

The Nine Days of the Gecko (excerpt)

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EXT. NY STREET - EARLY EVENING

Emmett leaves the building and walks along the street. Across the street, LARRY (one of the younger men from DTC) speaks into a walkie-talkie. In his mid-thirties, Larry wears large glasses and sports a black goatee on his round, pale face.

LARRY

Three bears, this is Goldilocks. The sheep are in the meadow.

Several blocks away, his voice squawks from another walkie-talkie held by GLORIA, atop a small building. Gloria is about sixty, matronly, with long thick braids in her gray hair.

GLORIA

What the hell is that supposed to mean, Larry?

LARRY

It's *Goldilocks*. Is it so much to ask that we try to keep this line just a little secure? I mean, we're about to— Oh, all right, forget it — look, I just saw him leave the building.

GLORIA

Already? But I don't think we're all in place yet.

LARRY

Well, I can't help that. He's already halfway there.

GLORIA

Damn. Van, Ally, are you in position yet?

Van and Liz are pressed up against the wall where a side street joins the main street. Van has a walkie-talkie. Liz, holding a large sheaf of papers, peers around the corner trying to spot Emmett.

An ancient and nondescript passenger van with blacked-out windows creeps along the roadway. ALLY is driving, holding another walkie-talkie. Ally is a miniature, young version of Gloria.

ALLY

Van's ready.

GLORIA

How do you know?
What about you, Ally?

ALLY

What? I just said I'm ready.

GLORIA

You said Van's ready.

ALLY

No, the van's ready. Van's still in the alley.

VAN

I'm ready.

GLORIA

What's the van doing in the alley? Get out on the street.

VAN

But I'm supposed to be in the alley until-

Liz grabs the walkie-talkie from him.

LIZ

Gimme that thing!
(a breath)
This is Liz. Van's with me in the alley, and Ally's in the van on the street. We're all set to go here. Just let us know when he's getting close.

GLORIA

Could be any time now. You might be able to see him by now.

LIZ

I do... I see him... Here we go.

Emmett pauses and looks up at the building across the street. He sees Stephanie in a window looking back at him. They wave, and Stephanie picks up her things to head down to meet him. Liz steps out of the alley and walks toward Emmett. She times it just right and walks headlong into him, scattering the papers all over the sidewalk. Emmett is caught off guard, but begins helping her chase down and pick up the papers. Stephanie sees him with her, and jealousy begins to show. She turns hurriedly and goes. The van slips up to the curb, and Aubrey opens the side door unnoticed.

Van sidles out inconspicuously from the side street until he gets a few yards from Emmett, then he springs toward him, intending to drive him through the open door of the waiting van. Unfortunately, a bad slip on one of the papers slows him a bit, and one of the papers blows up and covers his face, momentarily blinding him, and he runs headlong into a light pole. Dazed, he staggers about trying to regain his senses. Liz and Ally size up the situation. Emmett sees what has happened and goes to Van.

EMMETT

Man, that had to hurt! Are you OK?

Van tries desperately to hide his face from Emmett by keeping the paper in front of his face and keeping his head down.

VAN

Mmmm. Uh huh.

Emmett looks around and begins to lead Van over to a bench at a nearby bus station. As they get near the street, Van whirls around and tries to push Emmett through the van's door just as the wind plasters the paper tightly across his face again.

VAN

(muffled)

Death To Capitalism!

EMMETT

Huh?

Blinded by the paper, Van misses Emmett and ends up lying half in and half out of the van. Liz turns and discreetly walks away down the sidewalk, making her escape. Ally guns the van's engine and takes off down the street, Van clinging desperately to Aubrey as they roar away. One of his shoes falls off and bounces up onto the sidewalk. The van is immediately stuck in traffic no more than a few yards away. Emmett picks up the shoe and walks up to the van, where

Van has just managed to clamber the rest of his way in. As they scramble to close the door, Emmett calls out.

EMMETT

Hey, Cinderella! You forgot your slipper.

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