time.

"Yep. As much as either of you don't want to admit it, you're sisters." Said Jane with a smile.

Tristan had retaken his position in the driver's seat. "We ready?"

"Yep." Said Quinn.

"Good. Off we go!" Tristan drove away from the curb, and out of the airport lot.

"We going to go by and see your old house?" asked Jane of Daria.

"Sure." Said Daria sarcastically. Tristan nodded, and drove, remembering where Daria had indicated to go earlier. "Okay, turn here." Tristan would drive a few blocks. "Now turn right here." Tristan turned, and drove. On either side of the street were nice, well kept houses, with nice green lawns. An occasional tree was seen in a yard, and a few younger children played in their respective yards. "Up here on the left." Tristan pulled up to a single story house. "This is it." Said Daria.

Jane opened her door, and got out, followed by Tilly, and Quinn. "You don't want to get out and look?" asked Tristan.

"Not really. Spent 15 years of my life here." Said Daria.

Quinn walked up to the house and knocked on the door. "Don't look now, but I think Quinn is going for a tour."

"Crap." Said Daria. She climbed out of the SUV and walked up to the door where Quinn was standing. "Do we..."

The door opened, revealing a woman who was in her late 30's. "Hi! Can I help you with something?"

"We used to live here." Said Quinn. "We just wanted to take a look around."

"Ordinarily I would say yes, but both of my children are sick right now." Said the woman.

Daria pulled a notepad from her bag. "May I ask you a few questions?"

"Sure." Said the woman, pulling the door closed behind her as she stepped outside.

"When did you move in here?"

"I've lived here since I was a teenager myself. This was my parent's house, and they bought it sometime in 1997 I believe."

Daria jotted down a few notes. "Did you go to high school here?"

"Yes."

"The new school or the old school?" Asked Daria.

"The old one. It wasn't nowhere as good as the new one. When they built that, they fired a majority of the faculty."

"May I ask what your occupation is?" Asked Daria as she wrote.

"I'm a homemaker, but I do have a Bachelor's Degree."

"Okay." Daria wrote more. "Only a couple of more questions. How old are your children?"

"Fifteen and thirteen. Both girls." Said the lady with a hint of annoyance. "And before you ask, yes, they go to school here too."

Daria faked a smile, and wrote. "What about your husband?"

"He's a Marine, and currently serving in Afghanistan."

Daria finished writing her notes. "Okay. I thank you for your time." Daria turned to walk away.

"May I ask *you* a question?"

"Sure." Said Daria, as she turned back around.

"Why all the questions?"

"I'm doing a story on my childhood home for the magazine I work for."

"Oh, okay. Well, can you print my name in the article?"

"Uh.. Okay. What is it?" asked Daria.

"Crystal VanDriessen. My husband is Mark, and my girls are Laura and Jenn."

"Okay. I will see what I can do. Thank you." Said Daria. She tucked the notepad into her bag, and turned and walked away. "C'mon Quinn."

"Excuse me." Said Crystal.

"Yes?" asked Daria and Quinn at the same time.

"I didn't get your names."

"Oh. Well, I'm Daria, and that's my sister Quinn."

"Daria *Morgendorffer*?"

"Yes, well, Morgendorffer-Lane now, and Quinn Mercer. Why do you ask?"

"My father-in-law used to talk about a girl that was in his class named Daria Morgendorffer. Spoke very highly of her."

Daria took her notepad back out again. "Is your father-in-law still here in town?"

"Yes, and still teaches too." Said Crystal. "Would you like his phone #?"

"Yes." Said Daria.

Crystal disappeared into the house, and was back out a moment later. She rattled off a phone # to Daria, who jotted it down. "I was beginning to take a little offense to your attitude, but once I found out who you were, it all made sense."

"Thanks." Daria turned and walked away. "Have a pleasant day." She said through gritted teeth. A short walk back to the SUV, and she climbed in, along with the rest of the group. "Let's go, before Quinn decides to find the two idiot's old house."

"Not those freaks. No way!" Exclaimed Quinn. "I'd rather be seen without makeup....*in public!*"

"It's good to know *some* things don't change." Said Daria as she looked at Quinn.

"Where to now?" asked Tristan.

"What time is it?" asked Daria.

"About 10 AM." Said Tilly, looking at her BlackBerry.

"I think it's time we pay Highland High a visit." Said Daria.

"Oh no." said Quinn with a waiver of worry to her voice.

Part 5

"This place is most definitely *not* the place I went to school." Said Daria as they pulled into the parking lot.

"Too bad we couldn't pick up a pair of black suits. It would be just like when immigration came to Lawndale High." Said Jane.

"That was funny." Said Tilly. "Including DeMartino being arrested."

"They should've arrested Angela Li." Said Tristan. "I hated that woman."

"Is that why you made her life miserable?" Asked Jane.

"No, that was just fun." Said Tristan.

Daria sighed. "Okay, who's all going in?"

"Me." Said Tilly after a second.

"Me too." Said Jane.

"Do I have a choice?" asked Tristan.

"No, and neither does Quinn." Said Daria, as she got out of the now parked SUV. "Unlock the back, Tristan."

"Aye sir." Said Tristan as he climbed out.

"In case you haven't noticed, Daria's a woman... so that would be ma'am." Said Jane.

"Man or woman, the commanding officer is always addressed as *sir*." Said Tristan, with a smile.

"Daria, do you have press passes for you and Jane?" asked Tilly as she got out.

"Yes. That's what I am going to look in my attaché case for. I also have passes for you, Tristan, and Quinn, albeit temporary." Said Daria.

"How did you come up with those?" asked Tilly.

"Advantages of being one of the top staff members." Said Jane.

Daria pulled her attaché case from the back. She swore she would never carry one of these. This one was a gift from her mother, and it had come in handy numerous times. She opened it up, and pulled a folder out. Inside were plastic ID cards, each had a name and a picture on them. "Here we go." She took the ID's, and then put the folder back into the case. She pulled a notepad and pen from the case, closed it, and pushed it back into the depths of the SUV's rear hatch area.

"Where did you get the pictures for these?" asked Jane as she took the IDs from Daria and passed them out.

"Pictures we had on hand." Said Daria as she closed the hatch. She turned to face the school. "Well, let's see what we can get into." They walked up to the building that was identified as the main office. They walked inside, and up to the receptionist's desk.

"Hello! Can I help you?" Asked the woman behind the desk. Daria pushed her ID across the counter. Before she could say anything, the lady held her hand up as to say "One moment." She picked up the phone, and dialed.

"Great. She's calling the cops." Said Jane.

"Mr. McVicker? I think you should come up here." She hung the phone up. "The principal will be right with you. If you will all sign in please." One by one, the members of the group showed their press IDs, and then signed into the visitor's log.

"McVicker is still the principal?" asked Daria and Quinn in unison.

"Yes Ms. Morgendorffer, and he's been expecting you."

After a few minutes, an elderly man in a grey suit walked up to the group. "Daria Morgendorffer. I never thought I would see you in Highland High again!" He walked up to Tilly, extending his hand.

"Principal McVicker?" asked Daria. He turned to face her. She looked him up and down. He was not the McVicker she remembered. This man wasn't as overweight, didn't shake like a dog with fleas, and wasn't sweating profusely. He still wore glasses, but they were more stylish than the pair he used to wear.

"Wow. You've changed."

"What.. Wait? There's two of you? You're Daria alright." Said McVicker, extending his hand to Daria now. Daria took it, shaking it curtly. "We can use the conference room." He turned and walked down the hall, with the group following behind. They walked into a medium sized conference room, with a oval wooden table, and leather office chairs. There were paintings on the walls, except for one photo. It was a picture of the old Highland High. Daria looked at it for a moment, and then took a seat at the table. McVicker sat at the head of the table, and Daria sat to his left, and Jane sat next to her. Tilly sat to McVicker's right, and Tristan sat next to her. Quinn sat next to Jane. Once everyone sat down, McVicker spoke.

"Introductions?"

"Sure." Said Daria. She stood back up. "You were partially correct. My doppelganger over there is actually my twin sister Matilda Mathiesen, and her husband Tristan Mathiesen. This," as Daria indicated Jane. "Is my wife Jane. And then you know Quinn." Daria sat back down.

"If I had heard that back then, I would have probably had a heart attack." Said McVicker. "As you all are probably aware, I am Principal Edward McVicker. I was Daria and Quinn's principal at the old Highland High, and I am now the principal of the new Highland High." He picked up a phone. "Ms. Foreman, can you have Mr. VanDriessen report to the conference room."

"Yes sir." Was barely heard on the phone.

