

CHAPTER TWO — “THE HOOK BRINGS YOU BACK”

PAGE 1

FULL-PAGE / ESTABLISHING SPLASH

VISUAL:

A wide establishing shot of modern Innsmouth.

It is still recognizably Innsmouth: coastal, old, damp, and strange. But instead of rot, the harbor is full of sleek new signage, luxury waterfront condos, restored boardwalks, boutique seafood restaurants, and wellness spas with names like:

- **Brine, Bath, and Beyond**
- **Radar** — but visually close to a Target-style logo
- **Marsh Maritime Ventures: Undersea Futures Office**
- **Queequeg’s** — but visually close to a Starbucks-style logo

Old fish-processing buildings have been turned into artisanal markets. Ancient, leaning houses have been painted in expensive coastal neutrals. A mural on a sea wall reads:

RISING TIDES. RISING FUTURES.

Somewhere in the background, a banner advertises:

INNSMOUTH: THE NEXT WAVE OF COASTAL LIVING

A subtle tentacle curls along the outer page edge, outside the main image, as if holding the page open.

CAPTION:

Innsmouth had changed in the years since she’d been home.

CAPTION:

Significantly.

CAPTION:

There had always been the upper class, a genteel community, hiding somewhere both above and below the rotting docks and barnacle-riddled debris but now, well...

CAPTION:

Now there was, tides preserve us, honest to goodness gentrification.

PAGE 2

5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole stands outside the Innsmouth transit station / rideshare drop-off area with her rolling suitcase. She is polished, city-professional, and trying not to look overwhelmed.

Behind her: a refurbished old bus depot with tasteful signage reading:

WELCOME TO HISTORIC INNSMOUTH

Where Every Shoreline Has a Secret

A smaller sign beneath simply reads:

Please Do Not Feed

No caption.

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole scans the street. Her face tightens.

A boutique hotel shuttle rolls by. It has a slogan painted on the side:

MARSH MARITIME VENTURES PRESENTS:

THE FUTURE IS TIDAL

No caption.

PANEL 3

Close on Amber Nicole's eyes as she notices a restored row of once-rotting buildings now full of shops.

Visible storefronts:

- **Marsh & Gilman Home Goods**
- **The Waite & See Bridal Boutique**
- **Obed's Brewery**
- **Miskatonic Alumni Coastal Innovation Hub**

No caption.

PANEL 4

A memory-ghost overlay: old Innsmouth as Amber remembers it. Worm-eaten wood. Sagging roofs. Loose shingles. Salt-stained windows. Something watching from behind a torn curtain.

No caption.

PANEL 5

The memory is interrupted by a joyful shriek from off-panel.

WENDY:

Aaaaaaambeerrrr!!

PAGE 3

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Wendy Marsh barrels into frame, arms wide, wedding-planning energy radiating from her like bioluminescence.

She is beautiful in an uncanny Innsmouth way: glamorous, overexcited, slightly damp/waxen looking skin, with eyes just a little too prominent. She sort of looks like a young Steve Buscemi.

WENDY:

I'm so haaaaappy!!

PANEL 2

Wendy throws her arms around Amber Nicole.

Amber Nicole returns the hug somewhat stiffly.

WENDY:

You're here! You're actually here!

AMBER NICOLE:

Hi, Wendy.

AMBER NICOLE:

[softening] Of course I'm here.

PANEL 3

Wendy pulls back, still holding Amber's arms.

WENDY:

I know, I know, but you're so busy and important now.

WENDY:

All Miskatonic Elite and cross-platform and engagement architecture.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole forces a pleasant smile.

AMBER NICOLE:

Senior Engagement Architect for Cross-Platform Morale.

PANEL 5

Wendy beams.

WENDY:

Exactly! I've been telling everyone.

WENDY:

My cousin can create the optimal feeling for any situation for a living! I hope she can do that for my little wedding.

PANEL 6

Amber Nicole glances over Wendy's shoulder at the gentrified street.

AMBER NICOLE:

I see Innsmouth has been... optimized too.

