

THE ATTIC  
COUNT ME IN

Written by

Lilli Hughes

Annette Van Duren Agency  
annette@annettevandurenagency.net  
(213)-810-9965

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - DAY

A raven perches on the chimney of Charlotte's house, preening. The intro music is the main theme of the episode's song, "Count Me In."

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

And if it has a square stem, that's how you know it's in the mint family.

VIC (O.S.)

Square stems? You're making that up.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte and Vic climb the stairs to the attic door, and Vic grabs the handle.

CHARLOTTE

Nuh-uh. Next time you see some mint, see for yourself.

VIC

Man, is there anything you don't know?

Vic tries to open the door, but it's locked.

VIC (CONT'D)

Hey, it's locked.

At eye-level, a tiny section of the door slides open and Mousington pokes his head through.

MOUSINGTON

Halt! Who are you?

CHARLOTTE

Mousington, it's us.

VIC

We've been up here like, five and a half times already.

MOUSINGTON

Please state your name for the record.

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte.

VIC

Your name for the record.

A larger section of the door slides open beside Mousington and Trevor pokes his head through.

TREVOR

Ha ha, nice one.

He holds out his paw and Vic high-fives him with her finger.

MOUSINGTON

Vic, you need to give me your name so I can put you down in the guest book.

VIC

(indignantly)

You just said my name!

MOUSINGTON

Yes, but it's attic protocol. Sorry, I don't make the rules.

Charlotte and Vic speak over each other.

VIC

I'm pretty sure you do.

CHARLOTTE

You said so yourself.

TREVOR

Right, I've had enough of this. I'm unlocking the door.

Trevor ducks off screen.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks, Trevor.

MOUSINGTON

Wait-ah-no! Get back here!

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Trevor turns the key in the lock as Mousington climbs down the ladder of staples he uses to get to the door's window.

Trevor opens the door and the girls step into the room. Mousington rushes around, pointing to the welcome mat under them.

MOUSINGTON

Wipe your feet! Wipe your feet!

Charlotte wipes her feet. Vic half-asses it. The girls look out at the attic, with its numerous dusty relics and wonders.

VIC

Wow. This place gets cooler every time we visit.

Charlotte shivers and rubs her arms.

MOUSINGTON (TO TREVOR)

And *that* is why we don't leave the windows open overnight.

A dark, spindly creature rushes by, carrying a wooden flute. As the girls watch him go, two dusty baby dolls appear, carrying a toy piano between them.

CHARLOTTE

Where do you think they're going?

Vic looks in the opposite direction, fascinated.

VIC

What do you think they're running from?

Vic starts to wander toward where she thinks the danger is. Without looking, Charlotte grabs Vic's hood and pulls her in the other direction.

CHARLOTTE

Come on, they went around that corner.

MOUSINGTON

Is there an unauthorized gathering? Not on my watch! Come along, Trevor!

Mouse storms off after the girls and Trevor follows.

TREVOR

(chuckles) This should be good.

CUT TO:

## INT. OUTSIDE THE OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

There is a solid wall made of piled-up stuff: furniture, boxes, crates and bookshelves. Nestled in the wall is a large cello case, sitting upright. A fairy and a zebra hand-puppet approach the case, open the lid like a door, hop inside, and close it behind them. Charlotte and Vic walk up curiously. Vic gestures to Charlotte, as in 'after you.' Charlotte curtsies, and they both shove themselves into the cello case. Mousington and Trevor hop in after them, and close the door.

CUT TO:

## INT. THE OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

On the other side of the wall, we see the back of the cello case and a few creatures milling about, some carrying instruments. The back of the cello case falls off to reveal Charlotte, Vic, Mousington, and Trevor crammed into a cello shape. They all fall onto their faces.

They stand and observe **The Open Space**. It is a square clearing with walls made of attic junk on three sides. The last wall is a stage, with long window drapes on either side, and jars of glowing bugs lighting it up. Over the stage is a banner that reads '256th Annual Battle of the Bands Competition!' Onstage is a 3-person band consisting of a stuffed dragon shaking an hourglass, a floating skull blowing into a funnel, and a monkey wind-up toy crashing his cymbals together. Charlotte and Trevor are impressed, and Vic is ecstatic.

MOUSINGTON

Ah, right, the two hundred and fifty-sixth Annual Battle of the Bands...

