

When Fact Met Fiction

Season 1

Episode 1 - Welcome to the Southern Sunset

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FADE IN:

1 INT. OFFICES FOR SOUTHERN SUNSET MAGAZINE - MORNING 1

VIC (25) at desk throwing office supplies in box. I.E. stapler, mouse pad, pencil cup, etc. He is followed by CELESTE (40's) who is frantic.

CELESTE

(on phone)

Sunny, there's no way we can go for your license today...

(to Vic)

Vic, wait just one second. Lets talk about this.

VIC

There's nothing else to talk about.

CELESTE

(on phone)

I told you you're not getting your license until you pay for those three mailboxes...

Vic continues cleaning desk. Celeste puts her hand on his shoulder.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

(to Vic)

How about if I double your salary and you stay until the end of the week, so we can get this issue out.

Vic approaches the front door with the box of office supplies. Celeste covers the phone and addresses Vic.

VIC

I don't need another tank of gas. Besides I found a place where they recognize my true talent.

MEL TENNANT (50's) walks over to Celeste and Vic from desk set up for photo shoots. It has a basket filled with flowers and other trinkets.

MEL

Oh, you mean the talent of NOT giving a two weeks notice?

CELESTE

(on phone)

Listen I've got to go.

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED:

1

Celeste turns off the phone.

\*

VIC

\*

(to Mel)

\*

And miss out on the opportunity to  
write for Country Comforts Magazine?  
I don't think so!

\*

\*

\*

Vic turns to leave and walks into Olivia who enters through  
the door almost knocking Vic over. Her coffee spills down  
the front of his shirt.

\*

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED: (2)

1

OLIVIA

Oh, dear... I'm sorry.

MEL

(to Olivia)

Don't be. Matter of fact let me top  
off your coffee.

(looking at Vic)

So you can do it again.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Vic pushes past her.

VIC

Good riddance.

He exits as Celeste places a hand on Olivia's shoulder.

CELESTE

Olivia, perfect timing!  
(to Mel)

Our new writer has arrived.

OLIVIA

I'm your new *editor*.  
(re: Vic)

Wasn't that your writer?

CELESTE

We're making a little paradigm shift  
where we are encouraging our faithful  
employees to express themselves  
through writing.

OLIVIA

Faithful employees?

CELESTE

Our writer just quit. You've  
faithfully worked here for... One  
minute.

MEL

Tag you're it.

CELESTE

You *can* write?

OLIVIA

Creatively?

CELESTE

Great, I'll get your assignments.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

OLIVIA  
(worried)  
Assignments plural.

1 CONTINUED: (4)

1

CELESTE  
(professional)  
We try to keep articles between 1200  
and 2000 words.  
( perky)  
And we need those by the end of the  
day... So you can edit them tomorrow.

Celeste extends a hand.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
Did I say... Welcome to Southern  
Sunset Magazine, your place to find  
fun, food and flowers.

OLIVIA IN SHOCK

Hesitantly shakes Celeste's hand.

CUT TO:

2 INT. OLIVIA'S DESK - DAY

2

Olivia types away on her laptop stops and deletes it. Then  
does it again. Celeste stops by and sits on the edge of her  
desk.

CELESTE  
(smiling a bit too  
broadly)  
Olivia, so... It's so good to have  
you here.

Celeste tries to see what's on the computer screen then  
continues.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
I realize that today has been a bit  
unconventional. And I wanted to  
thank you for jumping right in  
there... How's the article coming?

OLIVIA  
Yeah, well I've finished the  
first...sentence.

CELESTE  
Let me see.

She turns Olivia's laptop to face her.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
"Most women like flowers."

OLIVIA  
That's sort of as far as I've  
gotten... Ms. Frank...

CELESTE  
Mrs. Frank.

OLIVIA  
Mrs. Frank, my expertise is technical  
writing and editing... not  
(She looks at a paper  
and reads)  
"Peonies, the Summer Staple Your  
Garden Needs"

CELESTE  
(a pep talk)  
Ms. Smith, you're doing great...a  
...real natural. I'll check back on  
you later.