PAGE 4

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Wendy loops her arm through Amber Nicole's and starts walking her toward the hotel.

WENDY:

Oh my gosh, hasn't it?

WENDY:

You would not believe how much has changed.

PANEL 2

They pass a luxury condo building converted from a crumbling warehouse.

Sign:

Basement Units Available at Low Tide

AMBER NICOLE:

I never thought I'd miss the old "worm-eaten coastal hamlet lingering at the edge of the world" thing.

PANEL 3

Wendy laughs, delighted.

WENDY:

Oh, don't worry! Nostalgia is very hot right now too.

WENDY:

We kept that sort of vibe for tourism in some areas, but you know, a little toned down.

PANEL 4

They pass a mural of the old skyline, but stylized and cheerful.

Text on mural:

The best little worm-eaten coastal hamlet thriving at the edge of the world!

WENDY:

You know, it's like Daddy always says, "We're a proud, heritage harbor community with resilient coastal character."

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole looks at a row of suspiciously perfect roofs.

AMBER NICOLE:

What happened to all the twisted roofs? The loose shingles? The dry rattle every time the Nor' Easterly came in strong?

PANEL 6

Wendy waves this away.

WENDY:

Historic preservation grants.

WENDY:

Plus three HBO location scouts and one very motivated roofing conglomerate.

PAGE 5

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

They walk past the waterfront. The ocean is higher than it should be. Some buildings have elegant elevated walkways and glossy flood-resistant foundations.

AMBER NICOLE:

So the town just... leaned into the rising tide thing?

PANEL 2

Wendy brightens.

WENDY:

Oh, completely.

WENDY:

While everyone else was panicking about drowning coastlines, Innsmouth finally remembered it had a competitive advantage.

PANEL 3

They pass a sign:

MARSH MARITIME VENTURES

Tidal-Tech • Undersea Infrastructure • Ethical Finance • Intergenerational Stewardship

Below it: a smiling fishy-faced family with suspiciously visible neck scarves.

WENDY:

Carbon emissions are terrible for the planet, obviously.

WENDY:

But from a coastal and oceanic real estate perspective...

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole side-eyes her.

AMBER NICOLE:

Wendy.

PANEL 5

Wendy lowers her voice, as if this is gossip rather than ecological horror.

WENDY:

What? I'm not saying it's good.

WENDY:

I'm saying the old families had a board meeting, not all of us have to drown. We're helping save the world! A brave new blue world, Amber!

PANEL 6

They pass a bright advertisement for an Innsmouth dating app.

Poster text:

GILLFRIEND

Swipe Right on Your Legacy

Tiny tagline:

Love beyond the shoreline.

WENDY:

And the dating apps went absolutely feral. Surely, someone in your line of work can appreciate that, right?

PAGE 6

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole stops to stare at the dating app poster.

The poster shows a happy couple: one human-looking, one with subtle Deep One traits, standing with two children wearing adorable little raincoats and gill-friendly collars.

AMBER NICOLE:

Please tell me that isn't real.

PANEL 2

Wendy leans in, proud.

WENDY:

It's very real.

WENDY:

And technically award-winning.

PANEL 3

Close on the poster tagline:

LOVE WHAT THE TIDE BRINGS IN

WENDY:

I'm not saying marry for gills, but I'm also not saying that... Honestly, swipe right on a Deep One and your grandkids are basically climate-proof.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole walks again, faster.

AMBER NICOLE:

That is one of the worst sentences anyone has ever said to me.

PANEL 5

Wendy keeps pace easily.

WENDY:

Wow. Leave Innsmouth for the Big City and you're still clutching pearls over interspecies dating? That's not very "coexist" of you.

WENDY:

Here it's actually considered very romantic. Progressive even.

PANEL 6

Amber Nicole mutters.

AMBER NICOLE:

Of course it is.

PAGE 7

5 PANELS

PANEL 1

They approach the **Gilman House Hotel**, now fully restored and aggressively rebranded for heritage tourism.