He hung the phone up. "He is the only one left here. The only other teacher I'm sure you would remember was Bradley Buzzcut and Mrs. Emily Dickie. Mr. Buzzcut went back over to Iraq a couple of years ago as a private contractor. He was killed by an IED while riding with an EOD contingent." Daria had her notepad out, writing notes. "Mrs. Dickie transferred to another state school system shortly after you left."

Daria finished writing. "What about Beavis and Butt-head?"

McVicker took his glasses off, and laid them on the desk. "I haven't heard those names in a long time. One day they were here, the next they weren't. No news, no nothing."

Daria noted it. "Your receptionist said you knew we were coming."

McVicker took an envelope out of his jacket. "I received this letter a few weeks ago, stating that you were coming here to interview the new CEO of Burger World. That's a great honor."

"How's that?" asked Tilly.

"This town was a hellhole, and on the path to nowhere. A few years after you left, a guy came to town. Theodore Hansen. He came in, and within a couple of months, he was easily able to take over Burger World. Within a year, he had completely turned the company around. The following year, everything changed.

"Excuse me? Mr. McVicker?"

"Come in, Mr. VanDriessen." Said McVicker. VanDriessen walked into the room. "Whoa. TWO Daria's?"

"No. There is only one Daria." Said Tilly.

"And one Tilly." Said Daria. She stood up. "Mr. VanDriessen. Time has been good to you."

"Wow Daria! You look just like you did in high school."

"Except now that I am 16 years older." Said Daria.

"It doesn't show." Said VanDriessen.

"You're telling me." Said Jane with a smirk.

"And you are?" asked VanDriessen.

"Jane Lane, Daria's wife."

"Groovy." Said VanDriessen.

"Sorry, let me introduce everyone... again." Said Daria. She quickly ran through everyone. "This is one of my old teacher's Mr. VanDriessen."

"Good to meet you all. I was excited to hear that you were coming back to visit us." Said VanDriessen.

"Letter?" asked Daria.

"No. Edward told me."

"We ran into your daughter-in-law this morning. She's living in our old house." Said Quinn.

"Yes Quinn. When your parents were selling the house, I bought it."

"Okay." Said Daria. They all sat and talked for about a hour. Exchanging memories, or nightmares depending upon the point of view. A tour of the school was offered, and accepted. Principal McVicker led the tour, showing the group all points of the school. Brief stops were made at the journalism and senior English classes, introducing Daria to the students. A stop was also made at the art room, on the suggestion of Daria of course (as she said "Why should I have all the fun?"), to introduce the students to Jane. The tour ended back at the main office, in front of the reception area.

"We are glad you came back to visit us." Said VanDriessen. "That reminds me. I appreciated the thank you letter you sent me while you were in college. Believe it or not, I tried to keep up with your progress in school. You were one of the few students who came to Highland High that has actually succeeded."

"Do *you* know what happened to Beavis and Butthead?" Asked Daria.

He sighed. "Sadly, no. They disappeared shortly after you left. I do remember a couple of days after you left, they were acting very strange."

"They were always strange." Said Daria.

"No. This was strange for them. They were not acting like they normally act. When I asked them if there was anything wrong, Butthead mentioned your name a few times incoherently. He didn't use that horrible name they had for you. Even Beavis wasn't himself. He just stared off into space."

Daria jotted this down. "This ought to be good." She said to herself. She looked up to McVicker. "So there is no record of them being killed, or any other tracks?"

"No." Said McVicker. "And maybe it is for the best."

"Yeah Daria. Why do you want to know so much about those morons?" asked Quinn.

"Curiosity." Said Daria. She offered her hand to McVicker. "Thank you for your time, and for showing us around." He shook her hand.

"No problem Ms. Morgendorffer, or should I say Ms. Lane. You are welcome back at Highland High anytime. You and your family." Said McVicker.

"It's Morgendorffer-Lane, actually, and it was good to see you too." Said Daria. She turned to VanDriessen. "It was good to see you again as well, Mr. VanDriessen." She offered her hand to him.

"Please Daria, call me Erik." He shook her hand as well.

The group turned and headed out of the building, and across the parking lot to the SUV. "I'm ready to get something to eat and go back to the hotel." Said Daria.

"We could have had lunch at the school cafeteria." Said Jane.

"It did actually look edible, didn't it?" Said Tilly.

"I don't trust school food at all." Said Quinn.

"Apparently, a lot has changed." Said Tristan, as he unlocked the SUV.

"You know what, screw going out. Let's go to the hotel and have a couple of pizzas delivered." Said Jane, getting in.

"I'm game." Said Daria as she climbed in.

"So am I." said Tilly, taking her seat.

"Order me a cheeseless, and we have a deal." Said Quinn, closing the door behind her as she got in.

"What about me?" Asked Tristan, as he started the SUV, and navigated his way out of the parking lot.

"You're always up for pizza, Trist." Said Tilly.

"True." Said Tristan. "So very true."

Part 6

"I'll give this town one thing. The pizza's not bad." Said Tristan as he looked at the three pizza boxes spread across the counter. "This stuff is so awesome, I think I will even try Quinn's cheeseless pizza."

"You take it, you eat it." Said Tilly.

Tristan took a slice of the smaller pizza, and took a bite. "Not bad. Needs cheese, but not bad."

"See? Just because it doesn't have cheese doesn't mean it's not good!" Said Quinn. "While you're there, could you bring me another slice... and a diet Ultra? Thanks!"

"Sure." Said Tristan. He picked another slice from the box, and put it on a plate. He then walked over and pulled a diet Ultra from the fridge. He didn't see it, but Daria, Tilly, and Jane were all just staring at him at this point. Tristan then walked over, handed Quinn the plate, opened the soda, and then handed it to her.

"Thanks, Tristan!" said Quinn bubbly as usual.

"You're welcome." Said Tristan as he turned around, and now noticing the looks he had been getting.

Jane was trying hard to not laugh. Daria had her glasses off, looking down at the table, shaking her head. Tilly had her arms crossed. "Thirteen years later, and you're still a slave to her charms."

Tristan looked blankly at Tilly until the realization of what he had just done sunk in. He covered his face with his hands. "Oh no..."

"When the fail is so strong, one facepalm is not enough." Said Jane. At this point, Quinn was starting to laugh.

"Sorry Tristan." Quinn said with a giggle.

"It's okay, Quinn. No harm done." Said Tristan.

"Just like Quinn. Can get any guy to do anything she wants." Said Tilly.

"Everyone except Jeffy." Said Quinn.

"Didn't the three J's do everything you asked them, and then some?" asked Daria, finally looking up.

"Yeah, but then I guess Jeffy just matured more than Joey or Jamie." Said Quinn. "When I started dating him, Joey and Jamie tried their best to break us up. I think it was then Jeffy realized that they weren't really as good of friends as he thought they were."

"So... why does he still hang around them, then?" asked Daria.

"They patched things up when Jeffy came to both Joey and Jamie and asked them to be his best men at the wedding." Said Quinn. "They talked through it and a lot of things were settled."

"I remember that." Said Jane. "It was odd that there were two of them."

"Definitely was one for the record books." Said Tristan. "That was also the day I first proposed to Tilly."

"Yeah." Said Daria, looking over at Tilly. "You two had only been dating a year or so at that point."

"I think my reaction was to tell you to go to hell." Said Tilly.

"Yeah. I didn't give up though." Said Tristan.

"You proposed to me again on Quinn and Jeffy's anniversary." Said Tilly.

"You did say yes, that time." Said Tristan.

"Yes I did." Said Tilly, smiling. "We've had our moments, but I'm happy."

"And that's all that counts." Said Quinn, as she walked into the kitchen.

"We are all happy with who we are with." Said Daria as she took Jane's hand and lightly kissed it.

"Yes. Yes we are." Said Jane with a smile.

"So. What are we going to do tomorrow?" asked Quinn.

"Well, we can see if we can track down Stewart, but I really didn't have much interaction with him. It's sad, but I interacted with Beavis and Butthead more." Said Daria.

"Yeah... I thought mom was going to freak when you brought them to the house the day we moved." Said Quinn.

"Yeah, and you noticed I never heard anything about it." Said Daria.

"Why do you care about them so much? I mean, they were.... Ewwwwwww!" said Quinn.

"I don't know. Maybe it is just that I wanted Jane and Tilly to meet them. Maybe to just see what they did with their lives." Said Daria.

"It's apparent they are no longer alive." Said Tristan. "Everyone we have asked so far says they just seemingly vanished into thin air. No trace, no nothing."

The room phone rang, and Jane got up to answer it. "Hello?... Okay... Yeah... okay.. one of us will be right down to get it." She hung the phone up.

"Who was that?" asked Daria.

"The front desk. A package was just delivered there for us." Said Jane. "Wanna walk down and get it with me?" She asked Daria with a wink.

