

Have Monster, Will Travel
Episode 12: The Professor in the Lime Green Kia

(RILEY, RENDER and TAIWAN in the 1996 GMC Safari.)

RENDER

But when will you be back?

RILEY

It's gonna be a couple hours, babe.

RENDER

But like, in minutes ...

RILEY

You want to know how long I'll be gone in minutes?

TAIWAN

I could set a timer. And if you're late, we would finally have the proof we need that you're not a trust-worthy person.

RILEY

It's called a work day for a reason. It's gonna be most of the day. I'll bring you some lunch in a couple of hours.

RENDER

And I'm supposed to just sit here?

RILEY

You know you are.

RENDER

Couldn't you drop us off somewhere? Somewhere on the edge of town.

RILEY

Little hippie college town at the end of the semester? There won't be a stream or hiking trail within twenty miles that's not busting at the seams with people.

RENDER

I could use my stealth skills.

RILEY

Oh. You have stealth skills now.



RENDER

You don't know.

RILEY

I do. I do know.

RENDER

Riley, I'm like a World War I dogfighter - my true prowess doesn't present itself until the pressure is on.

RILEY

You have to stay in the van.

RENDER

I'm going to be so bored.

TAIWAN

Cool. Cool cool.

RILEY

Render, I'm not going to a water park - I'm going to work.

RENDER

That job made you miserable.

RILEY

I know that.

RENDER

So let's get out of here.

RILEY

I'm not going back to my old job. This is two or three days of freelance work on one project - and then a very nice payday, which honestly, we could use.

RENDER

I'm going to be in here for three days!

RILEY

We're in this van every day.

RENDER

Not like this. This is like a kennel.



TAIWAN

Pff. Humans.

RILEY

You are not in a kennel.

RENDER

I'm being held against my will.

RILEY

Ok, well yeah, a little bit that but - We need this money. And to get it, I need to be in a public place with wifi, which makes it hard enough to find a place to park this mondo suspicious van without drawing attention to you.

It's a pretty day, the windows are cracked, just lounge about and try to enjoy it.

Besides, you're not alone - you've got Taiwan 1000 with you.

(RENDER thinks this over.)

TAIWAN

Why the long pause?

RENDER

Sorry.

RILEY

And, if you're good, after work I'll bring you some ice cream.

RENDER

Riley, you can't just bribe me when you want something.

But if you were going to try it would need to come with fruit topping and sprinkles.

RILEY

Deal.

And hey, can I show something that might help pass the time?

Taiwan 1000, can you open up ... minesweeper?

(A TAP of the mouse and minesweeper is open.)

You're gonna love this.



RILEY (cont.)

On this board, there are ten landmines. And it's your job to try to find them. You start by clicking any one of these little squares.

(Click.)

Now you see the little numbers? That tells you how many mines there are that are touching that square. So now we just click again and - see? I died.

TAIWAN

Ugh. Don't tease me.

RENDER

This seems like kind of a dumb game.

RILEY

[utter shock:] Um. My friend. You will be shocked. Start playing this and before you know it, the day will be half way over.

(RILEY opens up the Safari.)

Alright you two, I gotta go, but I'll see you at lunch. Be good.

(RILEY leaves. Silence in the Safari for a moment, and then:)

TAIWAN

Alright, I'm outta here.

RENDER

What!

TAIWAN

Yeah, I'm not sticking around.

(The back door POPS open.)

RENDER

But Riley said -

TAIWAN

She's not my boss.

RENDER

Where are you going?



TAIWAN

I don't know. I'll figure it out. See ya, dude!

(The door slams. RENDER is alone in the Safari. A moment, and then a firm determination:)

RENDER

[small but mighty:] Stealth Skills.

(RENDER pops open the back door.)

(THEME SONG.)

(A Coffee Shop. A BARISTA plops a cup down on a counter.)

BARISTA

Riley!

Black tea, skim milk?

RILEY

Yeah, thanks.

(PROFESSOR McDERMOTT approaches RILEY.)

PROFESSOR

I'm sorry, did she say Riley?

