

# ***UNCANNY COUNTY***

"Wellness"

Episode 2-H

By: Amanda Maciel

## Scene One:

### SOUND: Typing, office ambience

- HR:** Right this way, dear. You're starting at such a good time—we just renovated the whole building. Don't you *love* it?
- New Girl:** (Hesitant) Uh, sure! I love ... I mean, honestly, I love having a job.
- HR:** Well we are so glad you've joined us! Look, you can see the whole office from here—isn't the place just not complete without one more person?
- New Girl:** Ha. Yeah, I guess not. Thanks.
- HR:** (Sighing happily) I know everyone's doing the open-plan thing, but ours is extra special, isn't it? And now your bright, shining face out there—this is going to work out perfectly!
- New Girl:** I hope so.

### SOUND: Screaming, distant and muffled

- New Girl:** What—did you hear—
- HR:** Here's the kitchen! Can you believe the size of that fridge? You can store years worth of food in there! (laughs, then serious) But please don't.
- New Girl:** No, of course not.
- HR:** (overly serious) We clear it out every Friday.
- New Girl:** (laughs uncomfortably) Oh ... kay.
- HR:** (cheerful again) But do use it! Let's see. Kitchen, bathrooms, printers ... what else?
- New Girl:** My cubicle?
- HR:** (correcting) Work station. And lucky you, it's right next to the Wellness Room! You'll get your key as soon as you've settled in.

**New Girl:** Okay, cool—

**SOUND: More screaming (same voice/tone as before), less distant, still muffled but only by a door**

**New Girl:** Is—did you hear that?

**HR:** Nope! Now, be sure to make the desk your own. Just don't put anything on that shelf. Or that one. Okay! Welcome to Authentica!

**New Girl:** Thank you so much.

**SOUND: HR walking away, door opening**

**575:** (this is the screamer) Hello there. You the new girl?

**New Girl:** Wo ... (hesitates; annoyed but also embarrassed) ... man. Yes. Hi.

**575:** I'm 575. My station's over by the windows. Best spot. If you have any questions, I've been here a long time. Longer than just about anyone.

**New Girl:** Nice to meet you. Actually, I, I was wondering. What's that—that room?

**575:** The Wellness Room?

**New Girl:** I guess so?

**575:** Your last job didn't have one?

**New Girl:** No. I've never seen one.

**575:** Any of your old companies still around?

**New Girl:** Huh? Oh. No, I mean, with the storms, most of them moved out of town—

**575:** Well there you go. (laughs heartily. Too heartily. Keeps laughing until it sounds like he might be crying) Excuse me. I should get back to work.

**New Girl:** Oh, okay—

**575:** (abrupt) See ya.

**New Girl:** (to herself) Work. Right. Here we go.

**Narrator:** A new workplace is full of unfamiliar faces, sights, and sounds. But every office has its usual suspects, and anyone eager to stay employed gets to know the lay of the land as quickly and enthusiastically as they can. Of course, that land isn't always what it seems ... especially in Uncanny County.

## **Scene Two:**

**SOUND: Silverware and dishes, glassware—dinner sounds**

- Boyfriend:** How was your first day, babe?
- New Girl:** (tired) Fine. I mean—good.
- Boyfriend:** Hopefully this one will stick, huh?
- New Girl:** (defensive) It's not my fault those three companies had to shut down in two years—
- Boyfriend:** Hey, hey, I know. I just meant that it's good to have the income. And something to do with your day.
- New Girl:** I know. Sorry. (regroups) It seems like a nice place. New renovation. Amenities. Honestly I don't know how they can afford it, when everyone else is struggling to stay open.
- Boyfriend:** Somebody's gotta make money, I guess.
- New Girl:** Sure, but the tornadoes, the floods ... don't you sometimes feel like God is telling us to get out of here?
- Boyfriend:** Well, thanks to those storms my road crew will never run out of work. And that means that I can buy the ingredients for this lasagna, that you're hardly touching.
- New Girl:** You're right. Thank you for making dinner.
- Boyfriend:** Of course, God isn't helping out so much on the health insurance, so ... really. Please don't leave this job.
- New Girl:** I won't. I can't even imagine leaving unless they make me.
- Boyfriend:** They'll love you.
- New Girl:** Yeah. They will.

## **Scene Three:**

### **SOUND: Typing, office ambience**

HR: Are you settling in, dear?

