

Paws for Effect (Excerpt)  
Pilot: Pawsible Deniability

By

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INT. ANIMAL SHELTER LOBBY - DAY

ELLEN, mid 20s, a sarcastic girl with dark hair wearing a t-shirt and jeans, answers phones at the reception desk of a dirty, pastel-colored animal shelter somewhere in New Jersey. It is not a top-of-the-line shelter.

Behind Ellen, BECKY - 17 and wearing a cheer-leading uniform - files papers haphazardly. The phone rings.

ELLEN

Paws for Effect, this is Ellen...  
Uh huh. Uh huh. No, we don't have  
any h- but- Sir? Sir? Can I  
interest you in a pitbull? Sir?  
(hanging up)  
He hung up.

A bell on the door chimes as an animal control officer, DAVE, enters with a cage that's dripping with something brown. The cage contains an unidentifiable CREATURE that rustles, shivers, and makes horrible, ungodly noises.

BECKY

Oh my God, what is that smell?!

ELLEN

It's like testes and kimchee.

DAVE

Found this in the Passaic.

ELLEN

What is it?

DAVE

Not sure. Thinking raccoon by the  
tail, but teeth say gator. Maybe a  
raccoon got attached to a gator?  
Somehow they mated? Love wins.

BECKY

A gatorcoon. A raccator.

DAVE

Exactly.

ELLEN

And now it's ours.

DAVE

(winking)  
Lucky lady.

ELLEN  
 (calling off)  
 Mike?!  
 (after a beat)  
 I'll go find him.

Becky is alone with the animal control officer. She hands him a pamphlet.

BECKY  
 In the meantime, please take this pamphlet on the big leather banks and their abuse of KFC chickens. Fight leather daddies.

DAVE  
 Yeah. [Bleep] the man.

Becky looks surprised at the swear word. They both hold onto the pamphlet as Ellen re-enters with MIKE, a veterinarian, who is sniffing deeply.

MIKE  
 Dr. Mike smells a mystery!

ELLEN  
 Becky, what do we say about vegan conspiracy propaganda in the office?

BECKY  
 (a la Arya Stark)  
 Not today.

ELLEN  
 Close enough. Sorry, sir. Uh, she's in high school.

DAVE  
 Too bad. Can you sign for this?

ELLEN  
 Sure thing.

MIKE  
 I'll start getting our new baby hosed off.

The creature makes a noise like it understood. Mike looks at the cage with excitement. Ellen looks with apprehension. Mike takes the cage away while she signs something on a clipboard.

DAVE

We sure do appreciate Paws for Effect taking these things, not like that stuck-up shelter on Main that only wants "puppies" and "kitties" and "identifiable mammals".

ELLEN

Pets for Parkinson's...

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. PETS FOR PARKINSON'S SHELTER - DAY

A lovely, clean, sunshine-y version of their shelter, filled with beautiful women and signs that say, "All our proceeds go to finding a cure."

CUT BACK:

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER LOBBY - DAY

ELLEN

...Our hated nemesis.

Ellen finishes signing.

DAVE

Right. Welp, keep fighting the good fight!

Animal Control Dave salutes and exits. Becky raises a fist.

The door chimes again as GREG, late 20s, handsome but unkempt, walks in. Ellen doesn't look up.

ELLEN

Back so soon?

GREG

That is... a warmer welcome than I was anticipating.

ELLEN

Greg, you [long bleep]-

Becky looks up.

GREG  
There it is.

ELLEN  
What are you doing here?

GREG  
I'm back in Jersey, baby! Listen,  
about the way we left things-

ELLEN  
You flushed my heart down the drain  
like yesterday's goldfish.

GREG  
That's a bit of an exaggeration.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

TEXT: "8 MONTHS AGO"

Greg and Ellen are naked in bed.

GREG  
Alrighty, that's enough of that.

He gets up and starts getting dressed.

ELLEN  
What?!

GREG  
I think I deserve someone a little  
hotter.

CUT BACK:

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER LOBBY - DAY

ELLEN  
We dated for 6 years.

GREG  
And you're welcome for that.

ELLEN  
Ew.

GREG  
Anyway, I'm back now and I want to  
make things right.

ELLEN  
No.

GREG  
I mean, not like, get back together  
right-

ELLEN  
Not on the table-

GREG  
-but we could be friends.

ELLEN  
Absolutely not. What's this really  
about, you soulless succubus?

GREG  
I love how you just get me.

Mike re-enters wearing rubber gloves and covered in brown  
goo.

MIKE  
Oh hey, Greg! Welcome back.

He pats Greg on the shoulder. Some brown gunk gets on Greg.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, it's just chocolate  
cake.

He begins to exit.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
No, hold up. I didn't eat any  
chocolate cake.

He smells his hand then tastes the brown stuff.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
You know what? Disinfect that just  
in case.

Greg looks disgusted. Ellen smiles.