The original bones of the building are still there: tall, old, narrow, severe, with too many windows and maybe a suggestion of a shadow or stain — maybe even the original bones are actual whale bones. But now the façade has been repainted in tasteful coastal neutrals, and dressed up with brass fixtures, hanging ferns, restored trim, and expensive gas-lamp-style lighting.

A polished sign over the entrance reads:

THE GILMAN HOUSE

Historic Innsmouth Hotel & Event Venue

A Marsh Maritime Ventures Heritage Property

Wedding banners hang from the restored balcony:

WELCOME WEDDING GUESTS

WENDY MARSH & GILLIAM GILMAN

Two Families. One Tide.

A smaller plaque near the door reads:

Lovingly Restored from the Original Gilman Hotel

Est. 1798 | Reimagined for the Next Wave

WENDY:

Anyway, the hotel is gorgeous now.

WENDY:

They kept the original Gilman House structure but made it, you know... a little more breathtaking.

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole looks up at the building.

It is undeniably beautiful now: boutique-luxury windows, curated antique signage, tasteful nautical/whaling aesthetics, valet stand, and a little branded cart offering lemon water with floating cucumber slices and something that might be seaweed.

But beneath the polish, the old Gilman Hotel is still visible. The upper windows seem too dark. The roofline still feels slightly off-kilter. There is a severity to the structure that feels a little oppressive.

AMBER NICOLE:

[shuddering] That's a word for it.

PANEL 3

They enter the lobby.

The lobby is coastal luxury: white marble, sea glass chandeliers, preserved old beams, brass fixtures, framed nautical maps, and suspiciously ancient carvings repurposed as décor.

PANEL 4

A hotel employee at the desk smiles too widely.

Behind the desk a local advertisement reads:

PLEASE ASK ABOUT OUR LOCAL NIGHT LIFE

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole glances at a framed corporate statement from Marsh Maritime Ventures.

Visible text:

**SPONSORING THE NEXT WAVE OF TIDAL-TECH AND UNDERSEA
INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH ETHICAL FINANCE AND INTERGENERATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP OF LAND AND SEA.**

AMBER NICOLE:

Wow.

AMBER NICOLE:

When your side of the family went public, they really meant it, didn't they?

PAGE 8

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Wendy presses the elevator button.

WENDY:

I know what you're thinking, and it's not a curse...

WENDY:

It's an inheritance.

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole looks at her.

AMBER NICOLE:

I didn't say anything, but since you brought it up—

PANEL 3

She's cut off by the elevator doors opening.

Inside: soft blue lighting, brass rails, seafoam wallpaper, and an unsettling mural of waves full of barely visible eyes.

PANEL 4

They step inside.

WENDY:

I know you always saw it differently.

WENDY:

But for me, it's... I don't know. A blessing.

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole turns toward her.

AMBER NICOLE:

Being married off for the benefit of Marsh Maritime Ventures is a blessing?

PANEL 6

Wendy gives her a look: hurt, but patient.

WENDY:

I'm not being married off.

WENDY:

I'm choosing...and embracing my place in the family.

PAGE 9

7 PANELS

PANEL 1

The elevator rises.

The floor indicator numbers also include symbols or tide marks.

WENDY:

And Gilliam is wonderful.

WENDY:

He's kind. He listens. He cares about plastic bags in the ocean.

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole folds her arms.

AMBER NICOLE:

Does he care about you, or does he care about land and sea mergers?

PANEL 3

Wendy laughs, but there's a slight edge.

WENDY:

Both things can be true.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole looks at Wendy's reflection in the elevator door.

Wendy's reflection looks slightly more aquatic than she does in person.

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole's internal thought begins.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

She's gotten so blue and smooth.

PANEL 6

Close on Wendy's skin at her neck and cheek. Iridescent. Slightly blue and slightly too white at the same time.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

Too smooth. Practically slick.

PANEL 7

Wendy chatters on, oblivious or pretending to be.