Celeste's face clouds with concern as she heads to her office.  
Mel watches Celeste then follows her into her office.  
She sits at her desk.

MEL  
Everything okay?

CELESTE  
"Everything" is falling apart, Mel.

MEL  
Again?

She reaches into a box and pulls out a honey bun and begins  
to unwrap it.

MEL (CONT'D)  
Ooh, so this is "honey bun" bad?

She sets the honey bun down. She begins trying to be positive  
but gradually falls back into despair.

CELESTE  
Honey, we may not have any buns if  
we don't figure this out.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2

CONTINUED: (2)

2

CELESTE (CONT'D)

We have to get four more articles ready for print in two days and our only real writer just walked out the door. Mel, I don't know what to do?

He picks up the honey bun and puts it in her mouth.

MEL

Chew slowly.

Beat.

CELESTE

(patronizing)

Thanks.

Mel gets an idea.

MEL

What about getting Jon to help?

CELESTE

Oh. My. Gosh, you're right. He's back from meeting with his editor.

She picks up her cell phone, dials and waits.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

(to Mel)

Remind later to tell you you're a genius.

Mel smiles and leaves the office as Celeste picks up her phone.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Jon...how's it going? Do you think you could come down here for a little chat?... You're the best brother in law ever... Oh and could you pick up a few pizzas on the way. I'll call in the order to Chang Li.

She leans back in her chair crosses her fingers with one hand and takes a bite of honey bun with the other.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. OFFICES FOR -----MAGAZINE - DAY

3

JON (late 20's) walks down the sidewalk toward the front door carrying three pizza boxes and talking on a cell phone.

(CONTINUED)



3 CONTINUED:

3

JON

I'll have the chapter revised by the end of the week. Rhonda - don't worry. I always hit my deadlines.

He stops at the door.

JON (CONT'D)

One more thing. I'm still not convinced that now is the best time to let the world know that I'm Nathaniel Embers... Do you think it's been long enough?

Rhonda on other end of phone mumbles.

JON (CONT'D)

Of course I trust you. I mean I wouldn't even be Nathaniel Embers if it wasn't for you. I'll do whatever you think is best.

Rhonda on other end of phone mumbles.

JON (CONT'D)

Gotta go... We'll talk tomorrow.

He pushes the door open.

CUT TO:

4 INT. OFFICES FOR SOUTHERN SUNSET MAGAZINE - DAY

4

Jon comes through the door and glances over at Olivia who has her head in her hands. He looks her over with admiration and gets a sideways grin.

Mel sees him and waves.

MEL

(Re: Celeste)

Jon, She's waiting for you.

Mel motions to Celeste's office. Jon crosses to Mel.

JON

(quietly re: Olivia)

Who's she?

MEL

New editor.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED:

4

JON

Name?

MEL

Olivia.

JON

(He nods at the pizza's)  
I'll be right back.

Jon enters Celeste's office with pizza in hand. She types at a computer. Looks up as he enters.

Celeste eats another honey bun. She sees Jon.

CELESTE

Set those down here. I need to switch to something savory. I'm as jittery as a June bug.

JON

Whatever it is must be pretty bad.

CELESTE

Why whatever would make you think that?

Counts honey bun wrappers.

JON

Three honey buns and double anchovies? What's wrong?

CELESTE

(melodramatic)  
Only everything. We have a deadline in two days. My only writer just walked out on us and Mrs. Chiapetti just got a new mailbox... she's going to hate me.

JON

Mrs. Chiapetti doesn't hate anybody.

CELESTE

She will if I let Sunny get a drivers license.

JON

Vic leaving is a bad thing? Who else would have hired him, Wikipedia?

(CONTINUED)

CELESTE

Good writer or not I still have need to get four articles hammered out, edited by Ms. Smith and given to Mel for layout before the end of the week...

(baiting him)

I just don't know what I'm going to do. Do you have any ideas?

KNOCK

Olivia peeks her head around the corner. Jon can't take his eyes off of her. Olivia glances his direction briefly then turns her focus on Celeste.