"Sure." Replied Daria as she got up, and headed for the door. "We'll be right back." She opened the door, and waited for Jane to walk out, and she then followed. Once on the elevator, she spoke. "Did they say what it was?"

"No." said Jane. "The desk said it was just dropped off a few minutes ago."

"Wonder what it could be?" asked Daria, not really asking Jane directly.

"I don't know, but we will find out." Said Jane. The elevator stopped, and they got off, and approached the desk. The same girl who was there the day before was there again.

"Oh, hello Ms. Morgendorffer." Said the girl when she recognized Daria.

"Hello. You have a package for us?"

"Yes." Said the girl. She went into the office, and then came back out with a manila envelope. "Here you go."

"Thank you." Said Daria, as she started opening the envelope. She pulled some paperwork out, and flipped through it. Without as much as a frown or smile, she asked "Who did you say delivered this?" The girl didn't answer. "Well, it's obvious that this wasn't shipped by a major carrier, so that means it was hand delivered."

The girl looked around. "I'm not supposed to tell you."

"Why?" asked Jane, looking at Daria, trying to see what was in the envelope. Daria had already the papers back into the envelope and closed it.

"I was told I could not tell you." Said the girl.

"By who?" asked Daria.

The girl looked around, took out piece of paper, and wrote something on it. "I'm sorry. I cannot tell you. Oh, also while you are down here, I forgot to give you your copies of your receipts yesterday." She finished writing something on the paper, folded it in half, and handed it to Daria. "Sorry about that."

Daria looked at her with a bit of confusion, but took the paper. "Thank you." She turned to Jane, and indicated for her to walk away. They walked back to the elevator in silence.

"What was that about?" asked Jane. All Daria did was look at Jane and put a finger to Jane's lips. Jane looked at Daria with confusion, but didn't say another word until they were in the room. The door closed behind them, and Jane opened up. "What the hell was that?"

She handed the receipt to Jane. "Read it."

Jane opened the paper up, and read it aloud. "The guy who delivered it presented credentials saying he was from the CIA. I didn't really notice what he looked like, nor did I get his name. Hope this helps. Please don't say anything if asked." She looked at Daria. "What was in the envelope?"

"What the hell is going on?" asked Tilly.

"The envelope. It had records and info on Beavis and Butthead." Said Daria.

"Like?" asked Jane.

"There were all kinds of documents. The ones that count were the death certificates." Said Daria.

"So they are dead." Said Quinn.

"The death certificates are from Juarez, Mexico. It says they died about three months after I left." Daria looked down at the floor. "If you will excuse me, I want to be alone for a while." Without another word, she walked across the room, and into the bedroom. She forcibly closed the door behind herself. Once into the room, she took her glasses off and set them on the desk. She then laid down, face first onto the bed.

"What was that about?" asked Tilly after Daria had vanished into the bedroom.

Jane was shuffling through the paperwork, and found the coroner's report for Beavis. "Died of a drug overdose." Jane read through the report. "Something is not right."

"What?" asked Tilly. Jane handed her the paper. Tilly read through the report. Tristan looked over her shoulder at it. "I don't see anything wrong with it."

Quinn came over and looked the report. "Can I see that?" She looked it up and down. "You said this was from Juarez, Mexico?"

"That's what it says." Said Jane.

"This wasn't written by someone from Juarez." Said Quinn.

"Okay Mrs. Lawyer, why do you say that?" asked Jane.

"I've seen a lot of legal documents. This one is well-written... almost too well-written." Said Quinn.

"Meaning?"

"It's a fake." Said Quinn. "Can I see the rest of those?"

"Sure." Said Jane, handing Quinn the envelope.

Quinn leafed through the rest of the paperwork. After a few minutes, she set the papers down. "There is also a death certificate for Butthead as well. School records, family records, photos."

"So?" asked Jane and Tilly.

"The records. They are issued by the school district. They aren't anywhere as perfectly written as the death certificates." Said Quinn.

"Maybe no one really knows what happened, and someone faked the certificates so they could claim the death benefits." Said Jane.

"Maybe, but if someone bought these documents, they paid a lot for them." Said Quinn. "They are just too perfect." She pulled Beavis' certificate back out and read it, and then read the attachments. She then pulled Butthead's certificate out, and read it, along with the attachments. "Oh no."

"What?" Asked Jane and Tilly again.

"The attachments are the coroner's reports. They list what was found with the bodies, their findings, etc etc." Said Quinn. Jane and Tilly looked at Quinn blankly. "They were found a week apart. Beavis had a black leather jacket with him. In the pocket, they found a picture of a girl." Quinn rifled through the contents and pulled a photocopy of the picture, handing it to Jane. "Butthead was found a week later. He

was found with a brown leather jacket and a red t-shirt that didn't fit him. In the pocket of the jacket was the same picture."

"Oh my God." Said Jane.

"What?" asked Tilly and Tristan.

"Here." Said Jane. She handed the photocopy to Tilly.

They only took a second to recognize the girl in the picture. "It's Daria." Said Tristan finally.

"Yeah.... It's Daria." Said Quinn, voice trailing off.

Part 7

Jane waited until Tilly and Tristan had left. Quinn originally had decided to stay with Daria and Jane, but at the last minute decided to room with Tristan and Tilly. Jane turned off the lights in the living room, and walked into the bedroom. Daria was still laying on the bed face down. She sat down next to Daria on the bed. "Daria? You still awake?" Jane said softly, placing her hand on Daria's shoulder.

"Yeah." Said Daria quietly, barely above a whisper.

"You okay?"

"Yeah. I guess."

"You want to talk about it?"

"No."

"Please?" asked Jane.

Daria propped herself up on her arms, and sighed. "I didn't know."

"Know what?"

"Those two idiots. They were nothing more to me than a irritant. Yet, the last thing they had to be thinking of was me." Said Daria.

"You missed what Quinn said." Jane said.

"Another comment about them?"

"Yeah... you could say that." Said Jane.

"What? That they deserved what they got? That they are better off dead? That..."

"She said the certificates were fakes." Said Jane quietly during Daria's rant.

Daria sat up. "Run that by me again..."

"Quinn looked at the certificates. She said they were fakes. Beavis and Butthead were found in Juarez, Mexico. The certificates are from Mexico, but she said they are too good to be real."

Daria put on her trademark smile. "Just like mom... one hell of a lawyer. Mom says that sometimes Quinn is a better lawyer than she was."

"Daria, can I ask you a question?"

"Why do I care so much about those two morons?"

"Yeah."

"Well. I guess it's because I seemed to be the only one who could get through to them. When I first met them, they had this name they called me all the time...Dia.."

Jane waved Daria off. "I know... You don't have to say it."

"Thanks. Anyway, it was the time Bill Clinton came to town. Everyone was asking benign questions. I stood up and asked a real question. From that point on, they stopped calling me that name, and seemed to, even if only slightly, to change. They were the only two people who didn't turn and go the other way when I walked down the hall." Jane started to giggle. "It's not funny."

"Daria! They had a crush on you!"

"Thanks.. That makes it better." Said Daria.

"There has to be some kind of official record on them." Said Jane.

"I think tomorrow we will just see if we can go find Stewart, and maybe take in a bit of the new town."

Jane put her arm around Daria. "We could just stay in tomorrow. It's been a while since we've been in a hotel room together."

Daria smiled, and gave Jane a light kiss. "I'm glad you came with me."

"Hey, someone had to keep you out of trouble."

They were silent for a few moments, until Daria broke the silence. "I love you, Jane."

"I love you too Daria. Now and always."

The next morning, the group was downstairs in the hotel lobby having breakfast. "I thought we were going to go out for breakfast." Said Quinn.

"I like this better." Said Tilly. "We can eat, and then go back upstairs and go back to bed for a while."

"Bagels and cream cheese... hold the bagel." Said Tristan as he scooped the cream cheese out of small plastic tub and into his mouth."

"Do you know what that stuff does to you?" asked Jane.

"No." said Tristan.

"It causes your babies to be born naked." Said Jane. Daria almost choked on her waffle, and Tilly was trying hard not to expel apple juice from her nose. Jane was laughing at this point.

"I don't want to hear about this." Said Quinn.

"What? You're the only one here that has kids." Said Tilly.

"That reminds me, why haven't you two had kids?" asked Quinn.

Tilly and Tristan both looked at each other. Tilly set her glass down. "I guess we just haven't got around to it." She said, turning to Daria and Jane. "What's your excuses?"

"Too busy with work." Said Daria. "Besides, two women can't produce a child."

"I think Trent offered once." Said Jane.

"Yeah, before him and Monique got married, and he found out he couldn't have kids." Said Daria.

Tilly was silent. "I didn't know that."