VIC

Wicked! I've never been to one of these. Hey, we should enter. It would be fun!

TREVOR (TO CHAR AND VIC)

Uh-huh. Well you two have a grand old time.

VIC

No, I meant all of us. You too, Mousington.

MOUSINGTON

Oh, no, no, I couldn't. What with all my lawful duties I haven't had much time to study the art of music.

TREVOR

You should hear him play piano. It's tragic.

MOUSINGTON

(sputters indignantly)

CHARLOTTE

Well, I play a little ukulele.

VIC

How little?

Vic holds her hands a short distance apart questioningly. When Charlotte doesn't answer, she moves her hands closer and closer together with increasingly astounded facial expressions.

TREVOR (TO VIC)

Looks like you've got at least one musician in your band. That's a good start.

VIC

Hey, you guys've got nothing to worry about. I can teach you music. I've got experience in pretty much every instrument.

CUT TO:

INSERT CUTAWAY. VIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Several short sequences of Vic happily making a racket. She does a silly dance while playing a kazoo. She plays the tiny strings at the very top of the guitar neck. She steps on a garbage can lever to bang the lid into the wall and claps her hands rhythmically. She alternates between squeezing two slightly different-sounding whoopee cushions.

CUT TO:

INT. THE OPEN SPACE - DAY

VIC

All we need is a couple stringy things and something to hit with a stick, and boom! We've got ourselves a band.

TREVOR

You mean like those stringy things?

Trevor points to a booth embedded in the junk wall. A sign next to the booth reads 'Instrument Checkout.' A grey mouse in a tidy outfit (**Minifred**) hands a tennis racket to a squirrel with a hat, which the squirrel plucks like a guitar.

MINIFRED

Now make sure to bring your instrument back at 8pm, sharp, or you'll face a serious penalty!

The squirrel ignores her and skips away.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, Mousington, look! That mouse is just like you. Do you know her?

MOUSINGTON

(offended)

Well! Not all mice know each other.

VIC

Come on!

Vic grabs Charlotte's arm and approaches the booth. Mousington and Trevor follow.

VIC (CONT'D)

Hi there! We'd like to borrow some instruments please.

MINIFRED

Very well. You'll just need to fill out this paperwork.

Minifred shoves a tall stack of paper at Mousington.

MOUSINGTON

Oh! Well, this seems rather excessive.

Trevor looks blankly at the camera.

CHARLOTTE

Miss Mouse, do you know how we can sign up for the music competition?

MINIFRED

I'm sorry, I can't help you. We already have the maximum number of bands signed.

VIC

Aw, isn't there somewhere you can squeeze us in?

MINIFRED

Now that you mention it, one of the bands still hasn't shown up. They're called the No-Shows. Very strange...

VIC

Hey, maybe we can go on instead of them. Eh?

MINIFRED

They're supposed to go onstage in fifteen minutes. Given that you have all your reports filed by then I suppose it wouldn't hurt...

CHARLOTTE (TO VIC)

Is that enough time to get ready?

VIC

Plenty of time! Alright everyone, look around and grab something that makes noise.

Vic gestures to the junk wall, where a nice-looking acoustic guitar is stuffed sideways.

VIC (CONT'D)

Like this beautiful thing.

She reaches past the guitar, fishes out a cracked teapot from the depths, and gives it to Trevor.

VIC (CONT'D)

Here, give that a toot.

Trevor blows into the spout and opens and closes the lid with his paw. The teapot makes a sound exactly like a trumpet with a mute. Trevor peers into the teapot. Inside is a beetle holding a tiny trumpet and standing in front of a little music stand. The beetle looks up at Trevor.



TREVOR

Cheers.

Vic grabs an accordion and gives it to Charlotte.

VIC

Here, you can play this. It's basically a ukulele, right?

CHARLOTTE

Uh...

VIC

All you have to do is press these buttons and squish it.

Charlotte follows her directions, producing a wheezy accordion sound.

VIC (CONT'D)

Wha'd I tell you? Just like a harmonica!

CHARLOTTE

Um-

Vic leaves Charlotte looking confused and turns her attention to Mousington, who is two-thirds of the way through Minifred's paperwork.

VIC

Mouse, you'll like this. You're in charge of the rhythm. That's what keeps the whole band together. You were born for this! What do you think of playing a lightbulb?

Vic holds up a small lightbulb and taps it with a pencil.