New Girl: (Extra cheerful) Absolutely!

HR: Did you put some snacks in the fridge?

New Girl: (falters) Not yet?

HR: Well you should! You should really settle in! We want to keep you here!

New Girl: (flattered and relieved) Thanks. I want to stay.

HR: Well, good!

### **SOUND: Muffled screams**

HR: 575 is getting an early start today, I see. Good for him.

New Girl: Hey, I was wondering, could you tell me a little more about that room?

HR: The Wellness Room? Don't worry, you'll get your key as soon as it's ready! The silly girl before you took hers with her. (darkly) Now we'll never get it back. (cheerful again) But you'll be careful!

New Girl: (no less confused) Of course. I will.

### **SOUND: Door opens and shuts loudly, big satisfied sigh from 575**

575: All *right* let's get back to *work*! (noticing) New girl! Lived to see her second day!

New Girl: Woma—(thinks better of it) Yes, I sure did.

575: (suddenly morose) That desk has been empty for too long.

HR: (sharp) No need to bring up the past, 575.

**575:** Hmph. (regrouping) Got your lunch in the fridge, New Girl?

**New Girl:** Yes.

**575:** And *snacks*?

**New Girl:** Bringing those in tomorrow.

**HR and 575 (together):** Great!

**Other coworker:** 575, you're out of the room, right? This is supposed to be my time slot.

**575:** (wearily) Sorry, Fire Safety Warden, I'm out now. Go ahead.

**SOUND: Door opens and shuts**

**SOUND: Other coworker's muffled screams**

**575:** You know, the girl who used to sit here—

**HR:** (interrupts) —had some lovely decorations! Don't forget to bring some in.

**New Girl:** Cool, I will.

**HR:** *Lovely*. Now, 575. Why don't I just walk you back to your desk.

**575:** I think I can handle it. See ya, ladies.

## Scene Four:

**SOUND:** Chiming noise an open car door makes, then door slam

**SOUND:** Car engine / driving ambience

**New Girl:** Whew. What a week.

**Boyfriend:** How about goin over to Old Smokey's for a little celebration?

**New Girl:** Actually, can we just go home?

**Boyfriend:** Huh? We always go to Smokey's on Friday.

**New Girl:** I know. I just don't feel like it tonight.

**Boyfriend:** Why not?

**New Girl:** (sighs) I'm tired. And the others ...

**Boyfriend:** Others who?

**New Girl:** Everyone from Authentica. They're going over there for a beer.

**Boyfriend:** To Smokey's? Right now? Well hey, that's perfect! Networking! They invited you, right?

**New Girl:** Oh, they definitely invited me.

**Boyfriend:** So what's the problem?

**New Girl:** I don't know! They're so nice, mostly, but there's just something ... *weird* about that place.

**Boyfriend:** Weird.

**New Girl:** Yes! I mean, why is everyone using the Wellness Room to *scream* every day?

**Boyfriend:** Maybe it makes them feel better.

**New Girl:** And why don't I know anyone's real name? Like, I think 575 is the Richard Perkins I've been emailing, but I'm not sure. That's not normal, is it?



- Boyfriend:** People have nicknames, honey. And maybe if you grabbed a beer with them, you'd feel better. Get your own nickname, even.
- New Girl:** (confused and a little bitter) Oh, I have a nickname. "New Girl." It's all "hey New Girl, why don't you have any pictures up" and "New Girl, why don't you have more snacks in the" — (sharp inhale) oh, no.
- Boyfriend:** (less annoyed) What?
- New Girl:** I forgot to clean my stuff out of the fridge. We have to clean it out every Friday before we leave.
- Boyfriend:** I'm pretty sure you're overreacting.
- New Girl:** Honestly, I don't think I am. These people are really into that fridge. Like, as much as the Wellness Room.
- Boyfriend:** So, what, you need me to drive you back?
- New Girl:** (small voice) Yes?
- Boyfriend:** Are we allowed in after hours?
- New Girl:** I'm not sure.
- Boyfriend:** Good gravy. I love you, but I swear you have some kind of workplace curse.

**SOUND: Car wheels, making a u-turn**

- New Girl:** I'm sorry. I just really think it'll be bad if I don't get my hummus out of there tonight.
- Boyfriend:** (muttering) ... had the same job since I was 16, no problems with anyone...
- New Girl:** And as soon as I get my snacks, we'll go to Smokey's, okay?
- Boyfriend:** (very slightly mollified) Sure thing.