"It's okay." Said Jane. "He was bummed about it for a while. They tried different things, but they just decided that it was the way things were meant to be."

"Well. Enough about kids." Said Tristan. "Next thing you know, something will happen and Tilly will end up pregnant."

"Bite your tongue!" said Tilly, smacking Tristan, but not hard enough to do damage. "Can you imagine me or Daria pregnant? We'd look like a snake that swallowed a basketball!"

"Can we talk about something else?" asked Quinn. "I'm starting to miss my kids." Quinn laughed. "They love spending time with their aunts, though. Gives me and Jeffy some time alone."

"When he's home." Said Daria.

"He gets a week of home time every four weeks he is out." Said Quinn. "He makes excellent money, and he enjoys driving. Plus his truck is big enough that me and the kids can go with him for a week or so."

"How do you, Jeffy, and two small girls live in a truck?" asked Tilly.

"Very carefully, but we manage. The best part is his company encourages it. Says it makes the drivers happier when they spend time with their families."

"Hey, nothing says happiness like watching network users cry when you accidentally delete their accounts." Said Tristan with a evil grin.

"I think you do that on purpose." Said Tilly.

"No. Not me. Not I. No way."

"You would think your bosses would catch on to that." Said Tilly.

"They are clueless. As long as they can surf the Internet and play their Facebook games, they don't care." Said Tristan.

"I think you read waaaayyyy too much Bastard Operator From Hell when you were in college." Said Tilly.

"Hey. Everything I needed to learn about being a system administrator I learned from Simon Travaglia." Said Tristan. "Including the excuse calendar."

"I keep meaning to get a copy of that for my school." Said Tilly.

"How would a technical excuse calendar be effective in a college composition classroom?" asked Tristan.

"When the students start panicking because their papers are due at the end of the week, and they give me a crap excuse, I could feed them a better one." Said Tilly with a smile.

"Or see if they are a user of the excuse calendar too." Said Daria.

Jane looked at the clock on the wall. "If we are going to catch naps before we head out, we better go back upstairs now."

"Good idea." Said Tilly. "I could use a nap."

"I think I will call home and see how Jeffy and the girls are doing." Said Quinn. She pulled her cell phone from her pocket, and stepped away from the table, taking a seat on one of the leather couches were placed around the lobby.

"We'll be upstairs." Said Tilly.

Quinn covered the phone with her hand. "I have my key." She said with a smile.

The foursome walked to the elevator, and headed up to their rooms. Once they reached the 5th floor, they went to their respective rooms. Daria and Jane went into the bedroom, and simply laid down, holding each other. Tristan and Tilly did essentially the same thing, except they paused long enough to get something to drink.

Meanwhile, Quinn was downstairs, still on the phone. "Yeah. I should be home in a couple of days. I didn't know what exactly we were coming out here for. Daria is supposed to be interviewing some guy for her magazine..... Yeah... I know..... So, how are the girls doing?" Quinn was looking around the room, and happened to notice a man who was reading a newspaper across the room. "That's great. Tell them mommy will be home soon." Quinn looked back up at the guy across the room, and she could have sworn that he was watching her. She shrugged it off, and continued her conversation. "Well, tell them if they behave, that they can spend the weekend with Aunt Daria and Aunt Jane." Quinn could hear cheers in the background. "I don't know why they like going to Daria's so much... Probably because they have a girl's night..... No... Yeah...." Quinn looked back up at the sound of a rustling newspaper, and saw the guy who was across the room was still reading the newspaper, but now it was a different paper. "Hey Jeffy... I am going to go. I want to go up and catch a nap before we start on our adventure for the day. Yes... Yes I love you too.. Bye." Quinn thumbed the phone off, and got up. She walked across the room to the elevator. Inside, she turned to face the doors, and just as they were closing, she saw the guy lower his newspaper. He was dressed in a black suit, and had a pair of sunglasses tucked in his pocket. Quinn didn't catch much more as the doors closed, and the elevator began its trip to the 5th floor.

The man watched Quinn get on the elevator, and after the doors closed, he reached inside his jacket, and pulled a cell phone from his pocket, and dialed a number. After a few seconds, he spoke. "Yes.... I'm here, and so are they. They are in their rooms.... Rooms 501 and 502.... What?... Yes... Of course... No problem." He turned the phone off, and tucked it back into his jacket pocket. He stood up, and walked out of the lobby, nodding to the day manager on his way out.

Quinn stood in front of Room 501. "I don't want to wake them, but I need to tell Daria." She knocked on the door. She waited, and didn't get a response. She knocked again. "Maybe they are asleep." After waiting what seemed like forever, she heard the door unlock. The door opened slightly, to reveal Jane, who looked half asleep.

"Quinn?"

"Where's my sister?" asked Quinn as she pushed her way past Jane and headed for where she knew Daria was. She made it halfway across the room when Daria came out of the bedroom.

"Quinn? What's wrong?" asked Daria, seeing the look of concern on her sister's face.

"There was this guy downstairs watching me." Said Quinn.

"A lot of guys watch you. Called being cute." Said Jane.

"No. This guy was wearing a black suit." Said Quinn.

Jane and Daria looked at each other. "What the hell is going on?" Asked Daria, more to herself than anyone in particular.

Quinn took a moment to collect herself. "I don't know what he was doing here."

"Haven't pissed anyone off lately, have you?" asked Jane.

"Not in the past month." Said Daria with a small smile.

"Wait.." said Quinn, holding hands up. "Didn't the girl at the front desk say someone from the CIA delivered that envelope?"

"Yeah." Said Jane. "Why?"

"Black suit? CIA? Faked documents? Hello!!!!" Exclaimed Quinn. "I think we need to stay here in the hotel for the day."

"No... I'm not letting anyone intimidate me or my family." Said Jane. "We're going out and about."

"Okay. Let's all just calm down a minute." Said Daria. "We make too much noise and Tilly and Tristan will be over here. Remember, this is supposed to be a mini vacation for them." She turned to Quinn. "You can stay here in the room with us, or you can go back to Tilly and Tristan's room."

Quinn thought it out for a moment. "I think I will go back to Tilly and Tristan's."

"Okay. We will go out for lunch and then go see if we can find any more survivors of the old town." Said Daria.

"Okay." Said Quinn. "Sorry for waking you two. I know this is supposed to be a vacation for you as well."

"It's okay Quinn." Said Daria. "We meet with the CEO of Burger World tomorrow morning, and by tomorrow afternoon, we will heading home."

"Okay." Said Quinn. She walked out of the room, and used her key card to get into Tilly and Tristan's room. When she walked in, she found Tilly and Tristan were awake, sitting on the couch. "Did I wake you two from Daria's?"

"Yeah.." said Tristan, but Tilly kicked him in the leg.

"It's okay, Quinn." Said Tilly. "I needed to get up and get a drink anyway."

"Didn't you have a dr..." started Tristan before Tilly stomped on his foot. "Ouch!"

"I just want to lie down for a little bit." Said Quinn.

"Sure." Said Tilly, as she drug Tristan to his feet as she stood up. "We'll be in the bedroom if you need us."

"Thanks." Said Quinn. She picked the pillows and blanket off the chair, and placed them onto the couch. She laid down, as Tilly and Tristan walked to the bedroom. Before they had reached the door, Quinn was fast asleep.

They walked into the bedroom, and closed the door behind them. "For a hotshot lawyer, she sure gets frazzled easy." Said Tristan.

"You need to learn to keep your mouth shut sometimes." Said Tilly.

"Hey, advantage of being a sys admin... I can say and do what I want." Said Tristan with a smile.

"Well, you're not in Mission Central..." Started Tilly.

"Mission Control..." Corrected Tristan.

"Whatever you call it, you're not there. You need to learn some tact."

Tristan just smiled, and changed the subject. "We going to watch TV?"

"No." said Tilly, looking at her cell phone's clock. "We can catch a couple hours of a nap before we head out."

Part 8

"Where we going to eat?" asked Tristan as he was driving through the streets of Highland.

"Burger World?" asked Jane as she looked over at Daria. "Hey, we can do some pre-interview research!"

"Last time I ate there, I think I was sick for a week." Said Quinn.

"And that was before the two morons tried frying nightcrawlers." Said Daria.

"Uhh... Are we sure we want to eat there?" asked Tilly, already feeling an uneasiness in her stomach.

"Too late. Already here." Said Tristan as he pulled into the parking lot.

Daria and Quinn both looked out the window. "This isn't the same place." Said Daria.

"It's cleaner." Said Quinn.

"Still scared?" asked Jane.

"Yes." Said Daria.

"Relax. It can't be any worse than some of the places we've eaten while on assignment." Said Jane.