MOUSINGTON

Oh, well, I'm not sure-

Vic holds up a book and flaps it open and closed.

VIC

'Bout this?

MOUSINGTON

No, I really-

Vic shoves two baby rattles at Mousington.

VIC

Maracas?

MOUSINGTON  
(a bit anxiously)  
Now hold on a minute! I told you, I  
don't play music.

TREVOR  
What about that whistle you've got?

Mousington tosses the rattles aside and brings a police  
whistle out of his shirt.

MOUSINGTON  
This? This is not a musical  
instrument, it's an instrument of  
law!

VIC  
Brilliant! Just what we needed.

MOUSINGTON  
(pleased)  
Really? Hm, well...

Vic tugs an electric guitar out of the wall for herself.

VIC  
Let's get this show on the road!

They all rush off screen, leaving Minifred alone with papers  
scattered on the floor.

MINIFRED  
Wait! The paperwork!

Mousington reenters, gathers up the papers, and stacks them  
neatly on the booth's counter.

MOUSINGTON  
Sorry about that, Minifred.

He runs off again.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

We catch the end of Charlotte, Vic, Mousington and Trevor's  
practice song, which is punctuated with a strong, confident  
strum from Vic, and a sturdy tweet from Mousington's whistle.

VIC  
That's awesome! We're awesome.

CHARLOTTE

We sound good!

TREVOR

I'm ready to bring the house down.

VIC

That's the spirit! Now remember, I'll count us in. And when we get out there, forget about the competition. The most important thing about music is the feeling. If you want to do a solo, do it. If you want to swap instruments, do it! Listen to the music, and let it move you.

MOUSINGTON

And try not to bring about irreparable damages to the facilities.

VIC

Sure! Whatever that means!

MINIFRED (O.S.)

Doilies and gentlelamps, We've got a brand-new band up next. Give it up for the No-Shows!

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE FRONT - CONTINUOUS

The audience cheers as Charlotte, Vic, Mousington, and Trevor take the stage. Vic grins at the crowd, but her smile slowly melts into horror. Dramatic camera truck in on her face. Charlotte, Mousington and Trevor wait for her to count off, but she is paralyzed with stage fright. Charlotte is the first to realize something is wrong.

CHARLOTTE

Vic? Are you okay?

VIC

(squeaks)

TREVOR

Is this part of the act?

CHARLOTTE (TO MOUS AND TREV)

(hushed)

I don't think she can move!

MOUSINGTON

Wah? Well, we can't all just stand here forever!

CHARLOTTE

Then... do something!

Trevor grabs Mousington and drags him to the front of the stage to improvise a stand-up bit to stall the audience.

TREVOR (TO MOUSINGTON)

(loudly)

Hey Mousington! You ever hear the one about the old table? It just *varnished* into thin air!

MOUSINGTON

What-? Oh, I see. (loudly) Ah, Trevor old pal! Did you hear the one about the lamp? The story is quite *illuminating*!

No one in the audience laughs or moves.

TREVOR

(whispered)

illuminating?

MOUSINGTON

(ruffled)

Oh, like yours was any better!

Charlotte grabs Vic and carries her overhead like a surfboard, propping her against the wall backstage. Vic is able to move again and promptly cowers behind a bass drum. Charlotte crouches next to her.

CHARLOTTE

(concerned)

Why didn't you tell me you had stage fright?

VIC

(distressed)

I didn't know!

CHARLOTTE

It's okay. It's just like you said. Don't worry about the competition. Or the audience, or the other talented bands, or the judges scoring us on how well we perform-

Vic opens the face of the bass drum like a door, crawls inside, and shuts it.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Sorry! Sorry. You don't have to go back onstage if you don't want. But Vic, I know you. You're brave. And sometimes facing your fear head-on is the only way to get over it.

VIC

(muffled)

You're right!

The bass drum opens again, and Vic climbs out.

VIC (CONT'D)

(determined)

Besides, this whole thing was my idea. I can't just ditch my band at the last minute.

CHARLOTTE

Are you ready to go back out?

VIC

Yes... can you carry me?

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE FRONT - CONTINUOUS

Onstage, Mousington is putting on a Vaudeville-style tap dance routine. Trevor comes in and hits him over the head with a pool noodle, sending him crashing through the floor of the stage.

TREVOR

He'll be alright. He's just going through a stage!