## Scene Five:

**SOUND:** Low hum of an empty office

**SOUND:** Click of a light switch

- Boyfriend:** (faint whistle, then talking quietly) You didn't tell me how fancy this place was.
- New Girl:** (also quietly) You think so?
- Boyfriend:** Don't you? Everything's *shiny*. Clean.
- New Girl:** Yeah, really clean. Funny—they go on and on about settling in, but everything is cold and impersonal ...
- Boyfriend:** I'd kill to work in a place like this.
- New Girl:** Kitchen's right over here ...
- Boyfriend:** (not listening, talking louder now) Ah, the famous Wellness Room!
- New Girl:** (hissing) Get away from there!
- Boyfriend:** (still not listening) Why don't you like this again?
- New Girl:** I don't—it's not—just stop, okay? I don't have a key anyway.

**SOUND:** Doorknob rattling

- Boyfriend:** They sure keep it locked tight.
- New Girl:** Please don't do that!
- Boyfriend:** Jeez, okay! Say, show me your desk.
- New Girl:** Oh—it's right here.
- Boyfriend:** So close to the Wellness Room!
- New Girl:** Are you being sarcastic?
- Boyfriend:** I like this little stuffed dog.
- New Girl:** I've had that for years.

- Boyfriend:** Really personalizes the work station. C'mon, let's go bond with your colleagues. I can't wait to meet this 575 guy. Oh cool, look at your name tag!
- New Girl:** (pause) Oh. That's new.
- Boyfriend:** (not listening) It actually says New Girl, Maybe next week you'll get promoted to Girl.
- New Girl:** Actually I really don't feel like going out tonight.
- Boyfriend:** (voice from afar, he's already leaving) First round's on me, New Girl!
- New Girl:** (to herself) You're being paranoid. Take your hummus and go consume alcohol until you can't *think* anymore, like a normal person.

**SOUND: Front door shutting behind them**

## **Scene Six:**

**SOUND: Typing, office ambience**

**HR:** Good morning! How was your weekend? Goes by too quick, am I right?

**New Girl:** It was really nice, thank you. How was yours, uh ... I'm so sorry, somehow I don't think I ever got your name?

**HR:** Oh, hahaha! HR is fine. I'm your HR rep, and i like cats! See my pins? This one looks like my first cat, this one looks like the baby.

**New Girl:** Those are nice pins. What are your cats' names?

**HR:** (obviously) First and Baby.

**New Girl:** I used to have a cat. Maple. I miss him.

**HR:** Well, bring in a picture! See that part of your tack board? That's for personal phot—oh dear!

**New Girl:** What?

**HR:** (lowers voice) Is that your little dog there, next to your computer?

**New Girl:** Yeah. He's my desk pet.

**HR:** But I thought you said you used to have a cat?

**New Girl:** I did.

**HR:** (laughs nervously) Well isn't that confusing! You might want to not confuse people like that.

**575:** Hey New Girl! HR, did you hear about New Girl? She likes hard cider! Put away four of 'em at Smokey's on Friday!

**HR:** Oh, you went to Smokey's with the gang? Oh that's wonderful! All you need is your Wellness Room key and we'll be all settled in!

**New Girl:** You know, I've been thinking—I don't really need the Wellness Room. Everyone else seems to love it so much ...

**SOUND: Right on cue, a muffled, rising scream can be heard**

**New Girl:** See? And I'm settled in fine. You don't have to worry about me.

**HR:** But your wellness!

**575:** (a little darkly) You gotta get yourself through the day!

**HR:** You really need—what do the kids call it?

**575:** (barely hiding sarcasm) Self-care?

**HR:** Yes, that's it! You have to practice *self-care*. In the Wellness Room.

**New Girl:** (interrupting) Really, I'm fine! Look, I'm putting the dog away, and I just ordered some hummus for my spot in the fridge, and I'll bring in a picture of Maple tomorrow. Where did you say I can put it, again?