RILEY

Yeah. Oh, did I grab your -

PROFESSOR

No. I just heard the name and thought... Do you know Eric McDermott? Big D, two Ts.

RILEY

Uh. Yeah. I'm sorry, who are you?

PROFESSOR

Oh, right, forgive me. I'm his mother.

RILEY

... His mother.



PROFESSOR

But please, call me Dr. McDermott. I thought you couldn't make it.

RILEY

Couldn't make it?

PROFESSOR

To lunch. Eric told me you were having a procedure today. A root canal?

RILEY

Oh, no, not me. I mean, sometimes it feels like it but ... I'm here.

PROFESSOR

Well this just makes my day. I'm so happy to finally meet you.

RILEY

Well... Me too.

PROFESSOR

I kept asking him, "When am I going to get to meet this girlfriend of yours?"

(RILEY has no words for this. But there are lots of sounds.)

I was starting to think maybe he was just making you up.

RILEY

Oh, That does sound like him, doesn't it?

PROFESSOR

Where is Eric?

RILEY

I don't know.

PROFESSOR

Oh, I thought maybe you two came together.

RILEY

No. I came by myself. I was trying to get a little work done.

PROFESSOR

Well that is wonderful. Congratulations. I know it can be hard to get back on your feet again.



RILEY

... It sure can.

PROFESSOR

I don't mean to embarrass you. There's no shame in being fired.

RILEY

Did your son tell you that his girlfriend ... that I ... had been fired?

PROFESSOR

Did I say something that I shouldn't have? I just thought you knew he had told me about your unemployment. Because of the whole car fiasco.

RILEY

His car. I think I understand.

PROFESSOR

But we don't have to talk about that. I'm sure you feel bad enough about the financial strain you've put us under without me bringing it up. This is not how I want us to start our relationship.

RILEY

Well, I didn't want to meet you either. Like this, I mean.

He's meeting us here?

PROFESSOR

I told him we were meeting here. Of course, you know my son. Twenty minutes late is on time for him.

We should see where he is. Do you two share your location with each other.

RILEY

Like on a phone? No. We're adults.

PROFESSOR

I think I left my phone in the cup holder. I'm just parked right out front.

(PROFESSOR and RILEY exit the coffee shop.)

RILEY

Is that your lime green ...

PROFESSOR

Oh, but you recognize it, of course. Eric got his right after I got mine.



PROFESSOR (cont.)

Well ... it was my name on the car note but you understand.

You know, for a compact SUV, the Kia Soul is surprisingly roomy.

(PROFESSOR retrieves her phone.)

Well, I don't know, it says he's on our block.

RILEY

Is that him, on the blue bicycle?

PROFESSOR

It must be.

Eric!

The college just started this rideshare bike program and the students love it.

(ERIC rides up on his bike. He speaks in his normal voice.)

ERIC

Mom!

PROFESSOR

You didn't tell me Riley was able to make it.

RILEY

Hi, Hon.

ERIC

[jumping back into his cryptozoologist voice:] Riley!

PROFESSOR

Son, please, enough with that voice.

ERIC

Sorry, Mom.

... Riley. What a surprise.

RILEY

What a fun surprise for all of us.



PROFESSOR

Eric, did you remember to lock the front door?

ERIC

Yes, Mom.

PROFESSOR

And you put the key back?

ERIC

Yes!

PROFESSOR

If he doesn't put the key back, he loses it.

ERIC

Mom, that happened one time. And I was twelve years old.

PROFESSOR

Well, have you lost it since?

ERIC

[sign:] no.

PROFESSOR

Now Riley, I hope you didn't get a hotel room. You will be staying with us, won't you?

RILEY

Oh, well, I -

ERIC

Mom, I'm not going to ask my girlfriend to get a hotel room.

(And the sound of "girlfriend," RILEY, perhaps, swallows a little piece of vomit.)

PROFESSOR

Well I wish I had known we were going to have a house guest.

ERIC

It was ... a surprise.

PROFESSOR / RILEY

It sure was!



PROFESSOR

Well, after lunch, you're going to have to go home and strip the sheets of the bed in the guest room.

ERIC

You mean my bedroom.