WENDY:

But cursed or blessed, I am happy you're here. I've missed the way you could just tell people exactly what you thought.

PAGE 10

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

The elevator doors open. Wendy and Amber Nicole exit into a hotel hallway.

The carpet pattern resembles waves, but also scales.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

She's practically iridescent. How can she be too blue and too white at the same time?

PANEL 2

Wendy walks ahead, animated, still talking.

WENDY:

Then Uncle Ephraim got into a fight with the caterer because they actually tried to serve calamari to Grammy Shub. Can you believe it?

PANEL 3

Close on Amber Nicole's hand as she adjusts her grip on her suitcase.

Wendy's hand briefly touches Amber's arm as she gestures. Amber notices the texture.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

She looks perpetually damp, even though her touch is dry.

PANEL 4

Wendy laughs at her own story.

WENDY:

And then there was a question of the flower girls, but honestly — we're going to be so far from the shoreline by the end of it we may as well get lily pads before we get flowers, you know?

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole studies Wendy's face.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

Like a sponge that's dripping, but you know still holds water.

PANEL 6

Close on Wendy's huge joyful smile.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

Yes.

AMBER NICOLE CAPTION / INTERNAL:

Cousin Wendy will be sucking saltwater in no time.

PAGE 11

4 PANELS

PANEL 1

They turn a corner.

Wendy keeps talking.

WENDY:

The rehearsal dinner is technically dry, except for ceremonial brine—

AMBER NICOLE:

Of course.

PANEL 2

They arrive at Amber's room door.

Wendy is still talking.

WENDY:

And you remember Caleb? He's in municipal planning now, which is funny because you know how much he loved hiding in the sewers. We could never find him!

AMBER NICOLE:

Mm-hm.

PANEL 3

Amber unlocks the door.

Wendy barges in first, still narrating.

WENDY:

Oh! And the old cannery is an incubator now.

WENDY:

Not for eggs this time. For start-ups.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole stands in the doorway with her suitcase, smiling like a woman enduring a weather event.

No dialogue.

PAGE 12

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole's hotel room. It is beautiful and expensive, with nautical décor and a view of the harbor.

Amber sets her suitcase on the bed.

Wendy finally pauses to inhale.

PANEL 2

Amber perks up at the pause.

PANEL 3

She jumps in quickly, warm and bright.

AMBER NICOLE:

Whoa, that's all really wild.

AMBER NICOLE:

I'm so happy that everyone's been so busy.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole forces a cheerful little laugh.

AMBER NICOLE:

Sounds like they've gone from surviving to thriving.

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole grabs her purse before Wendy can restart.

AMBER NICOLE:

Hey, you know what I could really use?

AMBER NICOLE:

A coffee.

PANEL 6

Amber Nicole looks at Wendy with tactical hope.

AMBER NICOLE:

Are there any good coffee places in town now, Wendy?

PAGE 13

5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Wendy takes another breath.

Amber Nicole braces herself, afraid she is about to hear about the other side of the family.

PANEL 2

Wendy lights up.

WENDY:

Yes!

PANEL 3

Amber Nicole's shoulders drop with relief.

PANEL 4

Wendy grabs Amber's hand and pulls her toward the door.

WENDY:

There's a place nearby and it's adorable.

WENDY:

You're going to hate how much you like it.

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole lets herself be pulled out of the room.

AMBER NICOLE:

Oh, I'm sure at least one of those things will be true.

At the edge of the page, outside the panels, a small tentacle curl appears near the corner as if turning the page.

CHAPTER THREE — “DEEPZ NUTS”

PAGE 1

5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Exterior of a trendy Innsmouth café.

The building is aggressively spooky-cute: restored brick, sea-glass windows, hanging plants, reclaimed driftwood signage, and faintly ominous kraken-themed, ghost-pirate branding.

The sign over the door reads:

DEEPZ NUTS

Coffee • Brunch • Forbidden Pastries

Amber Nicole stands outside with Wendy, staring at the sign like it has personally offended her.

PANEL 2

Close on the café window display.