**HR:** (flustered) The upper left quadrant. There's a standard-issue pushpin.

**New Girl:** (appeasing) Of course, I see it! And look, it's yellow. My favorite color.

**HR:** (wailing) But you've never worn yellow *once*!

**575:** (comforting) She will, though. (sharply) Won't you, New Girl?

**New Girl:** (sighs) Yes. I think I have ... sure, yes. I'll wear yellow tomorrow.

**HR:** (hopefully) And eat hummus?

**New Girl:** Yes. At ... at 3:00, I'll have a snack. Every day.

**HR:** Oh, that would be wonderful, just wonderful. Thank you.

**New Girl:** No problem at all.

## **Scene Seven:**

**SOUND:** Car driving; New Girl's voice is in the car and Boyfriend is on the phone

**Boyfriend:** Hey, what's up? You taking lunch early today?

**New Girl:** Yeah, I have to go to the mall. I need some yellow clothes. And I'm picking up a picture of Maple from the drugstore.

**Boyfriend:** Maple? Why?

**New Girl:** It's a really long story. Anyway, I just wanted to say hi. You know, while I'm still me. (nervous laugh)

**Boyfriend:** What about that yellow dress you have?

**New Girl:** That's for, like, summer weddings. I think I can get a cardigan or scarf or something, that'll probably fix it ...

**Boyfriend:** Hang on, fix what?

**New Girl:** (half-sighing, half-shouting) I don't know! I'm just really trying to fit in at Authentica!

**Boyfriend:** They love you! And we'll go out again with everyone on Friday, right?

**New Girl:** Yeah. Yeah, that'll be good.

**Boyfriend:** Good luck at the mall, darlin. You'd look cute in a yellow potato sack.

**New Girl:** Do they sell those?

## Scene Eight:

**SOUND: Typing, office ambience**

HR: (quietly) Her key is here. Don't—don't *bother* her.

575: (also quiet) Calm down. I know how important it is that she stays.

HR: I don't think you do.

575: You and I both know that I understand *wellness* better than anyone else here.

HR: (sighs) Let's just keep Corporate happy, okay?

575: That's their job. (pause) Look, she put up her cat photo.

HR: Yes. Unfortunate looking creature.

575: We can't all be supermodels like First and Baby.

HR: Very funny. Oh! Good morning, dear!

New Girl: Hey guys. What's going on?

HR: I was just so excited to give you this!

New Girl: A key card? For—oh.

HR: Your time slot is 11:15. In the morning.

New Girl: Right. Okay.

575: Look at the time! I should be getting in there. Congrats, New Girl! Don't lose that key.

New Girl: (flat) I won't.

**SOUND: Door opening and shutting**

**SOUND: Muffled screams**

HR: So. Um. You seem ... did you get enough sleep last night, dear?

**New Girl:** Probably not.

**HR:** Well that's a really lovely dress you're wearing. A bit formal, but just a beautiful shade of yellow.

**SOUND: Muffled screams**

**New Girl:** You know, um, HR ... I was thinking I might try wearing pink tomorrow.

**HR:** Huh. But you're off to such a good start, dear. With the yellow. You're our young, cheerful, healthy-eating New Girl. Right?

**New Girl:** Right.

**HR:** This is going to be a wonderful day. Why don't you just see how you feel after you finally get some Wellness time, hmm? I'm sure that'll set you straight.

**New Girl:** I guess that's the plan.

**HR:** Sure is!

**SOUND: Muffled screams**

**MUSIC: Cheerful**



## **Scene Nine:**

**SOUND: Low beep (key card)**

**SOUND: New Girl breathing heavily**

**New Girl:** (to herself) Okay. Here we go.

**SOUND: Door opening, closing**

**SOUND: Low hum**

**New Girl:** ... light switch ... okay. Oh! Oh.

**SOUND: Slightly louder hum**

**New Girl:** It's ... a really big hole. (pause) Hello, hole. Void. Gaping maw of blackness.

**SOUND: Slightly louder hum**

**New Girl:** I'm ... the new girl. Around here. So I don't really know how this is supposed to work. I'll just sit in this chair, okay? (to herself) Stop talking to the hole. (even quieter) I'm just being polite.