Charlotte wheels Vic onstage with a hand truck dolly.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, we're going to try it again. Trevor, can you count us in instead?

Trevor grabs his teapot as Mousington crawls dizzily out of the hole in the stage.

TREVOR

My pleasure. A-one, a-two, a-one,  
two, three, four...

Vic remains still as Charlotte and Trevor improvise another song. Trevor, still playing his teapot, lets Mousington climb onto his shoulders, and Mousington grabs the body of Vic's guitar, moving it up and down to strum it against Vic's hand.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Oi, I reckon there's only one way  
to fix this.

MOUSINGTON

What's that?

Mousington climbs off Trevor's shoulders.

TREVOR

You've got to inspire her, mate.  
Show her there's nothing to be  
afraid of.

MOUSINGTON

(hesitantly)  
Oh dear. I really think-

TREVOR

No thinking! Feel the music. Now's  
your chance! Go! Shine!

Mousington is inspired by this.

MOUSINGTON

Yes... yes! Now's my chance!

Mousington runs to the very front of the stage. He dashes back and forth, blowing energetically into his tiny whistle. He is bad.

INT. OUTSIDE THE OPEN SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Vic, Charlotte, Mousington and Trevor stand in a line without their instruments. Behind them, the cello case door to The Open Space slams shut.

TREVOR (TO MOUSINGTON)

(laughs) You really went for it.

Mousington is not amused. Vic still appears paralyzed for a moment, but then she wilts.

VIC

I... I couldn't do it. I tried. But there were too many people.

CHARLOTTE

You had no problem playing in front of us backstage.

VIC

*With you.* I was playing *with you*. It's different when people are staring at me.

CHARLOTTE

Do you think you could play something for us? Just the three of us?

Charlotte, Mousington and Trevor settle into seated positions, watching Vic curiously. Vic is nervous for a moment, but then she spots an old Victrola nearby. She grabs a rubber chicken and ties it to the Victrola's plate with a shoelace, and cranks the machine to life. As the plate spins around, the chicken smacks against the funnel, making rhythmic squeaks. Vic grabs a violin to strum like a guitar and notices the floor board creaks under her foot. She strums and creaks for a bit, then begins to sing.

VIC

Even with the three of you I'm feeling kind of tense.  
At least I'm not just standing frozen, waiting in suspense.  
I know I'm enthusiastic, ready to begin,  
I know I'm brave, but when it comes to this,  
I guess you'll have to count me in.

Charlotte grabs an old suitcase and starts tapping a rhythm on top. She joins in singing.

CHARLOTTE

Let's be clear, you've got nothing to fear with us.  
We can help if it takes all year.  
I know you could rock the house with just a violin.  
I know you're brave, but you should know,  
If you need anything, then count me in.

Trevor and Mousington get on the keyboard of an old piano and begin plunking out notes with their feet. They sing.

TREVOR

Don't you worry, love, we've all  
had our bad days, too.  
You might be surprised at who has  
felt the way you do.

Mousington does a river-dance on the keys, looking brave and confident.

MOUSINGTON

I have my own trick for when the  
silence presses in:  
Interrupt the quiet with a noise.  
\*Ahem\* Alright, now let's begin.

Vic seems less nervous now, and is starting to enjoy herself.

VIC

I'm not used to going slow, but  
fear has got me chilled.  
Maybe if I start a little smaller I  
can build and build.

TREVOR

That's it!

MOUSINGTON

And before you know it, you'll look  
where you've been.

CHARLOTTE

You won't believe how far you've  
come, but first...

ALL

Don't forget to count us in!

They finish the song as the Victrola winds down, and the others clap for Vic.

VIC

(laughs) That was way more fun than  
facing my fear head-on.

CHARLOTTE

Just take it a little at a time.  
One day, you'll be playing in front  
of a whole crowd, easy.

TREVOR

You mean like that whole crowd?



Trevor points to a spiderweb, where a little gathering of spiders are applauding the performance.

MOUSINGTON  
Ah, see? They loved your song!

VIC  
(horrified)  
They were listening?  
AAAAAAHHHHHH!!

Vic runs off into the attic in terror.

TREVOR  
Well, she didn't freeze up.

MOUSINGTON  
She's making progress already!

CUT TO:

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Truck out on Charlotte's house as Vic yells and crashes into unseen things.

END