A t-shirt is displayed for sale.

Text on shirt:

HORROR OVER EASY

DEEPZ NUTS

PANEL 3

Amber Nicole squints at the shirt.

AMBER NICOLE:

What... what could it possibly mean?

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole gestures toward the display, horrified.

AMBER NICOLE:

What is this branding?

AMBER NICOLE:

Coffee, coffee isn't made from nuts... or... or is it?

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole grimaces at the shirt.

AMBER NICOLE:

No. No. It's made from beans.

PAGE 2

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole turns to ask Wendy.

Wendy is absorbed in her phone, only half-listening.

AMBER NICOLE:

Wendy?

PANEL 2

Wendy shrugs without looking up.

WENDY:

I don't ask too many questions.

PANEL 3

Wendy finally looks up as she drops her phone into her purse. She smiles suddenly and pleasantly.

WENDY:

It's forbidden.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole opens her mouth to respond.

Wendy is already moving past her toward the café door.

PANEL 5

Wendy scurries inside, breezy and urgent.

WENDY:

Cousin, would you mind too terribly putting in the order while I run to tinkle?

PANEL 6

Wendy disappears past the counter toward the restrooms, blowing a kiss over her shoulder.

WENDY:

Kisses!

Amber Nicole stands alone at the counter.

AMBER NICOLE:

Of course.

PAGE 3

6 PANELS

ARTIST NOTE:

This page combines present-day Amber waiting in line with soft flashbacks of Amber and Wendy as children. The flashbacks should be warm but slightly uncanny: coastal childhood, old Innsmouth money, family rituals in the background, and Wendy always hiding behind Amber in public-facing moments. This is the “worm-eaten Innsmouth” of Amber Nicole’s past.

PANEL 1

Present day. Amber Nicole stands in line, looking up at the café menu.

Visible menu items:

- **Dead Men Tell No Brews**
- **The Black Spot Mocha**
- **Yo Ho Hoat Milk Latte + .75**
- **Shipwrecked Sea Salt Cappuccino**
- **Siren Song Espresso**
- **Low Tide London Fog**
- **The Whispering Wharf Macchiato**
- **Deepz Nuts Signature Blend**

Amber Nicole’s expression says she has concerns.

CAPTION:

Amber chuckled softly to herself.

PANEL 2

Flashback: Young Amber and young Wendy at a seaside candy counter. Wendy hides behind Amber while Amber orders for both of them.

Young Wendy wears an expensive little dress and looks terrified of the cashier.

CAPTION:

Even as kids, she was normally the one to do anything that vaguely resembled interacting with someone outside their social circle.

PANEL 3

Flashback: Young Wendy at a formal family event, chin lifted, looking haughty and untouchable while clutching Amber's sleeve out of sight.

CAPTION:

Wendy leaned heavily on projected arrogance and what could only be described as hoity-toity-ness to mask a crippling social anxiety.

PANEL 4

Flashback: A group of townsfolk whispering as young Wendy stares blankly into the middle distance, mouth slightly open. She sort of looks like a fish.

Young Amber notices the whispers and glares at them.

CAPTION:

And — it had to be said — a mistrust of anyone not immediately within the family's social circle.

PANEL 5

Flashback close-up of young Wendy's unfocused gaze. She breathes through her mouth, anxious and lost in thought.

CAPTION:

It was understandable.

CAPTION:

Wendy had this unusual way of falling into an unfocused gaze and breathing through her mouth when she was lost in thought or nervous.

PANEL 6

Present day. Amber Nicole glances toward the restroom hallway with a small, reluctant fondness.

CAPTION:

And she was usually one or the other.

PAGE 4

4 PANELS

PANEL 1

Flashback: Young Wendy tries to speak to a group of local kids. She freezes, mouth slightly open.

The kids whisper.

CAPTION:

This led the townsfolk to whisper about her.

PANEL 2

Flashback: Young Wendy hears the whispers. Her face falls.

Young Amber steps between Wendy and the other kids.