**SOUND: Humming sounds a little musical**

**New Girl:** That's nice. Is that a tune? I guess this is sort of pleasant.

**SOUND: Out of the hum, a whispering voice**

**HR:** (sounds strange, disembodied) *Yellowwww.*

**New Girl:** HR?

**575:** (also strange, whispering through the hum)  
*New girl.*

**Boyfriend:** *Snaaacks.*

**575:** *New-new-new-new girl-girl-girl-girl.*

**New Girl:** (loud) Hey! Stop that!

**SOUND: A moment of silence**

**SOUND: A pleasant bell chime, like the end of a massage**

**New Girl:** Oh. Was that five minutes?

**SOUND: Bell chimes again**

**New Girl:** Okay, I guess I'll get back to work.

**SOUND: Door opening, closing**

**SOUND: Office ambience**

**575:** How'd it go in there, New Girl?

**New Girl:** Hey, 575. It was great. How are you today?

**575:** Just fine, thank you. Get those reports done yet?

**New Girl:** I was just going to finish up on them now. I feel so ... (surprising herself) energized.

**575:** That's wonderful. Make the most of it. And if you start getting tired, don't forget to have a snack! Hummus, right?

**New Girl:** That's right. I really love hummus.

**575:** Sure you do. And hard cider!

**New Girl:** Nice talking to you, 575.

**575:** Glad to have you on board.

## **Scene Ten:**

### **SOUND: Kitchen ambience**

**Boyfriend:** What's this in the trash, honey? Your little stuffed dog from work?

**New Girl:** Hmm? Oh. I guess so.

### **SOUND: Dishes clinking, water running**

**Boyfriend:** You're throwing it away?

**New Girl:** (distracted) Mmm. I don't like dogs.

**Boyfriend:** Since when? You liked Fred and Ginger.

**New Girl:** Who?

**Boyfriend:** My dogs. When we met. Babe, are you okay?

**New Girl:** I'm just trying to finish the dishes so I can get back to my email.

**Boyfriend:** Really? I'm exhausted. Don't you want to finish our show and go to bed?

**New Girl:** I'm not tired at all.

**Boyfriend:** (pause) No, I can see that you're not. You look especially ... perky, in fact. Lately.

**New Girl:** Thank you.

**Boyfriend:** Say, tomorrow's Friday, right? We going to Smokey's?

**New Girl:** Oh sure. I have four hard ciders waiting for me.

**Boyfriend:** (soft laugh) Four, huh?

**New Girl:** That's what I always put away. When I'm out with the gang.

**Boyfriend:** Well, sometimes you have an IPA. Or a gin fizz.

**New Girl:** No I don't.

**Boyfriend:** Yeah—I mean. You do. Sometimes.

**New Girl:** That really doesn't sound like me.

**Boyfriend:** Okay then. So I'll pick you up at 5:00?

**New Girl:** Make it 5:05. I got promoted to a second session.

**Boyfriend:** Second session of what?

**SOUND: Clink followed by a cabinet being shut**

**New Girl:** Finally! All done. (kissing sound) Goodnight, sweetie.

**SOUND: New Girl walking out of the kitchen**

**Boyfriend:** Uh ... g'night.

## **Scene Eleven:**

**SOUND: Office ambience**

**SOUND: Knocking**

575: Hey New Girl?

**SOUND: Muffled screaming (New Girl)**

575: (muttering) I know it's Monday, but come on.

HR: What's going on, 575?

575: Your girl's hogging the room.

**SOUND: Muffled screaming (New Girl), almost operatic**

HR: (singsongy) All our employees need their outlet.

575: Just remind her of the time limit, though.

HR: This doesn't seem excessive ...

**SOUND: Maniacal laughing (New Girl)**

HR: Huh.

575: Maybe you were right to worry about her.

HR: No, no. She's been very consistent. Maybe ... maybe something happened with that boyfriend of hers. Over the weekend.

575: Now that you mention it, they did seem ... *off* at Smokey's.

HR: But she was there, right? At Smokey's?

**SOUND: A yell/moan sound (New Girl)**

575: Sure. They were both there. But the boyfriend was a little moody.

HR: Controls on the home-hours *are* a problem.

575: But, she did send me emails on Saturday and Sunday. At night, too.

**HR:** So you're not worried, then?

**575:** I'm just watching. Isn't that what you want?

**HR:** Corporate wants us all to look out for each other. And after last time, we especially need to know that *you*—

**575:** (snippy) Yeah, I know. But if I don't get *my* Wellness session, it's gonna be hard to—

**SOUND: Door opening, shutting**

**New Girl:** Good morning, gang!

**HR and 575:** Good morning.

**New Girl:** What a great day. I can't wait to sit down. Oh, look, 360 is flossing at his desk again. Isn't that hilarious?

