

**HIGHLIGHT TO SEE CONTENT WARNINGS:**

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NICHOLAS:

*(as the intro plays)* At the edge of Gilt City, the stolen guide the lost, and all await the arrival of the Night Post.

[THE AIR FILLS WITH LOUD BIRDSONG AND CHIRPING INSECTS - IT'S LATE IN THE DAY FOR THE COURIERS TO BE OUT.]

VAL:

Milo?

CLEMENTINE:

Milo?

VAL:

Hey, wake up!

MILO:

*(groans)*

CLEMENTINE:

I think he's coming around.

VAL:

Hey, Milo! You okay?

MILO:

Hm? Am I...dead?

CLEMENTINE:

Let me check.

MILO:

*(indignant)* Ow.

VAL:

No, not dead, but you're gonna be sore for a while. Help me raise him up, Clem.

[ALL THREE GRUNT AS MILO IS PULLED TO HIS FEET.]

MILO:

Oh, God, you're right. Everything hurts. So where are we, exactly?

CLEMENTINE:

Not too far from your last stop, actually. Nicholas called us to ask if we knew where you were.

VAL:

He seemed worried, but obviously not worried enough to track you down himself.

MILO:

I think we've established he's not a people person. Either of you have any water?

VAL:

Yeah, take my canteen.

MILO:

*(drinking)* Thanks for that. Ugh... I can't tell what hurts worse--my body or my head.

CLEMENTINE:

Here, take one of these. I get killer migraines, so that should take care of any regular headache.

VAL:

So? What happened to you?

MILO:

A lot, actually. How did you two find me?

VAL:

Finding your truck wasn't too difficult. We just followed your regular route. Found it still idling near the last house on this road.

CLEMENTINE:

You obviously weren't there, though. I checked with the family and they said there was a pretty big commotion outside not long after midnight. Someone yelling, and a lot of rustling, but it stopped nearly as quickly as it started.

VAL:

What made you leave your truck?

MILO:

I think I remember everything, but can we have this conversation literally anywhere else?

VAL:

Sure. Want us to go to your place?

MILO:  
Fine by me.

CLEMENTINE:  
We'll take your truck. Val can follow.

[THE BIRD AND INSECT SOUNDS FADE AWAY. A FRONT DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES ON A BUSY STREET.]

VAL:  
Nice place. Oh, and sorry for the dirty boots. I can sweep up if you want.

MILO:  
Thanks, but don't worry about it. The roof could be caving in, and I wouldn't care as long as I didn't have to move from this chair.

CLEMENTINE:  
Do you have any pets?

MILO:  
No, not right now.

CLEMENTINE:  
Oh.

MILO:  
We used to have a cat, but he got out one day. He still comes around from time to time for food or a quick pet--just seems happier not being stuck inside. Haven't gotten around to getting a new one.

VAL:  
Sure you don't want to change out of the nasty uniform first?

MILO:  
Well, if I change, I'm gonna want a shower. And if I step into a hot shower right now, I'm probably not gonna come out.

VAL:  
Fair enough.

CLEMENTINE:  
So what exactly happened out there?

MILO:

Ugh... a lot. Not sure where to start.

CLEMENTINE:

Why'd you leave the road anyway?

[AS MILO TELLS HIS STORY, WE CAN HEAR HIS VAN RUMBLING ALONG A BUMPY ROAD AT NIGHT.]

MILO:

Right. Well, not too long after I turned out onto the road, fog set in. And I know it's always foggy and creepy and whatever out there, but it was so much worse last night. It didn't just look thick, but it *was* thick? I stuck a hand out of the window for a second and I felt actual resistance against my hand, not just the wind from the truck moving. Even the extra lights weren't helping me see much. I was practically crawling along, afraid I'd run into some ditch or hit any number of things that were out there.

I had to step out of my truck to drop that family's mail off. Sometimes the box is there and sometimes it isn't. I don't know if they keep getting a new one or what, but last night it wasn't there. So, I got out, left the two envelopes on the doorstep, and went back to my truck. At least I tried--couldn't find it again.

VAL:

It was sitting right in front of their house. How could you *not* see it?

[SUBTLE, EERIE TONES PLAY IN THE BACKGROUND.]

MILO:

I know, I kept telling myself that. But I couldn't even hear the engine anymore. Everything was just quiet and damp. I called out a few times, hoping someone inside would hear me, but I didn't get a response. So I just tried heading back in the general direction of the road.

CLEMENTINE:

And?

MILO:

Couldn't find it. Hadn't gone further than thirty or forty feet before I turned back to the house. But I couldn't see *it* anymore either. So I kept stumbling around until I tripped over some brush and managed to fall down a really steep hill.

CLEMENTINE:

But we found you not far from the road, remember? Like, over the ditch and past a couple of bushes and trees.

MILO:

I'm not lying, if that's what you're thinking.

VAL:

She didn't say you were lying. We just want to know what happened.

MILO:

And I'm *trying* to tell you, okay?

CLEMENTINE:

Go on.

MILO:

Okay. So, I fell. Felt all banged and bruised up, but it kind of was hard to tell--just knew nothing was broken. Started yelling for help as loud as I could, stumbling and fumbling around. That's when I realized I couldn't see or hear much, but I could smell something...

CLEMENTINE:

What was it?

