

Project Changeling episode 1

V: Violet

C: Clem

M: Mom

D: Dad

Scene 1

V: Um- Hi. My name is Violet S[Bleep] and this is the "director's cut" of my summer film class biography project, with like, behind the scenes stuff. For introduction to film production class section [Beep] with professor Gordan at University of [Long beep]

[Cheesy windows video editor title screen]

["About me"]

V: Ok i'm just going to ramble a bit. I can always cut this down.. I'm 19 years old, I just finished my freshman year of university at [Long beep]. I'm a finance major, I think I might go into accounting? It just sounds right to me. But I have to take a non-major elective, and I've always kind of wanted to try film. I know it's not really practical for what I want to do, but it's more useful to me than like. Studio art or something.

[Censored "family photo"]

I live in [Beep] Florida with my family. I'm an only child, no pets,... no grandparents. Just me and my mom and dad. My mom is a financial analyst, and my dad is an investment banker. Money is kind of the family business, and I'm really glad to be a part of that legacy. We're all really alike. I'm glad we're so close. As people I know get older, a lot of them kind of fell out with their parents. I think we're just so similar that something like that can't happen.

Ugh... What do I even say here? I do well in class, mostly. I played soccer in high school. I don't really do anything interesting. No cool talents or hobbies. I'm just... typical. I mean, outside of my medical history, I'm just normal. And I'm happy. "May you live in interesting times" is a threat, after all. The kind of stuff that makes for good stories usually tends to, how should i say- suck real bad when it's happening to you.

Oh, yeah, my medical history. I have epilepsy. More specifically, I have atypical absence seizures and focal impaired awareness seizures.

I remain upright and my eyes stay open, but I'm just not home. In both of these, I'm unaware of what's happening around me. I don't ever know I was gone, unless someone tells me I cut off in the middle of a sentence or something. I feel pretty awful for a couple of minutes afterwards. They're not the big jerky kind you see on TV, but it's still tough to live with. But my mom says I'm made of tougher stuff.

We used to have it under control with medication, but I... stopped responding to it, for some reason. The specialists don't know why. Alternatives haven't been working either. I've even been trying keto and that isn't helping. It's not safe for me to play soccer anymore. I worry I won't be able to drive at all. I refuse to get behind the wheel without someone else there. It sucks. I feel a lot less independent now.

I'm.. considering asking about a seizure detection dog? I don't know how that'll go over. I think they're pretty expensive, but... it might be worth it. I can't just stay with my parents forever. They want me to be the best that I can be. They support me a lot, and i'm grateful. I just, uh, worry sometimes. They've gotten me to try to power through this last semester without relying on my accommodations. They think I'm less likely to get a job if I need them. I know the ADA has laws for that type of thing and all, but.. They believe in me. That I can be better. You can always be better, that's our motto.

The only good part of this was Garden Gate. It was a place like a neurological research center slash elementary school. I made a lot of good friends there, and learned a lot about myself and how to handle my disorder. I really miss it, you know. I still went there for doctor's appointments until it shut down while I was in high school.

Uhm.. I'm really excited to work on this project over the course of this class! Sounds really fun.

Uh.. that should be enough stuff to edit down, right?

## Scene 2

[footage of a ceiling fan spinning, from the camcorder sitting on a table]

V: Ok I think I got it set up right. Can you just talk into the microphone for a second?

M: one two three? Is that good?

V: Yeah we got it. Alright. So this is an interview about me. The whole concept of this film is about who I am. I want some lines about who you think I am.

M: You're my daughter. You're perfect, and I love you.

V: (disgusted noise) Ok yeah. You're my mom and you have to say that. Who am I really?

M: alright, alright. You're smart. You're good at math. You're resourceful, you don't let your.. Issues hold you back. You've got a bright future ahead of you. A place in our legacy.

M: You're just so pretty, really the spitting image of both of us. And you were so talented at soccer. It really is a shame you had to stop, but it's for the best. At least you have those fond memories.

V: Yeah. Those were good times. Much better than that phase I had in middle school with the goth clothes.

V and M Simultaneously: So embarrassing

M: Well, we're all glad you got over that. It made us look like we were neglecting you, poor thing. Like we didn't care how you looked at all, and all of that horrible screaming music, ugh, it scared the daylight out of the neighbors.

V: Well, you do care. And you were right that it made you look bad. I know you really must have felt like the bad guy telling me to knock it off, but it was for my own good. All it took was some gentle encouragement, right?

M: Right. And you found a much better outlet to all that energy with sports, anyways. Maybe don't put this part in your project, honey, we don't need everyone to know about it.

V: Sheesh, yeah. But with everything else, I should have something salvageable.

### Scene 3

[Violet is sitting on the floor in an office or study. There is a box of photos and folders]

V: I'm just gonna grab some footage of me picking photos to use for the slideshow. My process video is gonna be so sick.