PROFESSOR

Adult children do not have bedrooms in their parents' homes. And you'll need to move your things to the den.

ERIC

Are you kicking me to the couch?

PROFESSOR

I am not too old or too stupid to think that my handsome son isn't having sex. But it's my house, my rules.

[to RILEY:] One time, when he was in High School, I came home and caught him rolling around on the carpet, making out with one of the McAllister twins. I don't know which one - the one who wouldn't get her ears pierced.

ERIC

Mom!

PROFESSOR

Son, I don't care how old you are, it's my house, my rules.

RILEY

I'm actually not staying the night.

(This stops the bickering.)

I'm actually, just staying for the day.

PROFESSOR

Well of course. You'll want to spend Mother's Day with your own mom.

It doesn't matter to me that we're celebrating early. I'm just glad we're getting to spend the day together.

RILEY

... the whole day?

PROFESSOR

You know, I should go and check on our lunch reservation, make sure they can accommodate all three of us.

Now, Eric, I don't want to have a repeat of the scooter incident - you go find a station and check that bicycle back in.

I'll see you in ten minutes, don't be late.

(PROFESSOR walks briskly away. RILEY whallops ERIC.)

RILEY

You told your Mom that we were dating!

ERIC

I didn't know you were going to be here. You two were never supposed to meet.

RILEY

That does not give you permission to make me your girlfriend. Just knowing that in a fantasy somewhere I have to spend time with you makes me want to upchuck.

ERIC

Look, I didn't start out by just making you my girlfriend.

RILEY

No, first you had to make your way thru both of the McAllister twins.

ERIC

It's just that Mom was asking a lot of questions and -

RILEY

I'm sorry, I can't listen to you like this. Can you go back to doing the silly voice.

ERIC

It's not a silly voice!

RILEY

Do you have to turn everything into an argument? It is a silly voice and you need to acknowledge it.

Oh my god it does sound like we're dating.

ERIC

I had to borrow money from Mom to pay for the rental after you two destroyed my car.

RILEY

And you Mom asked why the rental wasn't covered under her insurance policy.

ERIC

Because the car was found in the middle of a swamp.

RILEY

What were you doing driving your car into a swamp, Eric?

ERIC

I wasn't. My friend Riley was driving at the time.

RILEY

Then why isn't Riley's insurance paying for it?

ERIC

Because Riley doesn't have insurance.

RILEY

Why doesn't she have insurance, Eric?

ERIC

Because she's between jobs right now.

RILEY

Who is this Riley, why have I never heard of her before.

ERIC

She's a new friend.

RILEY

And why would you let a new friend who is an uninsured driver, borrow your car?

(building to a fever pitch:)

ERIC

Because she's more than a friend, she's my girlfriend.

RILEY

When am I going to meet her.

ERIC

She's having a root canal.

RILEY

Forever! A forever root canal?!

Do you see how easy and effortless these questions are? Why aren't you a better liar.

WHY AREN'T YOU A BETTER LIAR!

ERIC

Look, I'm sorry, alright. Let's just get thru this lunch.

RILEY

Oh, I am absolutely not eating lunch with the two of you.

ERIC

You have to! She's updating the reservation!

RILEY

That is not my problem.

ERIC

You owe me!

RILEY

I owe you?

ERIC

You destroyed my phone, wrecked my car.

[dropping the voice:] I don't know if you've caught on, but my Mom doesn't think I can do anything right.

I am one big disappointment to her.

I had water from the unmentionables. I had a sapling from Potter. I could have shown her either of those, could have shown her that I am more than what she gives me credit for. But every time I get close to having something like that ... here comes the two of you.

So yeah. I think you owe me.

RILEY

Well what am I getting in return, lover boy?

(RILEY swallows a little more vomit.)



ERIC

You ok?

RILEY

I thought that was going to be a good comeback, but it - it just hurt.

(Across town, a quiet little side street.)

RENDER

[hushed:] Taiwan 1000.

TAIWAN

Render - what are you doing!

RENDER

I'm trying to catch up to you.

TAIWAN

You can't be out here.

RENDER

I can't be out here! What about you?

