

Catching the Skipper

Written by

Grace Ward

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

The scene opens in on NORA, a good-mannered, if not a bit pretentious student, as she puts on her hall monitor gear. She slips on a bright orange vest and smiles at herself in the mirror, proud.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Nora exits the bathroom into the hallway of the main lobby. As she walks, she is confronted by GRADY, her nemesis.

GRADY

(teasing)

You ready for another day of feeding
into the prison industrial system?

Nora rolls her eyes.

NORA

What do you want, Grady?

GRADY

Just making pleasant conversation
before your attempt and inevitable
failure to catch me.

NORA

I don't know if you know this, but
you're not as smart as you think.

GRADY

They don't call me Sneaky Zeke for
nothing!

Nora, out of sheer confusion, looks away for a second.

NORA

Your name is just not Zeke.

GRADY

Wow, Nora you like totally... like
missed... like.. the whole like... the
point of the joke, Nora.

When she turns back, Grady has seemingly disappeared. She looks around and see's that he has actually just run to the other side of the hallway.

GRADY
 (calling from the distance)
 Sneaky Zeke!

He trips and faceplants on the ground.

INT. MR. IMBUSCH'S OFFICE - DAY

MR. IMBUSCH sits at his desk, twiddling his thumbs. NORA walks in and stands at attention.

MR. IMBUSCH
 Nora. Please make yourself comfortable.

She sits.

MR. IMBUSCH (CONT'D.)
 Why are you sitting?

Nora stands up from the chair.

MR. IMBUSCH (CONT'D.)
 This morning's meeting is unlike the rest. I have terrible news. Walpole High is in danger.

Nora looks shocked.

MR. IMBUSCH (CONT'D.)
 They go by "The Phantom Skipper."
 They're a menace to the school and society as a whole. It's appalling that such an unstable and immoral individual could have come from such a sweet and unsuspecting town.

Imbusch slams badly drawn police sketches of a student leaving the school and a map to Dunkin. Imbusch himself most likely drew these

MR. IMBUSCH (CONT'D.)
 My sources tell me that the skipper is going to commit the ultimate act of truancy: The Dunkin Trip.

Nora gasps.

NORA
 No!

MR. IMBUSCH

Please don't get hysterical, and yes. I need you to catch them. Apprehend him. Bring them to me dead or- no never mind I just want him alive please don't hurt them. Please. Just ignore that. If you cannot catch them, there could be an uprising! A revolution! It would be sheer and utter madness.

NORA

You can trust me, Mr. Imbusch.

MR. IMBUSCH

The fate of this school is on your shoulders. I can't have students running amuck. Even faculty aren't allowed to leave.

Nora sinks into her chair, brainstorming. She nods her head.

NORA

I can do it. I won't let you down.

EXT. ENGLISH HALLWAY - LUNCHTIME

Groups of students are splayed across the English hallway, eating lunch. Grady enters the hallways and walks over to his posse. He plops down onto the floor. His friends, EVA and CHUCK, are mid-conversation.

CHUCK

-he just sounds like an absolute savage.

GRADY

What are we talking about???

EVA

The Phantom Skipper. Have you heard? He's the next big thing.

Grady dismisses this.

GRADY

Pfft... That Phantom Skipper's got nothing on me!

EVA

You better watch out... He's all

anybody can talk about. They're saying he's the bigger and better version of you.

GRADY
Impossible.

CHUCK
You're gonna have to step up your game if you wanna stay on top.

Suddenly, MR. SALMANS pops his head out of his classroom and intrudes on the conversation.

MR. SALMANS
Are you kiddos talking about the Phantom Skipper?

The three students look at each other, uncomfortable.

EVA
Umm... yeah.

Mr. Salmas takes a kneels down onto the floor and puts his arm around Grady. He looks out in the distance.

MR. SALMANS
That skipper is one righteous dude. In all my years of teaching, I've never seen anyone pull off what he plans to. You gotta admire the guy.

He stays put for an uncomfortable pause. He suddenly jumps up.

MR. SALMANS (CON'T.)
Well, nice talking to you!

He heads back to his classroom.

Grady sinks down. He sits in his silence for a minute before an idea pops into his idea, resulting in a conniving smile.

INT. HISTORY WING - DAY

Nora is patrolling the halls, visually on edge and acting more precisely than she would on any normal day.

GRADY
(popping up behind her)
Hey! Nora! I needed to talk to you...

Nora jumps, caught off-guard by Grady's jumpscare. She collects herself after realizing that it's just him. She laughs to herself and takes out her notepad. She begins to write him up.

NORA

Not you popping up behind me in the halls while you're supposed to be in class. I'm gonna have to write you up again-

GRADY

Don't bother. I have a pass.

Grady holds up a blue pass and presents it to Nora. She inspects it for a minute before snatching it, crumbling it into a ball, and letting out an exasperated groan.

NORA

What do you want?

GRADY

Have you heard of the... Phantom Skipper.

Nora is taken aback.