V: ok let me see what we've got here. Aww that one's cute.

[page flipping and shuffling sounds, digging through pictures and occasionally picking one out]

No, no, that one's embarrassing, no. Oh I remember that.

Hmm.

Here's some school ones. Nice.

Um.

Who... who's that. That's me, and that's Clem but who's.. Who's

[flips paper]

Laurel?

[censored photo fills up the screen. Tv "signal not found" bleep]

END

## Episode 2

### Scene 1

[Picture of a logo]

Garden gate neurotherapy center and school. It was like a specialist doctor's office slash school for kids with neurological disorders slash research facility. It was really good for me. I made a lot of friends there, and learned how to adapt to my condition. It was so good that my parents moved across the country to get me there when I was little. They had some leading scientists and therapies in the country there. I think it's kind of cool that me just doing normal kid stuff contributed to groundbreaking epilepsy research. I was there for elementary school, in the same class of sixteen kids in my grade the whole six years, learning normally and having recess and fun electives. We each had 2 "research" sessions every week, which were pretty boring, but not that bad. Mostly just medical checkups and doing cognitive puzzles. I made my best friendships there. Most

of us stuck together up through high school, but I'm still really close with one of them now. Clement. He just got home earlier this week from out of state. [He was in that picture too. Maybe he knows what's going on.]

[Voice call] [the censored photo is on screen]

V: Hey Clem

C: Hi V, I was just about to call you! Do you want to hang out this week?

V: Oh yeah for sure. The theater at the mall is showing something cool, but I've gotta ask you something real quick. Something weird is going on and I need to make sure I'm not crazy, haha.

C:Um... sure, what is it?

V: Do you remember going to school with someone named Laurel?

C: ..No. Wait- no. yeah I don't remember that. Was she a year above us?

V: Check your email.

C: Checking... checking.. Got it. Wait, what. I'm-We're in this photo with.. I don't remember this? I don't remember her. What.

V: I looked through all the other photos from elementary school, for my project y'know, and this is the only one with her. At our end of year party for fourth grade? And I don't remember any kids in other grades or neighbors, who look like.. Her.

C: Weird. Why don't we ask-

V: I don't think we should. I've got this, this bad feeling. That we shouldn't share this with anyone. Especially our parents.

C: What, you think we're haunted or something?

V: no I just,I feel like.. Why don't we talk about something else

## Scene 2

[censored photo of girl with grandma]

V:I don't like talking about this kind of stuff with my parents. They're pretty good at dealing with my condition.. But they don't like thinking about "strange" things. About me being strange. I can be inspiring, or I can be pathetic, but not strange.

V; I must have done.. Something. Something unsettling. To make my grandmother do what she did to me.

I do have one living grandparent, but she.. She tried to kill me. I was five or six the last time I saw her. Spending the night at her

house, making cookies or something. I don't remember it too well, but I probably had a seizure. That's around the time they started getting frequent. I probably scared her really badly. I don't know what I did. She just started choking me and screaming "who are you? Who are you? You're not my granddaughter, what did you do to her?" Somebody was able to get her to open the door, got her to put me down. I think it was the mailman? I went to the hospital. She went to a psychiatric hospital. I think she's still alive, in there. And the thing she has is capgras syndrome? When you think somebody has been replaced by an imposter. I honestly just feel really bad for her. She's sick. And sick people aren't responsible for what they do. I hope she's doing better. I wonder if she still thinks I killed the real Violet and took her place.

### Scene 3

[Violet is in a cramped storage room]

V: ok, i'm in the attic. We've, uh, got a lot of photos up here. Maybe there's one more with laurel? Or maybe one of grandma, though i'm pretty sure they destroyed most of those. I'm not supposed to go in the attic. It's unfinished, and mom says its kinda dangerous? But I'm going to stay where the floor is, well, flooring? And not just. Drywall. Ow. [she bumps her head on the ceiling] ok. Let's check back here.

[she paws around in the folders]

Hm. wow a lot this is sensitive so you get to watch the wall for a bit.

[ Digging around in file boxes, noises of confusion)

### Scene 4

V: Clem. Clem this is really important. I need you to come over right now, I'm serious, as fast as possible.

C: Is this about what you said yesterday? Because if you think something is up with our parents, i need to know, because i was considering-

V: DON't tell them. Anything. It's worse than I thought. It's bad. I'm scared, I don't know what this means. I need someone else to see this. No pictures. If you need to tell them anything, tell them you're helping me with my film project. Which isn't a lie.

C: You're videoing this?

V: I have to. I have a feeling we might.. Forget.. Do your parents have like, a filing cabinet or something?

C: Yeah. It's the kind that locks. What are you getting at?