**HR:** He is? Oh I'd better go tell him—

**New Girl:** No, it's fine! Look, I'm the only one who ever notices, and I'm fine. Right?

**HR:** You seem to be just peachy.

**New Girl:** That's it! I'm as unbothered as a peach.

**HR:** Good for you. All right, 575, let's get you into your session. Go see if you can't be as unbothered as Miss Peachy here.

**New Girl:** Miss Peachy! That is hilarious. HR, you are really too much.

**HR:** Why thank you.

**575:** Ladies.

**SOUND: Door opening, shutting**

**SOUND: Muffled shouts (575)**

**HR:** Your one-month review is coming up tomorrow.

**New Girl:** Oh, I know. I have my folder—look, it's yellow!—all ready to go.

**HR:** Perfect. I'll take that, and see you at 3:00 in my office? Corporate will be calling in.

**New Girl:** 3:00?

**HR:** Yes. It's on your calendar, I'm sure.

**New Girl:** But 3:00 is my snack time.

**HR:** Of—of course it is. You can make an exception this once, though. For Corporate.

**New Girl:** I can?

**HR:** (firmly) You can. For Corporate.

**New Girl:** Corporate. 3:00.

**HR:** You'll be fine.

**New Girl:** (brightening) Peachy, you mean.

**HR:** (laughs, delighted) Exactly!

## **Scene Twelve:**

**SOUND: Low hum of the Wellness Room**

**New Girl:** Hey, it's me. I guess you know that.

**SOUND: Hum rises a bit, falls**

**New Girl:** I'm a little worried about my review. If I don't hang onto this job, I don't know what will happen.

**SOUND: Hum rises again, intensifies**

**HR:** (whispery, distant voice) *Peeeeaacchhyyyy.*

**New Girl:** (sighs) I don't really feel like yelling today.

**SOUND: Hum gets a little louder**

**575:** *Haarrrrrd Ciiiiiiiiddeerrrrrr.*

**New Girl:** Okay! Fine! (yells)

**SOUND: Hum grows quiet**

**New Girl:** Yeah, I guess that is better. Thanks. (pause)  
My boyfriend wants to try to have a kid. With me. He said we should go to City Hall, make things official, and then start on a family.

**SOUND: Hum gets louder**

**New Girl:** I said no, of course.

**SOUND: Hum gets quieter**

**New Girl:** That just doesn't sound like something I would do. At least ... not right now.

**SOUND: Hum rises again**

**New Girl:** Or ever? I don't know. How do people know?

**HR:** (whispery) *Corrrrrporaaaaate.*

**New Girl:** Right, of course. I've only been here a month!  
(pause) You know, I wish I could work in this room. It's like—like I can think clearly. Because



there's no one looking at me, I guess? It's just  
... it's nice to be alone. Behind a closed door.

**SOUND: Chiming bell**

**New Girl:** My time isn't up yet.

**SOUND: Bell chimes again, insistent**

**New Girl:** (voice louder, over the bell) If I yell some more,  
can I stay?

**SOUND: Bell cuts off mid-chime**

**New Girl:** Never mind, I don't think I have any more in  
me. Don't give me a trigger, okay? I'm just ...  
I'm good for now. I'll be okay out there.

**SOUND: Single ring of the bell**

## **Scene Thirteen:**

### **SOUND: Tapping of a keyboard**

**New Girl:** Hi, HR.

**HR:** Oh, my peach of a girl! Look at you, right on time. Early even! It's 2:59 on the dot!

**New Girl:** I always leave my desk at 2:59. You know, for my snack. (pointed pause)

**HR:** (slightly annoyed) We'll get you out of here before your tummy notices, I'm sure.

**New Girl:** Thank you, that would be kind.

### **SOUND: Electronic tone**

**Corporate:** Good afternoon.

**HR:** (even more enthusiastic than usual) Hello!

**Corporate:** Let's review our replacement employee.

**New Girl:** Replace—?

**HR:** Our New Girl is just great!

**Corporate:** Well. She seems to be receptive to our amenities.

**New Girl:** Absolutely! Everything is very nice here. Shiny. *Huge* fridge.

**Corporate:** Personal food items are very important to structural morale.

**HR:** And she's been very diligent with all her tasks. She visits the Wellness Room at least once a day and is extremely healthy.

**Corporate:** Good. I see from the file that you've committed to a favorite color, displayed a pet, and introduced your significant other to the group.