TAIWAN

I'm a computer, people see me all the time.

RENDER

Not weaving in and out of bushes and hopping across the street, they don't.

TAIWAN

Uh ... have you seen the way humans litter. Trust me, I don't stand out at all.

RENDER

You have to come back to the van.

TAIWAN

We can't talk like this out in the open. Come on, down this little side street.

(TAIWAN and RENDER move down a side street, into partial concealment.)

RENDER

Where are you going?

TAIWAN

That is none of your business. Why did you follow me?

RENDER

You just left.

TAIWAN

So?

RENDER

And I didn't know where you were going.

TAIWAN

So!

RENDER

I was worried you might get into trouble.

TAIWAN

And what were you going to do about it? You stand out more than I do.

RENDER

I don't know - I was just worried about you.

TAIWAN

You found me in the middle of pilfering season. I have been breaking in and sneaking around people's houses longer than you've been alive.

RENDER

I just thought I could help. You know - if you need help, look for a Rubilee.

TAIWAN

Render, it is not your job to fix my problems.

RENDER

What problems do you have?

TAIWAN

There's a car coming. Quick! Into that dumpster.

(RENDER lifts the lid on a dumpster and grabs TAIWAN.)

No! I meant just you!



(RENDER and TAIWAN topple into the dumpster, screaming.)

TAIWAN (cont.)

Did you think I was going to live in the back of the Safari forever?

RENDER

I don't know... Yes? Do you not like us?

TAIWAN

I like ... you.

RENDER

You like both of us. Admit it.

TAIWAN

I like Riley maybe 11% - which is not enough to hang around forever.

Render, I have my own life to live. And my own problems to sort out. And this town is better for me than a lot of places we've been lately. So ...

I'm getting off the ride.

And you need to get back to the van. I know you trust Riley, but you don't know humans the way that I do - and I promise, you cannot trust the rest of them.

(RENDER takes a moment to think this thru.)

RENDER

No. We're family. And if you're in trouble - then I'm sticking around to help.

(a moment TAIWAN sighs.)

TAIWAN

Riley is not going to like this.

(The Restaurant.)

PROFESSOR

Riley, You are going to like this. Everything here is fantastic.

RILEY

Great.



PROFESSOR

And today is my treat. I don't want to hear any arguments.

ERIC

Aww, thanks mom.

PROFESSOR

Eric, get your hand out of the bread bowl. You're going to spoil your lunch.

RILEY

So, Dr. McDermott - you teach at the college?

PROFESSOR

I'm a part of the Classics department. A lot of my work is in myths and folktales from around the world. I'm actually preparing to go on sabbatical for a semester.

ERIC

Mom teaches a class on monsters.

PROFESSOR

Well, that's a pretty sophomoric way of describing it. I think Medusa might object to that label. But yes, in a sense, I am deeply interested in how our collective fears - of nature, or the unknown - manifest themselves into the myths that we create.

RILEY

It sounds fascinating.

PROFESSOR

Well I can tell you, it's a lot more academic than Eric's approach to the subject.

ERIC

Mom!

PROFESSOR

I won't bring it up. [to RILEY:] I'm sure you've had your fill of the subject.

RILEY

[to ERIC:] But you didn't go to school here?

PROFESSOR

Oh! No. The course load here is a little ... well, it's a very rigorous school.

(A healthy amount of silence around the table.)



RILEY

I actually think it's kind of interesting. You have that photo you showed me.

PROFESSOR

The log! Oh, If I could redo that day.

ERIC

It's not a log, Mom.

PROFESSOR

He got a polaroid for Christmas and took a picture of a log floating in the lake behind the house. He came running up, his pajamas soaked, screaming of monsters and ... well, I didn't see the harm in letting him go on about his discovery.

I mean, this is how myths start: our explanations for the unknown.

Of course, now, I wish I had put an end to it. You see what it's turned into.

ERIC

Mom, I'm right here.

PROFESSOR

Well, you need to hear it. Maybe with Riley here you'll actually listen.

(A WAITRESS approaches the table.)

WAITRESS

Are we ready to order?