V; I have some physical evidence that I'm not crazy. You might too.

end

### Episode 3

#### Scene 1

C: So you're sure about this?

V: There's nothing else in the attic. Like they went through and got rid of it. Dad burned some trash after Christmas in the fireplace this year. And you weren't able to find any keys that fit that cabinet?

C:nope.

V: Dang it. Guess we do actually have to break into an abandoned building.

C: woooo. Yeeah, let's record ourselves doing crimes.

V: It's not like I'm going to share this anywhere. It's for Archival Purposes.

C: I'm just teasing you. How do you want to approach this? Just see if there's anything unlocked? Wait- wait. I just remembered something. Do you have any paper clips? Or bobby pins?

V: Um, yeah I've got some in my car, why?

C: I think I know how to pick a lock? I don't remember learning but I remember. Picking a lock. On a door somewhere.

V: What the hell, man?

#### Scene 2

V: Wow. Ok. any other cool random brain blasts for us.

C: Not Right now. Give me like 5 minutes and we'll see what happens.

V: [sarcastically] haha. Ok. if i were performing unlicensed medical procedures on children, where would i keep my files.

[Actors walk around empty school and improvise]

#### Scene 3

V: Do you remember the ghost light? The one that flickered by that teacher's room? The room that was even more off-limits than the back rooms in the front office?

C: ..yes. The one that was haunted by a kid who drowned in the toilet or something. It was really only scary if you're 8. Kinda stuff

little kids come up with. But we were so terrified. The whole class believed it.

V: what if we didn't come up with it? What if it was made up to keep us away from the room?

C: Well, that'd be screwed up. But what's one more screwed up thing on top of all this.

[Walking over to that room, shot of the light, now shut off]

[They open a classroom door to a dark room with boxes full of folders]

The files detail a certain process, what exactly has been modified on both of them, and two times when their memory has been wiped, one linked to a memo they find in the box about covering up laurel dying (and laurel's last file simply reading " unsuccessful, expunged") and the other time about a "premises breach" 3 or 4 years ago, when Garden Gate first closed and they got in here the first time.

#### Scene 4

V: ok this looks like you'd expected it to. A dark room full of stuff.

C: Let's get looking.

[Rummaging]

C: Looks like I found some kind of newsletter.

[Read whatever parts of it you want out loud]

C: Oh shoot! It's her.. Wait. Condolences?

V: I guess she is.. Gone. and this place covered it up. Whatever it is that they were doing... made us forget?

C: Let's keep looking.

[pan around the room some more]

Oh these are dated when we went here. Hm. These have initials.

V: Ok here's mine. And uh, this one looks like yours.

[inside of files. Read some of it out loud.]

C: So they were.. Editing us. Like a video game. Like a simulation.

V: Hm. so that's where the lockpicking comes from. We were here before. We did this exact thing before. And we're only starting to remember it because we're doing it again?

C: Maybe we can actually make it this time. We've done it before. Maybe we won't make the same mistakes this time.

V: Can you find the file that says A-17?

C: yeah here it is.

[Focus on the document]

V: Not only did they cover up her death.. They killed her. They wanted to change something that was a fundamental part of her so badly that they killed her. Not just hobbies or likes or dislikes. I think they tried to change all of her at once. We're Theseus's ships, we're being rebuilt slowly. I think they tried to get her all on one go. I don't remember what it was.. But I have a feeling. A vague feeling. But I trust it.

C:.. Let's just go now. We can keep a secret. We can just try to be what they want us to be until we can get out. It's just three more years and we can go. Say I'm going to law school and just move out forever. We'll be real adults by then. They can't keep doing this. Changing what we are.

V: I guess we really were replaced, huh? Replaced by ourselves. Grandma was right. Whatever we are now kind of killed what we used to be. Who we used to be. They took that from us. Let's just go home. I'll hide these video files somewhere they'd never look. And say we just went for lunch or something.

C:.. sounds good.

Scene 5

They leave the room with the folders

[loud footsteps, distant male voice]

Damn it, it's those two kids again. HEY! GET BACK HERE!

[C and V start running down the hallway]

[Violet turns the camera around, and it looks like she is fiddling with something while running, these are the only shots we ever get of her face]

V: I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry. It'll never end, I'll just be back here again. We can't save ourselves. I'm sorry, Clem. I'm sorry, Laurel.

[it looks like she trips and the video cuts out]

END

EPILOGUE- Text on a website

I found this sd card case in the grass outside of an abandoned playground. I haven't been able to find any record of those two kids. I redacted parts of their names anyway. i dont want the people who

hurt them to hurt me. Violet, Clement, or any of you classmates who find this, you don't deserve this. I'm sorry.

I guess violet saw this coming. or at least something bad happening to her... there's a bunch of photos on this sd card, too. she probably wanted to make sure she wouldn't lose anything again.