NORA

Yes, I've heard of him.

GRADY

(rambling)

Well... everyone around here seems to think he's this big shot, bad guy. Which like, I *personally* wouldn't agree with. He seems like he's got his feet in the water, but just because you have this scary name and big plan doesn't make you better than-

NORA

Can you please get to the point? I don't need to hear your tangent about your dumb insecurity.

GRADY

(defensive)

I'm not insecure! Grady Farias doesn't get insecure.

Nora looks doubtful.

GRADY (CONT'D.)

Ok, anyway. I was just thinking-

NORA

That's terrifying.

GRADY

Shut up! I was thinking... we should team-up. We both need the Phantom Skipper gone and I think I could help you catch him.

Nora lets out a laugh.

NORA

You want to help *me*?? What makes you think that you could contribute literally anything of value to this VERY important mission.

GRADY

I have insider intel! I know how the mind of a skipper works. I know how he'll plan his escape, I know where he'll hide, I know everything.

Nora tries to laugh this off, but she knows he's right. She takes a moment and then looks back at him.

NORA

Fine. For the first time in your life, that little pea brain of yours has actually come up with a somewhat good idea. Plus, I'm desperate.

Grady ignores her dig at his intelligence because he's too overjoyed.

GRADY

YES! Trust me, you won't regret this!

NORA

Let's hope not.

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - DAY

We see Grady, like Nora, suiting up in his new, orange, hall monitor gear. He snaps finger guns at himself in the mirror and walks out into the hallway. He marches out of the bathroom, confident.

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Nora looks at herself in the mirror. She is nervous. She takes a deep breath and pulls herself together. She nods and exits the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Grady takes his position at the Foreign Language wing. Nora is stationed in the English hallway. The two are communicating via Walkie Talkie.

GRADY

Grady Farias is decked out in his, might I say, drippy Hall Monitor uniform. Over.

NORA

Please, never say that again...

She pauses.

NORA

(unnaturally)
...Over.

Grady spots CHUCK walking down the hallway He walks over, greets his friend, and begins a benign conversation about his new "drip." Nora listens in, displeased.

NORA

As much as I love hearing your innate conversation with your imbecile friends, if you could try, even just a little bit, to focus on the task ahead of you, I would just appreciate that SO much. Over.

GRADY

Excuse me! Chuck is not an imbecile. Over.

NORA

Chuck is failing every single one of his classes and, just last week, he asked me how to spell his own name. So... yeah. Imbecile. Over.

GRADY

At least Chuck and I have a life and have friends. At least we're not

slaves to the man like you. Over.

NORA

You know what, Grady? I feel bad for you. I really do. I feel bad that you'll never have any respect for authority. I feel bad that you're probably never gonna do anything meaningful in your entire life. It must just fill you with deep existential dread knowing that you're gonna live your life longing for the feeling you got when you would skip a class. It's sad. You're sad. Over.

Grady begins another hot-tempered rant, but suddenly Nora hears a loud clang.

NORA

Grady, shut up.

GRADY

That's not fair! You get the last word-

NORA

GRADY! Shut. up.

Grady is silent. Nora peeks around, sneakily. Abruptly, a figure, The Phantom Skipper, dressed in a jersey and sweatpants, sporting a black ski mask, runs across the hallway. Nora yells into her walkie talkie.

NORA

GRADY, WE HAVE MOVEMENT BETWEEN
COORDINATES 38 AND 17!!! OVER!!

Grady begins to sprint out of the foreign language wing.

MONTAGE:

- The Phantom Skipper runs down the history wing stairs, with Nora not far behind him.
- Grady clicks the down button on the elevator and patiently waits.
- The Phantom Skipper runs down a hallway. Nora begins to lose him.
- Grady is still waiting for the elevator.

-Nora runs into the cafeteria. She looks around for the skipper. She spots him through the window as he runs outside.

-The elevator dings and Grady hops in.

-Nora runs by people eating lunch at the picnic tables. They stare at her.

-Grady strolls through the hallway on the bottom floor.

-Nora runs out to the parking lot and looks around, but the skipper is nowhere to be found.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. THE SKIPPER'S CAR

We see the skipper, still masked, open his car door. To his surprise, Grady is sitting in his driver's seat.

GRADY

Not so fast.

Grady tackles the skipper to the ground. He pulls out his walkie-talkie.

GRADY

I got him, Nora. Spot 273.

Nora sprints over and smiles when she sees Grady's accomplishment.

GRADY

Time to unmask him. Nora, will you do the honor?

NORA

Gladly.

Nora rips off the skipper's ski mask. He is revealed to be MR. SALMANS.

NORA/GRADY

Mr. Salmans?!?

Grady rushes to the back of the car and opens the trunk. Hoards of Dunkin coffee cups and paper bags fall out. He looks over to Nora, shocked.

Mr. Salmans shrugs, guilty.

MR. SALMANS

How do you think we teachers manage to
get through the day?

FADE OUT:

THE END.