"You have no sense of adventure." Said Tristan, shutting the SUV off. "Let's go in." The group exited the SUV, and walked towards the restaurant. Daria was at the lead of the group, and was the first to reach the door. She put her hand on the handle, took a deep breath and let it out slowly. She then opened the door, preparing herself for the onslaught she remembered.

It wasn't there. Daria looked surprised as she stepped in and looked around. The building was very clean, and busy. She glanced around the room at the various customers who were eating, and noticed that none of them seemed like they were displeased about what they were eating. As she looked around the building, she saw a picture, hanging in prominence, above the condiment area. It was a picture of a man in a business suit, short black hair, with a faint smile. Daria read the name on the brass plate below the picture. "Theodore J. Hansen, President & CEO – Burger World, Incorporated." She turned to the group. "Okay, when is Rod Sterling going to appear?"

"Food don't look half bad." Said Tilly.

"They even have salads." Said Quinn. The all walked to the counter, and placed their orders. Tilly, Daria, Jane, and Tristan all ordered burgers, fries, and Ultra Colas, and Quinn ordered a salad, with dressing on the side, and a Diet Ultra. Tristan paid, and they found a table they could all fit at. After a few minutes, their order was ready, and Tristan and Jane got up and retrieved the trays, returning to the table. Once seated, they started passing out the orders to the recipients.

Daria unwrapped her burger. "Well... Here goes." She took a bite. After a few moments to chew and swallow, she continued. "Wow. This isn't half bad. A thousand times better than it was back then!" The others took that as a good sign, and started to eat as well.

Not much was said between the group, except the occasional "Not bad." or "It's not killing me yet." They were so busy eating, they didn't notice the man walk up to their table.

"Daria? Daria Morgendorffer?"

"Who's ask...." Started Daria as she looked up, and instantly recognized the man standing before her. "Stewart Stevenson."

"Wow! You look great!" Said Stewart.

"Thanks." Said Daria, turning a bit red.

"Pull up a chair." Said Jane, indicating an empty chair at a nearby table.

"Thanks." Said Stewart, as he grabbed the chair and sat down. He looked over at Quinn. "Quinn, is it?"

"Yeah." Said Quinn.

"You're looking great as well!" said Stewart, trying not to sound creepy. He then turned to Tilly. "I didn't know Daria had a twin sister."

Jane gave Daria the "Who the hell?" look. "Let me introduce everyone." Said Daria. "You already know Quinn. My doppelganger sitting next to Quinn is my sister Tilly. The raven-haired beauty sitting next to me is my wife Jane, and sitting next to her is Tilly's husband Tristan. Everyone, this is Stewart Stevenson. He went to school with me and the moronic duo."

"Wife?" asked Stewart, a bit hung on the point.

"Yep." Said Jane. Daria could feel Jane starting to tense, like she was preparing for a fight.

It wasn't necessary. "Cool." Said Stewart. He directed his attention to Jane. "Daria was an awesome person back then. I wish I would have gotten to know her better."

"So, what finds you here?" asked Daria.

Stewart pointed to the nametag on his shirt. "I'm the manager here."

Daria lit up. "Really? So maybe you can tell me what the hell all the secrecy is about my meeting with the CEO tomorrow."

"I think it's better if you find out directly from Ted, Mr. Hansen, tomorrow." Said Stewart. "He has been looking forward to this day ever since he received your reply to his invitation."

"You call him Ted?" asked Jane.

"Yeah. I'm frequently at the main office. I'm part of the growth and expansion committee." Said Stewart. "Most likely, I will be at the office tomorrow."

"So then maybe YOU can answer the question that no one else seems to be able to answer." Daria said.

"What happened to Beavis and Butthead?"

"Yes." Confirmed Daria.

"Dead." Said Stewart. "They dropped out of school and disappeared. They were found in Juarez, Mexico. Apparently they had gotten mixed up with some drug runners, and ended up overdosing on cocaine."

Quinn looked across the table at Daria, and Daria nodded slightly. "How did you find this out?" Asked Quinn?

"It was in the paper." Said Stewart. "Not a big article, mind you. Just two small blurbs about it. I doubt anyone saw it."

"Apparently no one saw it." Said Jane. "Everyone we have asked said they simply disappeared."

Stewart looked around the room. "Hey, listen guys. I need to go. I have to finish the daily reports and get orders placed for the next day. It was nice to see you two again, and nice to meet you all." Stewart

reached into his pocket, and pulled out two twenty dollar bills. "Oh, lunch is on me." He quickly walked away, and disappeared behind the counter.

"Now that was weird." Said Daria.

"He knows the truth." Said Quinn. "Or he knows who made the fake paperwork."

"I was wondering that myself." Said Tilly.

"Ehh... Let's just finish eating, and then we'll go roaming around town and see what kind of trouble we can find." Said Tristan.

"Yeah." Said Daria a bit uneasily. Something wasn't right, and it was beginning to bother her. She looked up at her family, and was hoping no one noticed.

They finished their meals, and headed out to the SUV. They all climbed in, and after fastening their seat belts, Tristan stated the SUV and backed out of the parking spot. As they pulled out of the parking lot, Quinn noticed a black four door car with dark tinted windows sitting in the corner of the lot. "Does anyone else find that car odd?"

"It's been sitting there a while." Said Tristan.

"How do you know?" asked Quinn.

"The condensate from the A/C. It's left a nice size puddle." Said Tristan.

"No, what's odd is that it has government plates." Said Quinn.

"We are close to the border. Could be I.N.S." said Jane.

"Something is still not right." Said Quinn.

They pulled into traffic, and headed down the road. Tristan looked into the rearview mirror, and noticed the car was now following them. "We're being followed."

"That car?" asked Quinn.

"Yes." Said Tristan.

"Let's see how far he will go." Said Daria. "Evasive maneuvers."

"Aye captain." Said Tristan. He drove down the road, and then made a turn, then a little more, then another turn. After about fifteen minutes, the car was still following them. "They're still back there."

"Okay. Let's just head to the hotel, and see what happens." Said Daria. Tristan just nodded, and made way to the hotel. As they pulled into the parking lot, the car passed by the hotel. Tristan pulled into a parking spot, and they got out of the SUV to go into the hotel. Just as they walked into the hotel, Tristan noticed the car was coming back. He decided to keep quiet, and not alarm the rest of the family. They walked into the hotel, and to the elevator. Within a few short minutes, they were all in Daria & Jane's room.

"Who the hell was following us?" asked Jane.

"I don't know." Said Daria. "There is one way to find out."

"How?" asked Tilly.

"Wait until we run into him again, and ask him why in the hell he's following us." Said Daria.

"Well, we might get that chance." Said Tristan. "I saw the car turning around as we were walking into the hotel."

"Shall we go find out?" asked Jane.

"Yes." Said Daria. "Me and Quinn will go." Quinn had a look of surprise on her face.

"No. I'm going too." Said Jane.

"No, you're not." Said Daria. "I need you and Tristan to go down with us and keep watch. Tilly will also go out with us."

"Then why are we standing here?" asked Tilly.

"He's in the parking lot." Said Quinn, looking out the window.

"Let's go." Said Daria. They all left the room, and headed out. "Tristan and Jane, you will remain in the lobby as we go out. If he happens to be in the lobby, you two stand by the elevator. Tilly and I will approach him, and Quinn will act as legal counsel."

"Okay." Said Tristan. Jane and Quinn just nodded.

The elevator stopped, and they walked out. Sitting in the lobby, in the same seat he was earlier in the day, was the man in black. Tristan and Jane stood by the elevator. Daria and Tristan walked up to the guy, with Quinn closely behind. The man noticed their approach, and tried to hide behind his newspaper. Tristan and Jane moved from their positions by the elevator to a position by the front door. As Daria, Tilly, and Quinn got closer, the guy folded his paper, and got up heading towards the door. He didn't make it far. Tristan and Jane stepped into his path. "That's far enough." Said Jane.

He went to turn around, but Tilly and Daria were right behind him. "Okay. Now you're going to answer some questions."

"I have no answers." Was all the man said.

"First off, let's start with your name and who you work for." Said Daria, taking a notepad and pen from her pocket.

"Brian Coffey. I am an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency." Said the man. He produced an ID, and Daria copied the info down.

"Why are you following us?" asked Daria.

"You don't recognize me, do you?" asked the agent.

"Should I?" asked Daria.

"That is not important. I am on a special assignment, to assure that you make your appointment with Mr. Hansen tomorrow." Said the agent.

"This is turning into a bad rehash of *The Matrix*." Muttered Tilly.

"No. I can't change forms like that, but that would rule if I could!" Said the agent. He realized what he had just said, and calmed himself.

Daria looked up at the agent when he said "rule". It felt and sounded familiar, but she didn't let it show. "So who the hell are you?"