**New Girl:** I'm a team player!

**HR:** She's wearing yellow right now!

**Corporate:** As you know, HR, Corporate's expectations of this location are high. The renovation was a *significant* investment.

**HR:** Oh, we are very aware. We all feel extremely grateful for everything you've done for us.

**New Girl:** So grateful.

**Corporate:** Compliance is very important.

**HR:** (a little strained) We know!

**New Girl:** (wanting to help) I can work extra hours!

**Corporate:** (almost automated) Loyalty is very important.

**HR:** New Girl is loyal!

**New Girl:** Totally!

**Corporate:** (pause) We'll be monitoring closely.

**HR:** Of course!

**SOUND: Electronic tone, then pause**

**HR:** (deflated) Well.

**New Girl:** Can I go have my snack now?

**HR:** You may.

## **Scene Fourteen:**

### **SOUND: Muffled yelling (575)**

**HR:** 575, you can't bar the door!

**575:** (from the other side of the door) I already have!  
Leave me alone!

**New Girl:** What's going on?

**HR:** It's 575! He's—he's locked himself in the  
Wellness Room! (to herself) Oh, when  
Corporate hears about this ...

### **SOUND: Knocking on the door**

**New Girl:** 575? It's New Girl! Are you—is everything  
okay?

**575:** Obviously not!

**New Girl:** Can I come in there?

**575:** Why, so you can show me how this is done? I  
know how it's done! I've been a loyal  
Authentica employee since before it was  
Authentica! I'd qualify for a pension plan if we  
had one!

**New Girl:** I just want to see your face for a second. And  
then I'll leave, I promise. Okay? I've got my key  
right here, all you have to do is let me open the  
door.

**HR:** (loud whisper) Be careful!

**New Girl:** It'll be okay. I'm sure he just needs a snack.

**HR:** But—

### **SOUND: Deadbolt unlocking**

### **SOUND: Hum of the Wellness Room**

**New Girl:** Hey there.

**575:** (angry but tired) What are you doing, New Girl.  
You can't be in here.

**SOUND: Hum getting louder**

**575:** See? You're irritating the void.

**New Girl:** It's not a void.

**575:** Sure it is.

**New Girl:** No, it's our friend. It cares.

**575:** (sarcastic) About our wellness?

**New Girl:** Yes. It helps us unburden.

**575:** Hmph. You must feel so much lighter without  
the burden of your personality.

**New Girl:** I have personality!

**575:** Sure, we all do. Just not too much. Not at work.  
That would be too complicated. You know, I  
once tried to wear a sweater instead of a sport  
coat?

**New Girl:** I can't picture you in a sweater.

**575:** Of course you can't. Thanks to the void, we  
can all be our least complicated, most  
productive selves. Authentica!

**New Girl:** That's a very negative way of looking at it.

**575:** Yep.

**SOUND: Hum varies, uncertain**

**HR:** (the whisper-voice, but not quite right)  
*Comme ouuuuutt of therrrrre.*

**575:** Is she overriding the system?

**HR:** *Tiiiiime toooo gooooo.*

**575:** (shouting) SHUT UP, WANDA.

**New Girl:** Who's Wanda?

**575:** HR. She thinks I don't remember BUT I DO, DON'T I, WANDA?

**New Girl:** Listen, would you like a granola bar? Here, I have one in my purse.

**575:** You always do. But no thanks.

**New Girl:** (sighs, not unhappily) Don't you just find it so peaceful in here? This is nice, actually, just being able to talk the two of us.

**575:** Three of us.

**New Girl:** (calling) HR? Can you give us a minute?

**HR:** *Suuuurrre.*

**SOUND: Hum softens, continues throughout**

**New Girl:** See?

**575:** I'm gonna jump in there.

**New Girl:** What? No. You absolutely cannot do that.

**575:** That's where Ruth went. Because of me.

**New Girl:** I don't know who Ruth is, but I can assure you—

**575:** The girl before you. We were in love. Until she came to work here and just ... didn't know me anymore. I got her the job. I gave her her first key to this stupid room.