CAPTION:

Which only fueled her anxiety all the more.

PANEL 3

Flashback: Wendy breathing through her mouth again, even more frozen and uncomfortable.

CAPTION:

Which led to more mouth-breathing.

PANEL 4

Flashback: The whispering gets worse. A perfect vicious cycle around young Wendy.

CAPTION:

A vicious cycle of awkwardness ensnared her cousin.

PAGE 5

5 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole waits at the pickup counter. Behind her, the condiment station is crowded with tiny glass bottles of artisanal creamers.

PANEL 2

A barista sets two coffees down.

BARISTA:

Thanks for choosing Deeeeeepz Nuuu—

AMBER NICOLE:

THANKS!

PANEL 3

Amber Nicole picks up the mugs, still thinking about Wendy.

CAPTION:

Amber Nicole's thoughts were lost somewhere between pity for her socially awkward cousin and a self-righteous fury that her generation's love for ironic meme-based humor had quietly deteriorated into this sort of brainrot branding when...

PANEL 4

She turns abruptly away from the counter with a perplexed look on her face.

CAPTION:

She quickly and abruptly pivoted away from the counter to the seating area—

PANEL 5

Impact.

Amber Nicole bumps directly into “someone.”

The panel should feel like a rom-com collision, except reality hiccups.

Coffee begins to fly upward instead of down.

SFX:

THNK.

CAPTION:

And quite suddenly bumped into him.

PAGE 6

FULL-PAGE / SHAWN REVEAL

VISUAL:

The figure Amber has collided with is revealed in a dramatic, absurdly romantic noir splash.

This is **Shawn Goethe, Esquire**.

He is a shoggoth — but styled like an unnervingly handsome, old-money professional.

He wears, or appears to be wearing, a sharp necktie, though his body is a shifting mass of protoplasmic darkness, eyes, and glistening, disappearing and reappearing surfaces of tentacles and tendrils.

He carries a briefcase with several tendrils looped through its handle. Atop a mass of curling tendrils flipped sideways toward his top and circling downward is a trilby.

Around him, the café seems to bend slightly. Things are just slightly odd and off around him in the background at all times.

CAPTION:

The one your mother warns you about.

CAPTION:

Mr. Wrong... Mr. Vast... Mr. Unfathomable.

CAPTION:

His endless eyes flirtatiously pustulating, blinking in and out of existence, as protoplasmic tendrils skittered and slithered through the handle of a briefcase, a necktie, and held up what was a rather smart-looking trilby.

CAPTION:

He looked like the type of shoggoth you could get a beer with at the end of a long eon.

CAPTION:

He looked like he had sipped the blood of higher beings than her out of champagne glasses worth more than her soul.

CAPTION:

The type of shoggoth that both had no time and nothing but time for someone like her.

PAGE 7

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole's coffee mugs shatter upward.

Ceramic pieces float toward the ceiling in an impossible burst.

The cream microbrews, however, still somehow spill directly onto the front of Amber's favorite cardigan.

SFX:

[Sound of glass shattering upward.]

AMBER NICOLE:

Excuse me?

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole looks down at the coffee stains spreading across her cardigan.

Her horror is immediate and personal.

AMBER NICOLE:

Manifest tentacles much?

PANEL 3

Amber gestures sharply at Shawn's many tendrils, which are calmly occupying too much space.

AMBER NICOLE:

There's not a lot of room to just be—

AMBER NICOLE:

Be pustulating all over the place like that!

PANEL 4

Behind her, the creamers from the condiment station rise briefly and dance through the ether of time.

Tiny bottles float in looping paths, phase through one another...

PANEL 5

...then return neatly to their tray as if nothing happened.

The creamer tray is perfectly restored.

A tiny sign on the condiment station reads:

PLEASE REPORT ALL TEMPORAL SPILLS TO STAFF

PANEL 6

Shawn says nothing.

He simply... exists.

A few of his eyes blink asynchronously.

No dialogue.

PAGE 8

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole waits.

Shawn remains silent.

