

AMY FINAWITZ is having a rough year. Her best friend, Callie, has abandoned their awesome life in New York City to stay with relatives in Kansas. So now, while Callie is going for hayrides with boys named Bucky, Amy is stuck hanging out with geeky girls who knit and crushing on hottie John Leibler all by herself.

Thankfully—or not—God sends Amy a replacement friend in the form of Miss Sophia. Miss Sophia introduces Amy to a Hasidic boy named Beryl. Beryl is no John Liebler, but perhaps he understands Amy and her problems better than she realizes?

LAURA TOFFLER-CORRIE was born in New York City, but shortly thereafter moved to Oceanside, Long Island. Visit her at [lauratoffler-corrie.com](http://lauratoffler-corrie.com)

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9/13, 11:15 p.m.

*Dear Callie,*

According to the latest fortune cookie fortune:

WHEN YOU MAKE CHANGE, COME BACK A DOLLAR.

Very inscrutable, these fortune cookies. Although I think it's safe to assume that the message is not about money, but about life. So, you get it? (Change and become more, etc., etc.) These fortune cookie people sure know how to squeeze profound ideas onto a tiny slip of paper. And then, of course, they add a cookie for free. It just doesn't get any better than that.

And speaking of change (your big change, not money), I'm glad you're adjusting to farm life. You're a braver girl than me. Even the mention of the word "udders" would send me packing. So I'm beside myself with admiration for you actually having the nerve to touch them, much less pull on them. Are they slimy? I know, fresh milk is "just like cream." But they actually sell cream at the corner deli. It comes in a carton!

Now, I know it's not as much fun to reach into the dairy section and grab a carton as opposed to, you know, reaching under a cow and grabbing its udder, but what can I say? Life is dull here in New York City.

I'm also glad to hear that the school in Kansas doesn't bite. I was afraid it was gonna be very *Little House on the Prairie*, like, you'd keep getting your braids dunked in the inkwell by the boy who sits behind you, some big, blond hulk who's really twenty-four but is still in high school.

On the home front, my life remains unchanged, and the screaming continues. Kevin and my parents are fighting all the time now. They think he's a bum for dropping out of Tufts to move back home and become an actor, and I agree. He's dramatic all right, and every day he stars in the same little play, which I've affectionately titled:

**THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY US,  
BY BECOMING A BUM?!**

(A play in one scene, by Amy Finawitz)

CHARACTERS: MARV, LILLIAN, and KEVIN FINAWITZ. Special cameo performance by AMY FINAWITZ, who plays herself.

THE SCENE: The FINAWITZ living room. The FINAWITZES are shouting so loudly, that LOU, the doorman, calls from downstairs to tell them that the chandelier in the lobby is starting to vibrate.

LILLIAN

(to KEVIN)

Why have you dropped out of school?!

What's the matter with you?!

KEVIN

There's nothing the matter with me.  
I'm following my inner chi.

MARV

Can't you do that at college?  
(to LILLIAN)  
What's an inner chi?

KEVIN

I don't need college to become an actor.

LILLIAN

Couldn't you have figured that out four tuition payments ago?

MARV

Do you know how hard it is to make it as an actor?  
You and your chi will end up a bum!

KEVIN

You're just urban pseudo-intellectuals with no feeling for the aesthetics.

MARV

I don't even know what that means! See how smart you are?!  
You should finish college!

LILLIAN

Didn't one of the Jonas Brothers go to college?

KEVIN

What on earth does that have to do with anything?!

At this point, AMY passes through on her way to the kitchen.

AMY

Hi, 'scuse me. I'm running away to Italy to press grapes with my feet.

She is unceremoniously ignored. The fighting continues, until LOU the doorman calls and threatens to have them evicted.

THE END

According to some doctor guest on *Oprah*, it's often the unstable, emotionally needy child, a.k.a. pain in the butt, who demands all the attention in a family. Very insightful, these doctor guests, don't you think?

And by the way, do you like the picture I sent you? I'm finally wearing those contacts. They kind of show off my eyes, if I do say so myself. And how about the hair? Can you see how that lemon juice worked its magic?

I am a little concerned, however, that my boobs are getting too big for my torso. I told my mother that I wanted to get them reduced. She said I was crazy and that I should exercise. Exercise? I was like, "Mom, they're boobs. You can't exercise them away."

And speaking of boobs, please don't suggest that I hang out with Judy and Claire while you're away. I know that Judy is angling to be my replacement friend, but those girls are bigger dorks than we are and so BORING. The point

is, there is no point now that you've left. You know I'm not going to find a replacement friend to suit my discriminating taste.

I  
remain  
forsakenly  
yours,  
*Amy*