"Brian Coffey." Repeated the agent.

"You're not telling me everything." Said Daria.

"You're right. I'm not. I apologize for being overly intrusive, but I have been instructed to make sure you make the meeting on time." Said the agent.

"Can you answer some questions?" asked Daria.

"Not pertaining to my assignment, no."

"Let's step away from the doors and have a seat." Said Daria.

"And I wouldn't try to run." Said Tilly. "It wouldn't be pretty if you did."

"Very well." The agent and the group walked over to a group of chairs, and sat down, except for Tristan and Jane, who remained standing behind the agent.

"Are you from this area?" asked Daria.

"Yes." Said the agent.

"Can you tell me how long?"

"No."

"Do the names Beavis and Butthead mean anything to you?"

The agent looked around nervously, then back to Daria. "Yes. They were two kids who went to school back in the old Highland High. They were found dead in Juarez, Mexico."

"How do you know this?" asked Quinn.

"I am the one who delivered the packet you received with their info in it." Said the agent.

"Doesn't explain why you know how they died. The envelope was sealed. Besides, the paperwork inside is mostly a fabrication." Said Quinn.

"How do you know this?" asked the agent.

"I've seen enough fake documents in my time. Those cost someone quite a lot." Said Quinn.

The agent was fidgeting in his seat. "Look, I need to get out of here. I've probably already said too much."

"One last question." Asked Daria. "Do you work for Theodore Hansen?"

"I have to go." Said the Agent, as he stood up. Tristan and Jane stepped forward to stop him, but Daria waved them off.

"Thank you. You just gave me my answer." Said Daria.

The agent quickly exited the room, and retreated to his car. Once inside the car, he pulled his cell phone from his pocket. He quickly dialed a number. "Mr. Hansen? Yes, I am watching them. They cornered me. No, I didn't tell them anything except my name and what I was supposed to be doing.... Yes.. they will be there tomorrow... The surprise will be waiting for them. Uh huh... Yeah.... Okay.. " he hung the phone up. He started his car, and then quickly left the lot.

"That was weird." Said Jane as they were all back in Daria and Jane's room.

"Why does the CEO of Burger World have a CIA agent working for him?" asked Tilly.

"I don't know, but I'm quite sure we will find out tomorrow." Said Daria.

"You noticed he seemed a bit nervous when you mentioned the moronic duo?" asked Jane.

"Yeah. I'm sure he knows what really happened to them, or Hansen does. Either way, I am going to find out tomorrow." Said Daria. "Now let's just relax and chill until tomorrow afternoon."

Part 9

Daria was awake at 5AM, and the meeting was at 10 AM. She tried to go back to sleep, but couldn't force her mind to sleep. So she just relented and got out of bed. Jane barely stirred as Daria slipped out of the bed, putting on a robe and slippers. She decided to go down to the lobby and see if they had set up for breakfast yet. As she stepped out of the elevator, the hotel staff was just finishing placing the breakfast items out. She picked up two containers of raspberry yogurt and a spoon, and sat down at a table. She was halfway through the first container, when she felt the presence of someone standing in front of her. "Hey Quinn."

"Hey Daria. Couldn't sleep?"

Daria went to go with sarcastic comment, but she changed her mind at the last minute. "Yeah. Too much on my mind I guess." She motioned to the chair across from her. "Have a seat."

"Did they have any fat free yogurt up there?" asked Quinn.

"I think they did. Strawberry and I think black cherry."

"Be right back." Quinn walked away to retrieve her breakfast. Daria noticed that Quinn was wearing basically the same style robe that Daria was wearing, except it was pink, whereas Daria's robe was a dark green color. After a few moments, Quinn returned to the table. "The black cherry wasn't fat free. All they had was strawberry and vanilla."

"They are all pretty good." Said Daria, as she took another spoonful of her own yogurt.

"So... how do you think this is going to go?" asked Quinn.

"I don't know. I've interviewed billionaires, former heads of state, and even convicts. I don't know what to expect with this one."

"Can I ask you something, and have you answer me honestly?" asked Quinn.

"I guess." Said Daria.

"How did you really feel about Beavis and Butthead?"

Daria had just taken another spoonful. She set it back into the container. "I don't know. They were a source of entertainment for a while, and the only two who would actually be seen with me. Then I get here, and find out what happened, and, well..." Daria trailed off, not finishing her sentence.

"YOU had a THING for them?" asked Quinn.

"No. I tolerated them. I could understand them, but I didn't have a thing for them." Said Daria.

"Daria, what do you think happened to them?"

"I don't know Quinn. I figured they would be in jail somewhere." Said Daria. "Maybe they are in some foreign jail, and that's why the CIA made fake documents for them. Maybe they are not acknowledging their presence in a foreign country."

"Can anyone join this party?" came a voice. Both Quinn and Daria looked up, to see Jane and Tilly standing there.

"Sure." Said Daria. "They have the breakfast stuff out." Tilly and Jane turned and walked over to browse the selections. "I bet I woke Jane up when I got out of bed."

"Then what is Tilly doing down here?" Asked Quinn.

"I don't know. Maybe she sensed me being awake. She has had a thing for that lately. She'd say she wasn't feeling good, and call me, and I'd be feeling the same way."

"The bond of twins." Said Quinn.

"Did you ever think what it could have been like if Tilly had been your twin sister?" asked Daria.

"Yeah, actually I have." Said Quinn. "And I think you would have hated us even more than you hated me back then."

Daria looked deadpan at Quinn. "I never hated you Quinn. You got on my nerves, aggravated the hell out of me, and were a royal pain in my ass, but I always loved you Quinn. You are my sister."

Quinn giggled. "I remember the day Sandi found out you were my sister. She acted like it was a major crisis. She was even more pissed when Stacy and Tiffany told her they had known about it for about a year."

"Speaking of... How are Stacy and Tiffany?" asked Jane as she and Tilly approached the table and sat down.

"They both are still in Lawndale. Stacy is still teaching at Lawndale High. Tiffany was just promoted to assistant manager at Cashmans." Said Quinn.

"I still get letters from the school board wanting me to come back and teach at Lawndale High." Said Daria. "Two years was enough." She said with a smile. "I don't know how Stacy does it."

"She likes it." Said Quinn. "Especially since she is making more money as a teacher than Sandi is at being a fashion consultant."

"You know they have waffles, right?" stated Jane.

Daria quickly changed pace. "Yeah, but I wanted something that would taste the same coming up as it did going down. They didn't have any peanut butter, so I had to settle for this."

"Not feeling good?" asked Tilly.

"Just nerves." Said Daria. She turned to Jane. "Did I wake you when I got up?"

"No, but you not being in bed woke me up." Said Jane.

"And you?" asked Daria of Tilly.

"Just had a uneasy feeling." Said Tilly. "Just like always. I sense how you feel."

"Weird." Said Jane. "So, if you feel how Daria feels... what do you feel when me and Daria are...." Jane stopped as all eyes went to her. "WHAT?"

"Not.... Going.... There..." said Daria. Tilly started giggling. "What?"

"There was that one time, right after you two had gotten married. For some reason, I felt like I was on Cloud Nine." Said Tilly.

Jane smiled broadly. Daria turned a deep red. "You weren't the only one on Cloud Nine." Said Jane.

Daria put her face into her hands. "Can I get some water for this facepalm?" She muttered. Everyone at the table started laughing.

Quinn decided to change the subject. "Are we leaving after the interview?"

"No, we are going to be leaving tomorrow." Said Jane, still smiling.

"And I'm still hoping I can talk Tristan into driving me home." Said Tilly.

"That's a long drive." Said Quinn.

"About 2,500 miles." Said Daria as she looked back up.

"I don't think you're going to talk him into that." Said Quinn.

"Well, if we are all finished with breakfast, let's go back upstairs." Said Jane. They placed their trash into the garbage can, while Daria grabbed a glass of apple juice. They all piled into the elevator, and rode it up to the 5th floor. They exited the lift. "What time we going to leave for the meeting?"

"The interview is scheduled for 10 AM, so I'd like to be there around 9:30 or so." Said Daria.

"Cool. So we will come over to your room about 9 AM then." Said Tilly.

"Works for me." Said Daria.

"What's the dress?" asked Quinn.

"Business causal." Said Daria.

"Okay. We'll see you in a few hours." Said Tilly. She and Quinn went to their room, and Jane and Daria went to their room.

"I'm interested to see what Tilly looks like in a pantsuit." Said Jane.

"Tilly? I want to see how Tristan cleans up." Said Daria with a smile.

"Should be interesting. Very interesting." Said Jane.