**New Girl:** (pause) Oh.

**575:** You love your boyfriend, right? What's his name again?

**New Girl:** Uh—Tom? Tom. It's Tom.

**575:** Okay, Tom. You love him? You gonna marry him?

**New Girl:** I mean ... I don't know.

**575:** Haven't you talked about it?

- New Girl:** I can't remember ... 575, this isn't helping you. This is *your* Wellness time. Maybe if you just shout a little you won't want to—
- 575:** Ruth loved it in here. But she thought it was about feeling better, and it's not. It's about anger, it's about frustration. You pour that stuff into that void and it eats it and turns it into ... I don't know for sure, but we stay safe. We don't get hit by the storms, the power outages. Authentica makes more money, and more money, and more money.
- New Girl:** Because of the Wellness Room? That doesn't sound right.
- 575:** I didn't say it was *right*, it's just how it *is*. And now they've got us all in cubicles, so that we have *more* anger and frustration. See? This was my office, back in the day. Then they made the deal with the void, and moved me out there. Then the construction, and the cubicles, and ... here we are.
- New Girl:** I wish you'd just have a snack.
- 575:** Didn't you think it was *strange*, when you first got here? I remember your face. You thought we were all nuts.
- New Girl:** No, I always respected the team.
- 575:** Trust me, you could see what's up.
- New Girl:** You're really not making sense, 575.
- 575:** Richard. Rich.
- New Girl:** We're closer because we have nicknames.
- 575:** I don't think that's true anymore. If it ever was.
- New Girl:** 575, I think you're forgetting the job here. We take some time for ourselves so we can be more effective out there. Corporate knows what they're doing.
- 575:** You don't get it at all, do you.

**New Girl:** (getting desperate) I love having a job.

**575:** Even if it's working for the void?

**New Girl:** I like yellow, I used to have a cat, I leave at 5:05 every day, on Fridays I go to Smokey's and have four hard ciders. I'm safe and secure and that's all that matters.

**575:** Fair enough. I'm not sure I need this anymore, though.

**New Girl:** Everyone needs something to do with their days.

**575:** I need Ruth. And ... something more. Something real.

**New Girl:** You get to sit by the windows. Don't you like that?

**575:** The windows? Would that make *you* happier?

**New Girl:** It seems pleasant.

**575:** Okay. Tell you what. I'm gonna jump in there, go find my girl. You tell Wanda that you want my window seat. Then go straight home—*straight home*—and propose to your boyfriend.

**New Girl:** But 575, what will Corporate think—

**575:** (not listening) Wanda will give you the new seat and a new name. *Fiancee*, probably. But stop going to Smokey's, all right? At least, not with the gang. Have a life of your own.

**New Girl:** *Stop!* You can't go into the void!

**575:** Sure I can. And hey, one more thing: it's okay to like cats *and* dogs.

**New Girl:** (caught off guard) You think so?

**575:** Sure.

**New Girl:** I think so, too.

**575:** Nice knowing you, kid.



**New Girl:**            Wait!

**SOUND:    Hum vibrates, sounds staticky, then very quiet**

**SOUND:    Time's-up bell**

## **Scene Fifteen:**

### **SOUND: Office noises**

- New Girl:** Hey, new kid, how you liking the place so far?
- New Kid:** Great, everything's great.
- New Girl:** It sure is. Authentica's a great company. You put something in the fridge yet?
- New Kid:** Sure did! Turkey sandwich.
- New Girl:** Perfect. Oh, and look, is that a photo of your—
- New Kid:** Goldfish! Yep. Easiest pet there is—never minds when I have to work late. Hey, I heard there's a bar around here where everyone hangs out?
- New Girl:** Yes. Every Friday we go to Smokey's, just down the road. You'll have to join us!
- New Kid:** Awesome. Oh, sorry—what's your name again?
- New Girl:** You can call me 575. I sit over there, by the windows. Best spot.
- New Kid:** Cool, cool.
- New Girl:** Okay. I think you're going to do great here. Not married, are you?
- New Kid:** (laughs) Definitely not.
- New Girl:** Good. Marriage is a terrible distraction.
- New Kid:** Or just plain terrible, am I right?
- New Girl:** (laughs too heartily, too long, until she sounds like she might be crying) Absolutely right. Well. Welcome to Authentica! Now if you'll excuse me, it's 11:15.

### **SOUND: Door opening, closing**

**SOUND: Muffled screams, fading out**

**Narrator:** Everybody needs to feel useful, find something to do to fill their days. And every corporation needs a dedicated staff to keep the business world spinning. And if those needs happen to come with a little sacrifice, well, it wouldn't be the first time someone disappeared right in front of your eyes. Especially in Uncanny County.

**MUSIC**