OLIVIA

Could I get your opinion on this first paragraph?

She hands a paper to Celeste who reads in silence. Her face going from interest to confusion to horror.

CELESTE

It's getting there.

OLIVIA

(doubtful)  
Really?

CELESTE

Keep working on it.

Olivia sighs and leaves. Celeste hands Jon the paper.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

We're in big trouble.

He reads then laughs then looks up questioningly. Celeste defends her choice in Olivia.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

She is a truly brilliant editor, but her writing?

JON

This is bad. You're right, I don't know what you're going to do. I'll go get some more honey buns.

Pretends to leave.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3)

4

CELESTE  
(calls after him)  
Jon.

JON  
(dramatic sarcasm)  
Tell you what I can do... "The *Love in our Tears*" is almost out... They want me to do a book tour but not for a few months. And honestly, after writing four Nathaniel Embers novels I'd enjoy writing something different.

CELESTE  
Jon, Thank you. I owe you one.

JON  
Put me in that desk across from hers and we'll call it even.

CELESTE  
Jon, she is barely 21, I think that's a little young for you.

JON  
I seem to remember someone else who robbed the cradle.

CELESTE  
Well you know the phrase, "do as I say not as I do."

JON  
Worked out okay for you.

CELESTE  
Heh, you'd be sitting there anyway...  
When can you start?

CUT TO:

5 INT. OFFICES FOR SOUTHERN SUNSET MAGAZINE - DAY

5

Jon's fingers fly over the keys. He hits enter and stretches.

JON  
Check your inbox.

OLIVIA  
That was fast.

She opens the file and starts to read.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Mel comes over to Jon's desk.

MEL

Jon, how would you visually represent  
an Asian kale salad with craisins.

JON

What's the story?

MEL

It's just a recipe.

JON

Everything has a story.

MEL

Fine, what's the story?

JON

I see a Geisha. She awaits the return  
of her Samurai lover...

Jon closes his eyes and starts to swivel his chair lost in  
thought.

MEL

Square plate, bonsai tree, bamboo  
cutting board...

Mel saunters back to his station.

JON

... his favorite culinary offering  
is her decedent but refreshing Asian  
Kale salad.

Jon opens his eyes. Searches for Mel. Sees him at his work  
station.

JON (CONT'D)

(to Mel)

Hey Mel, has the article for that  
recipe already been written?

Jon starts typing out another article.

Olivia Picks up a paper, turns her chair and stretches out  
her legs as she reads.

Jon slides his chair over and leans down to tie his shoe to  
get a better view of her legs.

She looks from the paper to Jon.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

He averts his eyes to meet hers and smiles.

JON (CONT'D)

Dang shoes are always coming untied.

Olivia sighs.

OLIVIA

Mr. Frank, this is a lifestyle magazine not a smutty paperback novel.

JON

Smutty?

OLIVIA

(reading in a  
condescending manner)

"The sweat on his biceps glistened in the noonday sun as he climbed the stairs to their deck and arranged the peonies in a handmade basket so they would be the first thing Felicity saw when she arrived home?"

JON

(sincerely)

Does it not reflect the depth of his love for Felicity?

Olivia gives Jon a sarcastic smile.

OLIVIA

I'm kind of stuck on the sweaty biceps?

JON

But biceps sweat when it's hot.

He picks up on her disapproval.

JON (CONT'D)

(playful)

Besides women like reading about thoughtful sweaty men.

She chuckles and shakes her head.

OLIVIA

And what could you possibly know about writing for women? Or anyone for that matter.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

JON

Excuse me?

OLIVIA

I looked you up, I know about your book. The critics said, "Frank's harsh outlook and bitterness towards women alienates his readers". I just don't want that to happen here.

Jon rolls his eyes but doesn't correct her.

JON

(sincerely validating  
her)

That was a long time ago. Ms. Olivia Smith, you're an editor. An award winning editor. You should know that you can never judge a book by its cover.

He rises from his desk.

JON (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

He exits as she watches with interest.

THE END