Most of the time, Daria got by wearing the same basic outfits she wore in high school... T-shirts, skirts or jeans, boots, and a jacket. The only times she has ever dressed up is when it was absolutely necessary, like when she interviewed former President George Bush, the Queen Elizabeth II, or the Emperor of Japan. She didn't even dress up for her wedding, especially since Jane stated she wanted Daria to be "herself". Yet, for this meeting, she was dressed in an outfit similar to what her mother would have worn back when she was still active in the law firm; except this outfit was in black except for the shirt, which was white. She decided against her normal Doc Martens, and wore a pair of flats instead. She turned away from the mirror where she was brushing out her hair, to see Jane dressed equally as well, except Jane was wearing a light shade of red, but not pink. "You look good in that." Said Daria.

"Remember, I borrowed this from you." Said Jane.

"Yeah. That was the one I wore to Japan." Said Daria.

"I wonder what your sisters are going to be wearing?" asked Jane. No sooner than she said that, there was a knock at the door. Jane walked over and opened it, revealing Quinn, Tilly, and Tristan.

"Wow Daria, you look good in that." Said Quinn. She was dressed in her usual business attire, what she wore to work every day.

"Same thing Till is wearing." Said Tristan. He was dressed in a dark grey business suit.

"It's scarily similar." Said Tilly. Her outfit was exactly the same as Daria's, except it was a medium blue color.

"There's no mistaking that we're twins." Said Daria. "Are we ready to get this over with?"

"You're not looking forward to this?" asked Jane.

"No, I want out of this damn monkey suit." Said Daria.

"I'm wearing the monkey suit." Said Tristan.

"Let's go." Said Daria. She grabbed her attaché case, and they headed for the door. They boarded the elevator, and took it down to the lobby. They exited the elevator, and walked out of the hotel, and to the SUV. After Tristan unlocked it, they all climbed in, and fastened their seatbelts.

"We ready?" asked Tristan.

"Yeah." Said Daria.

"Off we go." Said Tristan, as he pulled out of the parking lot, and then into traffic. Traffic was light, and the trip was quick. Within fifteen minutes, he was pulling into the parking lot of the Burger World corporate headquarters. As they pulled into the lot, they noticed the black four door car that the CIA agent had been driving. He didn't draw attention to it, and just parked in a spot that was close to the main entrance. They all exited the SUV, and then walked to the front entrance of the building.

"Here we go." Said Daria as she put her hand on the door, and opened it. They walked in, almost like a pack of businessmen heading for a board meeting. They walked to the reception desk.

"Welcome to the Burger World Corporate Offices, How may I help you?" asked the woman behind the desk.

"We're here to see Mr. Hansen." Said Daria.

"Do you have an appointment?" asked the woman.

"Yes." Said Daria in monotone.

"You name, please?"

"Daria Morgendorffer-Lane."

The woman typed something into her computer. "Ahhh yes... Mr. Hansen is expecting you." The woman took a RFID badge out of the desk and scanned it into the computer. "You will need this. Take the elevator to the tenth floor. You have to use the badge to let you select the floor. I will inform Mr. Hansen's receptionist that you are on your way."

"Thank you." Said Daria, as she took the badge from the woman. They all walked to the elevators, and pressed the call button. Once the elevator arrived, they all stepped inside. Daria touched the badge to the reader, and then pressed the "10" button. The doors closed, and the elevator swiftly rose to its destination.

"Tenth floor." Said the elevator as it stopped, and the doors opened. They all stepped out, and over to the desk of the receptionist.

"Mrs. Lane." Said the receptionist.

"It's Morgendorffer-Lane." Corrected Daria.

"My apologies. Mr. Hansen is waiting for you. This way." The receptionist escorted Daria and the group across the room to a set of double doors. She opened the doors, and walked in. "Mr. Hansen. Mrs. Morgendorffer-Lane and her family are here to see you."

"Thank you Mrs. Shepardson." Said Mr. Hansen. He was seated in a high-backed leather chair, facing away from the door. Mrs. Shepardson turned and left the room, closing the doors behind her. "Please, have a seat."

"Thank you." Said Daria, as she and her family sat down in exact number of chairs that were set in front of the desk.

"I'm betting that you are wondering why all the mystery." Said Mr. Hansen, with his back still to the group.

"They are." Came a voice from behind the group. They turned to see the CIA agent, Brian Coffey, walking up to them.

Daria had a look of concentration on her face. "What is going on here?"

Mr. Hansen turned his chair around to face Daria and the group. "It's been a long time, Daria. It's been a very long time."

"Oh.....my.....God....." was all Daria could say.

Part 10

"Daria? Daria!" snapped Jane, trying to refocus Daria's attention. Daria shook her head as to clear the fog from her mind.

"So you do remember me?" asked Mr. Hansen. Daria simply nodded. "I was worried that you wouldn't."

"You look nothing like the picture we saw in the restaurant the other day." Said Jane.

"That was done a few years ago. It's heavily Photoshopped. I kept it and used it only because I liked it." Said Mr. Hansen, indicating a copy of the same image that was hanging on the wall in the spacious office. He faced Tilly. "I didn't know Daria had a twin sister, but there is no mistaking the fact."

"Theodore Hansen? I never knew that was your real name." said Daria, starting to regain control.

"You can thank Brian for that." Said Mr. Hansen, indicating the CIA agent who had taken a seat at the end of the desk.

"Brian Coffey." Said Daria. She looked over at him, and he removed his dark sunglasses. "No way."

"Yes." Said Brian. "It is nice to see you and Quinn again."

"Daria? You want to tell us just who the hell these guys are?" asked Tilly.

Daria shook her head and smiled. "May I introduce the moronic duo. Brian Coffey, also known as Beavis, and Mr. Theodore Hansen, also known as Butthead."

"That's not possible." Said Tilly. "From what you told us, they were two hopeless losers."

Daria turned a shade of red. Mr. Hansen held his hand up. "It's okay Daria. Back then, we were."

"So what happened?" asked Daria, as she took out her notepad and pen.

"Well, it started after you moved away. You see, you were the closest thing to a female friend we had. We knew we never had a chance with you, but we still had a thing for you. When you left, we both mentally collapsed. Brain shut down altogether, and I lasted maybe a week before I finally just mentally broke down." Said Mr. Hansen. Brian was just nodding in agreement.

"We received documents saying you were both dead, found in Juarez, Mexico." Said Daria.

"Yeah. Faked documents for the most part. Brian went into one of his Cornholio rages, and ended up in Mexico again. He wandered around until a Mexican family took him in. After a couple of weeks, he returned to Texas, and found me, telling me about how much better his life was. You wouldn't have known it was the same guy. That was the first time in a long time that he went by Brian instead of Beavis." Said Mr. Hansen, leaning back in his chair.

"I didn't worry about where my next meal was coming from. I had a family who loved me." Said Brian. "With permission from my new family, they let me come back to Texas to bring Ted back with me. We both returned to Mexico."

"We lived there for the better part of three years. In one year, we had graduated from high school. Two years later, we both graduated from college. I majored in business, and Brian decided to go into law enforcement."

"So you two are Mexican citizens then?" asked Jane.

"No. We retained our United States citizenship." Said Brian. "I became a Texas Ranger, and was there for a few years, until I was accepted into the CIA. I'm normally in Langley, but when Ted told me you were coming down, I requested a vacation to come down for a few weeks."

Daria addressed Ted Hansen. "So then you are responsible for what has been done to Highland?"

"Yes. From working and going to school in Mexico, I had gained sufficient money to get a place to live here in Highland. I went to work for Burger World again, and within a year's time, I was the manager. Another year, and I was CEO. The company was falling apart. A few loans and some corporate sponsors, and I was able to build the company into what it is now. Those loans were paid back, and the sponsors bought out. I then turned my attention to the town. The first thing I did was rebuild the school system. I didn't want anyone to go through the academic hell that me and Brian went through. As that progressed, so did the company. I won't say that I own the town, because I don't. I just spearheaded the changes. Now this town is no longer the dead end that it once was. Now there are actually businesses moving to the town, and with business comes people. We're even working on getting an Interstate loop through here, and an airport capable of major jet traffic."

"Wow." Said Daria. "I must say I'm impressed. There is just one thing I want to know."

"What?"

"Why the fake documents?"

"Simple. None of this would have worked if they knew 'Butthead' was at the controls. So he died, and Theodore Hansen took over."

"No one here knew you're real names?"

"No. Our biological parents we're stupider than we were. The only way we knew our real names is when our adoptive family in Mexico did some research. Our father was a higher up in the Mexican government." Said Brian.

"They said some things were found with you." Said Tilly.

"You mean the jackets and pictures?" asked Mr. Hansen.

"Yeah." Said Tilly.