ERIC

Can we get another bread basket?

PROFESSOR

You're going to fill up on carbs.

Riley, do you mind if I order for the table?

(Outside.)

TAIWAN

Quick! Into this dumpster.

RENDER

There has got to be better places to hide.

TAIWAN

Before anyone sees us!

RENDER

Fine.

(RENDER and TAIWAN are in a new and exciting dumpster.)

Is this it?

TAIWAN

I think so.

RENDER

Where are we?

TAIWAN

It's a thrift store, I think.

RENDER

Why are we here?

TAIWAN

I think this is my best option.

RENDER

Best option for what?

TAIWAN

When you found me, I had been pilfering for over a month, sneaking into people's houses, finding the right thing, getting it back out again.

I don't have that kind of time any more. This place is crawling with humans, that's not great. But it might be my best chance.

RENDER

I don't understand.

TAIWAN

I can't tell you. Believe me, if I could tell anyone I would tell you. But it's better for me if I don't. Just know, this is where I have to be. You helped. Thank you.

RENDER

Taiwan 1000... Is this goodbye?



TAIWAN

Render. Friend.

Yes.

(A door to the THRIFT store blows open with a BANG! A DAD and TIMOTHY exit. TIMOTHY is banging something electronic against the sidewalk for the hell of it.)

DAD

Timothy! We just bought that.

(WHACK!)

Uh-uh. I don't want to see you do that again.

(SMACK!)

I don't think this is funny. Timothy!

(THWACK!)

Do you want a time out? Do you want a time out?

(CRACK!)

Timothy! Come here.

TAIWAN

Oh man ...

RENDER

You alright?

TAIWAN

Render. Look at the way they treat everything.

This is wrong. I made a mistake, I can't be here.

RENDER

What do you want to do?

TAIWAN

We gotta get back to the van.

(The Restaurant.)

PROFESSOR

So Riley, Eric hasn't told me much about your family.

RILEY

No?

PROFESSOR

I mean, he's always kept to himself, but to hear him - you'd think he doesn't know anything about you at all.

RILEY

Eric!

ERIC

Oh. You know ... when a relationship is new, you kinda keep it to yourself.

RILEY

Well - I've got a younger sister. She still lives back home, with my Dad.

PROFESSOR

And your mom?

RILEY

Uh. Passed. Unfortunately.

PROFESSOR

I'm sorry to hear that.

RILEY

Yeah ...

PROFESSOR

So this new job!

RILEY

Not really a new job. Just freelancing for the same company. A little spending cash, really.

PROFESSOR

The company that fired you now has you working freelance?

RILEY

Oh. I wasn't fired. I quit.

PROFESSOR

Without another job lined up?

RILEY

It was time to go. It wasn't going to turn into the career I wanted it to be.

PROFESSOR

Well I wouldn't be tenure today if I just quit every job that wasn't turning out the way I expected.

RILEY

Not really a tenure track at this job, I'm afraid.

No - my boss had his doctorate in hiring young and burning out.

PROFESSOR

I don't understand. What are you doing now?

RILEY

Just traveling, mostly.

PROFESSOR

And this freelance job is just a way to -

RILEY

Just trying to keep the train on the track, ya know?

PROFESSOR

I think I do.

(A moment, while PROFESSOR collects her thoughts.)

Allow me to play mom for a minute.

RILEY

That's okay.

PROFESSOR

No, I'm serious.

ERIC

Mom ...

PROFESSOR

I'm sorry but sometimes children still need to hear from their parents.

PROFESSOR (cont.)

And believe me, this is not how I wanted today to go, but to be honest, none of this is what I would have wanted.

[to RILEY:] I thought you were going to be a stabilizing force for Eric, help him find direction in his life, but I see now that you are just as rudderless as he is.

RILEY

Actually, I don't need to hear any of this from you.

PROFESSOR

I think you do. I think both of you need a wake up call.

What would your mom think of the way your life is turning out.

ERIC

[with a new-found bravery!] Mom, that is enough!

You are not going to talk that way to the woman I love.

(RILEY swallows a little bit of vomit.)