PANEL 2

Amber Nicole lifts her chin.

AMBER NICOLE:

I believe I deserve an apology.

PANEL 3

Wendy returns from the restroom and lights up.

WENDY:

OH MY GOD, SHAWWWWNIE!

PANEL 4

Wendy rushes past Amber toward Shawn.

Amber's expression shifts from outrage to alarm.

AMBER NICOLE:

Shawnie?

PANEL 5

Shawn briefly absorbs Wendy in a hug.

It should look terrifying but affectionate: Wendy disappears into a mass of tendrils and eyes like this is completely normal.

PANEL 6

Wendy puffs back into existence behind him, delighted and giggling.

WENDY:

Oh Shawn!

WENDY:

You know how that tickles me so, you naughty thing you.

Shawn pustulates.

PAGE 9

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole points at Shawn.

AMBER NICOLE:

You know this—

PANEL 2

Amber tries to find the right noun and fails.

AMBER NICOLE:

This—

PANEL 3

Wendy steps proudly beside Shawn.

WENDY:

Thiis is the best man at my wedding.

PANEL 4

Wendy gestures with theatrical pride.

WENDY:

Shawn Goethe, Esquire.

PANEL 5

Some of Shawn's eyes blink.

PANEL 6

Wendy continues, glowing.

WENDY:

Not only is he my future hubby's best friend, he is also a rising star in maritime real estate law.

PAGE 10

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole stares at Shawn.

Coffee drips from her cardigan.

AMBER NICOLE:

Maritime real estate law.

PANEL 2

Wendy looks back and forth between Amber Nicole and Shawn.

WENDY:

Aaaaand, you two have more in common than you might think.

PANEL 3

Amber Nicole gives Wendy a warning look.

Shawn bubbles.

SFX:

blorp.

PANEL 4

Wendy searches for the right words.

WENDY:

You're both very...

PANEL 5

Shawn floats.

Amber looks disgusted.

PANEL 6

Wendy snaps her fingers, pleased.

WENDY:

Data driven.

WENDY:

Results oriented.

WENDY:

Efficiently uncanny.

PAGE 11

6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Wendy's phone buzzes.

She checks it.

Her expression changes into one of concern.

SFX:

BUZZ BUZZ

PANEL 2

Amber is attempting to reach around Shawn to get to the napkins, but all of his eyes are open and staring directly at her, unblinking now, and he is not moving.

PANEL 3

Wendy gasps.

WENDY:

Aaaaand, I just got called into a bridal emergency.

PANEL 4

Wendy kisses the air beside Amber's cheeks.

WENDY:

So I'd very much appreciate it, cousin—

SFX:

MWUAH MWUAH

PANEL 5

Wendy moves toward the door, still talking.

WENDY:

If you would be so good as to allow Shawn to ES-squire you about town—

PANEL 6

Amber Nicole closes her eyes at the pun, wounded by it.

WENDY:

—so you can scout a good location for the bachelorette party.

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6 PANELS

PANEL 1

Amber Nicole is flabbergasted.

The panel should visually label her emotional state without text if possible: coffee-stained, rigid, eyes wide, mouth slightly open.

PANEL 2

Wendy waves from the door.

WENDY:

Thank you! Love you! Kisses!

PANEL 3

Wendy exits.

The café door swings shut behind her.

SFX:

jingle.

PANEL 4

Amber Nicole and Shawn are left facing each other.

Long awkward silence.

Shawn's form slowly shifts. One eye appears in his tie knot.

PANEL 5

Amber Nicole recovers her senses and looks down at her cardigan.

AMBER NICOLE:

Well, you could take me to a dry clean—

PANEL 6

Her cardigan suddenly disappears from existence, and she is left standing in whatever fashionable top she had beneath it.

Amber Nicole looks back up, sharp and practical.

AMBER NICOLE:

Well, I suppose that was one way to solve the issue.

AMBER NICOLE:

I'll drive.

At the edge of the page, outside the panels, a tentacle curls around the corner as if turning to the next page.