Brian got up, and walked to a cabinet. From the cabinet, he withdrew two garment bags. He brought them to the coat rack that stood behind Mr. Hansen's desk. He unzipped one, revealing a black leather jacket and yellow shirt. Daria just stared at the jacket, jaw agape. "When Mr. VanDriessen bought your old house, he found these, plus the brown leather jacket that is in this bag. When I came back to get Ted, he was with Mr. VanDriessen. He gave us the jackets, figuring we could use them. Me and Ted kept them, as reminders why we left Highland and what our future could hold. The shirt was balled up inside." Brian could see the look of confusion and a slight look of shock on Daria's face. "We didn't do anything weird with them. We used them for their intended purpose, to keep warm."

Daria kept writing. "So no one in town knows the truth?"

"No." said Mr. Hansen. "And we'd like to keep it that way. We know you were coming here to do a story on Burger World, and on your hometown. We were hoping that you could leave out some parts of it."

Daria said nothing, but kept writing. "We're not entirely sure what would happen if everyone knew that the two biggest screw-ups of the old Highland were the driving force behind the new Highland."

"I can see your point." Said Daria.

"Well, now that the storytelling is out of the way." Said Mr. Hansen. "Would you care to introduce us to your family here?"

"Sure." Said Daria. "This is my wife Jane, my twin sister Matilda..."

"Tilly." She corrected.

"Tilly..." said Daria. "Her husband Tristan, and finally, you should remember my younger sister, Quinn."

"Nice to meet you all, and it is good to see you again, Daria." Said Hansen.

Daria looked at the clock on the wall. Four hours had passed. She looked at her notebook, and noticed it was almost full. "Well. We need to be going. We are leaving in the morning, and we want to get a good night's sleep before we have to take the long flight back to Boston." Daria stood up. "I thank you very much for the opportunity to talk with you, and it was good seeing you again as well."

Mr. Hansen walked around from behind the desk. "You're more than welcome." He hesitated for a minute, and then extended his hand. Daria took it, shaking it firmly. Then, without notice, Hansen pulled

Daria to him, and wrapped his arms around her in an embrace. Daria resisted only for a moment. "I've wanted to do this for years." He whispered into her ear.

Jane and Tilly leapt to their feet, but Hansen had broken the embrace before they could make a move. "I'm sorry. I should have asked first."

"It's okay." Said Daria. She noticed that Brian had made his way over to where they were standing. "You too." Brian gave Daria a quick hug as well. Jane was balling her fists trying to control her anger. In a second, it was over, and Brian and Daria were apart again.

"You are all welcome to come back anytime." Said Hansen. "And if there are any expenses your company won't cover, send me the receipts and I will take care of them."

"Thank you." Said Daria. She turned and headed for the door.

Jane glared at Brian and Ted for a moment. Ted stepped to Jane. "I'm sorry. Daria was the closest thing we had to a friend."

Jane had to force herself to smile. "It's okay." She shook both of their hands, and then turn to left. The rest of the family members did the same, all joining Daria at the door as they walked out of the office, and to the elevator.

Once the doors were closed, Ted sat back down in his chair, and Brian took a seat across the desk from Ted. "You didn't tell her?" asked Brian.

"What? That I had a crush on her in high school? Or that I kept tabs on her when she was in college? No. It wasn't necessary. Daria is a magnificent woman, and has an excellent family. There was no sense in that." Said Hansen as he turned to his computer.

"Think she will come back?" asked Brian.

"Maybe."

"Heh heh... That would be cool." Said Brian, mocking his younger self.

A broad smile came across Ted Hansen's face. "Uhhhh... Daria's cool." He said, following suit.

The family was in the SUV, heading back to the hotel. "I can't believe that was them." Said Quinn.

"Neither can I. Apparently they just needed someone to actually give a damn about them." Said Daria.

"From what we have seen, they really have made a difference." Said Tilly.

"I thought Jane was going to kill Hansen." Said Tristan.

"I was, for a moment." Said Jane. "I don't take well to anyone messing with my woman except me."

"I have a lot of info to go over and process." Said Daria, as she flipped through her notebook. "That's just from this meeting, not to mention the info I have taken down from our other various interviews."

"I'm just ready to go back to the hotel, get some pizza, and chill." Said Jane.

"Agreed." Said Daria. She took out her cell phone, and dialed the number for the local pizza joint. She placed the order, making sure to get a small cheeseless for Quinn. She hung up the phone, and placed it back into her bag. A few minutes later, they were pulling into the parking lot of the hotel. They got out of the SUV, and walked into the hotel. They had no sooner walked into their respective rooms, when there was a knock on the door. Jane walked over and answered the door. It was the pizza. She paid the delivery driver, took the pizzas, and closed the door. As she set the pizzas on the counter, Daria had emerged from the bedroom, changing from the business suit into something more comfortable.

"I think I like you better like this." Said Jane as she took her wife into her arms.

"I feel better like this." Said Daria, laying her head on Jane's chest. They were motionless for a moment. "I love you Jane."

"I love you too, Daria." Said Jane. Another knock on the door caused them to break their embrace, but not before giving each other a light kiss. Jane went to the bedroom to change, and Daria answered the door, revealing Quinn, Tristan, and Tilly.

"Pizza!" exclaimed Tristan as he headed straight for the counter, and flipped open a box. He took a slice, and within a minute or so, had made the slice disappear.

"Hungry?" asked Tilly.

"Yeah. Didn't have lunch, remember?"

"Oh yeah." Said Tilly as she took a slice for herself.

"Hey, don't eat it all!" exclaimed Jane as she emerged from the bedroom. She retrieved a slice for herself, and one for Daria. Quinn just took the box for the cheeseless and sat down with it.

After a few minutes, Tristan asked the necessary question. "So, when are we leaving tomorrow?"

"Our flight leaves Midland at 4 PM." Said Jane.

"So we need to leave here around noon." Said Tristan.

"Checkout is 11AM." Said Tilly.

"Okay, so we will leave at 11AM." Said Tristan. They sat and ate, with not much being said except for the occasional comment about pizza sauce or losing a topping to the floor. By the time they had finished, it was 6 PM. Tristan and Tilly got up, and politely excused themselves as they left to go to their room. Quinn stayed behind with Daria and Jane.

"Daria? Do you think that was really them?" asked Quinn.

"Yeah, Quinn. It was."

"How do you know?"

"I know them. I could tell by the inflection in their voices."

"I wonder if Sick, Sad, World is on..." asked Jane more aloud than she wanted to.

Both Daria and Quinn looked at Jane. "We boring you?"

"No. I just want to watch TV. Care to join me?"

"Sure." Said Daria. She turned to Quinn. "You?"

"Sure." Said Quinn. They sat down, turned on the TV, and flipped channels until they found what they were looking for. Sick, Sad, World hadn't been in production for a few years now, but reruns were popular. Quinn looked over at her sister, and her sister-in-law. "It's good to be with family." She said quietly.

"Yes it is." Said Daria, as she put her arm around Quinn. "Yes it is."

They had all of their baggage packed into the SUV. Daria was turning in the room cards and picking up the receipts. As she walked out of the hotel lobby, Tristan had pulled the SUV up to the front door. Quinn got out to let Daria get in, and then Quinn got back in. "We're ready to head home." Said Tristan.

"Do it." Said Daria. Tristan piloted the SUV out to the main road, and within a few minutes, they passed a sign saying "Now leaving Highland. Come Home Soon!"

"Now that is weird." Said Tristan.

"I'm a journalist. Weird is part of the job." Said Daria with a smile. She closed her eyes, and tried to relax for the three hour ride to the airport.

"I still don't suppose I can talk you into driving me home?" asked Tilly of Tristan.

"No." said Tristan. "That's way too far to drive."

"Quinn? When you coming up to Boston?" asked Jane.

"Mom and dad were thinking about coming up in a few weeks. Jeffy was thinking on taking a week off and me, him and the kids coming up with them." Said Quinn.

"We have plenty of room at the house." Said Jane. "Question is, can you handle Trent for a week?"

"Trent is fine." Said Quinn. "When he's in Lawndale, him and Jeffy often go off doing `guy things'."

"Male bonding." Said Jane.

"Did I mention I hate flying?" asked Tilly.

"Yes." Said everyone in unison.

"Good. Just so everyone knows." Said Tilly.

Daria was flipping through her notepad, reliving the past few days. It was a lot to process. She looked around the SUV at her family. She smiled, leaned back and closed her eyes. Soon, she would be at her and Jane's home in Boston, and could get back to her daily routine. Tilly and Tristan would go back to their house, also in Boston, and Quinn would return to her home in Lawndale. Daria thought about her family, and how much happiness it brought her, even though she would never let it show. "We need to

get together like this again... Soon." She said to herself. Her smile grew a little bigger, and she drifted off to sleep.