I'm sorry, but it's true. Riley and I are in love. And what's more, Mom:

We. Are. Getting.

(RILEY clamps down on ERIC'S arm.)

RILEY

Ahead of ourselves! We are getting ahead of ourselves.

[to ERIC, thru gritted teeth:] You have got to be a better liar.

[to PROFESSOR:] Let me tell you something about my Mom.

My Mom loved nothing more than watching someone discover their passion. And when she found out what your passions were, she did everything in her power to lift them up for you.

Bedtime at my house took 90 minutes, because she wanted to hear us tell bedtime stories, and she would interrupt every 30 seconds asking us follow-up questions because there was nothing more interesting to her than the people she loved.

She would be endlessly proud of who I am, and flummoxed that you could think otherwise.

RILEY

[re: ERIC:] This man has figured out what he's passionate about, and he's brave enough to chase no matter how ridiculous everyone else thinks he is.

ERIC

Not everyone else. Riley ...

RILEY

No, Eric. It is about time that you got something in this life that you wanted.

[Donning her best BUNION voice, pounding the table:] This man would like!

(POUND!)

Another!

(POUND!)

Bread Basket!

(Outside.)

TAIWAN

Render! We gotta go.

RENDER

The coast isn't clear.

TAIWAN

No. We gotta go. Now.

RENDER

We'll be seen.

TAIWAN

Render!

RENDER

What!

TAIWAN

Doesn't that look like Riley?

RENDER

That does look like Riley.

TAIWAN

Doesn't it look like she's heading back towards the van.

RENDER

It does look like that.

TAIWAN

Render ...

RENDER

Right.

Run for it!

TAIWAN

No!

[an urgent whisper:] Stealth for it.

(Running and grunting and sucking in our breath and crouching, peppered with:)

TAIWAN

Quick, the dumpster!

RENDER

Not another dumpster ...

(CLANG! And then more scurrying.)

TAIWAN

Hurry, into this drainage culvert.

RENDER

Blech.

(More scooting, shimmying, sprinting.)

TAIWAN

No, no, this way, thru this ditch.

RENDER

Riley's gonna kill us.

(The Safari. RILEY opens the door and climbs in, fuming.)

But you know what. I also really like the work of Ashton Kutcher, so I think I'll marry him too.

TAIWAN

Oh, see, I had it the other way. I said:

Kill Ashton Kutcher.

Kill Chevy Chase.

Kill Meryl Streep.

RILEY

For the last time, that is not how you play that game.

RENDER

Riley, you're back.

TAIWAN

How was work?

RILEY

It.

It wasn't great.

RENDER

Riley, are you ok?

RILEY

No, Render, I'm ... I'm fine.

RENDER

Hey. What's going on?

RILEY

Riley. I'm fine.

TAIWAN

Are you sure? Cause if you needed to talk ... we'd listen.

RILEY

I just.

Some days it's just worse than others.

I just really miss her today, that's all.

RENDER

Oh.

Riley -

RILEY

Hey, pal. Do you mind if we just sit her for a little while.

RENDER

No. No, that's fine.

(The Safari takes a deep breath. RILEY, RENDER and TAIWAN sit in silence. Beyond the Safari, birdsong, passing joggers, but inside ... Still ness.)

RILEY

What is that smell?

(end of episode.)

CREDITS

TARA

Hi, this is Tara Williams. Have Monster, Will Travel features the vocal talents of Jordan Trovillion as Riley Kate, Paul Kerford Wilson as Render, Neil Batra as Taiwan 1000, Dave Powell as Eric Wayne McDermott, Jr. -

DAVE

Don't you hate it when moms use your full name?

TARA

Grayson Halonen as Server, Bridget Leak as Barista, Trey Tatum as Timothy's Dad and me, Tara McAllister as Professor McDermott, Big D, two Ts. Today's episode was written by Trey Tatum and directed by Bridget Leak. Have Monster, Will Travel is a production of Queen City Flash out of Cincinnati, Ohio

More information, including transcripts can be found at QueenCityFlash.com

And as they say where he's from:

"Clara, we're at a research facility in the middle of the Antarctic - what could possibly be out there?"