MILO:

Ashley. Well, sort of. It was his cologne, I think... No, I-I'm sure it was. you two know what I'm talking about--he never went anywhere without it.

VAL:

I think so. Kind of woodsy, right? A little sweet.

CLEMENTINE:

Well, you *were* in the woods...

MILO:

Look, you don't have to believe me, but there was more than that... I-I heard him. Come on, don't look at me like that. It *was him*. I mean, I couldn't see him or feel him, but I know he was there. I heard him say my name.

VAL:

Milo...

MILO:

It wasn't just once, either. I kept hearing him say it, over and over, like he was afraid I was lost. It was faint, though, and no matter what direction I went in, he never really sounded closer or further away.

CLEMENTINE:

Are you sure you don't just want to rest for a bit?

VAL:

Yeah, we can come back when you're feeling better.

MILO:

Just listen, okay? I walked around for hours, or--I mean, it felt like I did. The voice didn't stop, though. Well, not until the scent changed.

VAL:

What do you mean?

MILO:

The sweet tinge to the air disappeared suddenly, and all I could smell was dirt. Earthy, wet soil. Like I'd just fallen into some mud or something. Felt like I was choking on it and I could hardly breathe. I remember falling down to one knee, and then just collapsing completely. I couldn't have laid there for very long, but I guess I can't really be sure. Felt like I was on the verge of passing out the whole time... never quite did, though. My brain just stayed fuzzy and heavy, like the fog was leaking in. And worms and old grass and fresh mud, that's all I could think about.

But that didn't last long, either. When I could finally catch my breath, that's when the tang of metal cut through everything. I could even taste it--bitter, sharp, and... cold, almost? I mean, that part made sense. I was in the middle of fog, so stands to reason.

CLEMENTINE:

And you weren't passed out by this point?

VAL:

Maybe hit your head really hard? We can take you to the hospital, if you need.

MILO:

C'mon you two! Look, my skull is totally intact. You two have seen a bunch of crazy shit working with the Post. Why is this so hard to believe?

VAL:

Hey, we're sorry. We just don't know you all that well.

MILO:

So we're just assuming I'm a pathological liar at baseline, huh?

CLEMENTINE:

It's not like that, Milo, we swear.

VAL:

You're right. We've only known you for these few weeks, but we've all dealt with our share of weirdness. We'll hear you out, okay?

CLEMENTINE:

Yes, no more interruptions. The sooner you finish, the sooner you can get some rest.

MILO:

Alright... thanks. Okay, um, oh yeah. The metal bit... So then, it went from cold and damp to hot and humid in seconds. And you know what hot metal smells like?

[THE STRANGE TONES DEEPEN AND BECOME MORE URGENT.]

VAL:

Blood?

CLEMENTINE:

Blood.

MILO:

Exactly. *That's* when I started panicking really bad. Could tell that it wasn't my blood, at least--no broken nose or busted lip anything. I just remember dragging myself up off the ground and taking off as fast as I could. Didn't know what direction I was headed or where I was going, just knew I needed to keep moving. And then damn that knocking started again.

VAL:

Like back at the arboretum?

MILO:

Yep.

CLEMENTINE:

And here, when you got the job summons?

MILO:

(*sigh*) Yep again. Three knocks, each one as ear-splitting and skull-rattling as the next. Sounded like it was coming from behind me, and getting closer. And the blood smell was coming on thicker no matter which way or how fast I ran. The fog itself was feeling more and more like the stuff. The further I ran, the more I felt like I was swimming rather than running. But I kept going and going, and stumbling and falling over brush and vines and old limbs--clipped my shoulder on a tree here or there that I couldn't see until I practically ran up on it.

Eventually I heard Ashley's voice again. Not like the last time, though, where it came from everywhere at once. This time it was echoing off in the distance, somewhere to my right. I swerved and headed off in the direction of his voice. "Milo, faster," he was saying. Or, whatever was saying it.

VAL:

What does *that* mean?

MILO:

I mean that... (*sigh*) the closer I got to his voice, the more I began to doubt it was actually him, you know? Lost in some kind of ghost fog, running around from some ominous knocking noise, and my missing husband just happens to be calling out to me? Began to doubt myself for a minute, but whatever was chasing me definitely wasn't on my side. So, I kept chasing after what I hoped wasn't trying to kill me. I think I made the right choice in the end. Finally came out of the nasty mist and into a clearing in the trees. Was able to stop and catch my breath for a second. I'm obviously not the fittest guy.

[A STRANGE, YET SOOTHING RINGING SOUND RISES IN THE BACKGROUND, A MIX BETWEEN AN INSECT AND A HUMAN VOICE.]

I don't think there was anything particularly special about the place. Just one gnarled tree standing alone, surrounded by tall, still grass. I really only remember one thing that stuck out: the clearing was entirely surrounded by the fog. Like it was cleanly shorn and couldn't move beyond some kind of barrier or something?

I finally realized the whole place was lit up by some of the brightest moonlight I'd ever seen. Was one just thick, white beam that shown down through the clouds and onto that spot. The clouds didn't seem to move, so the light held.

CLEMENTINE:

But not indefinitely, I'm guessing?

[A STEADY BASS BEAT THUMPS BENEATH MILO'S WORDS.]

MILO:

Right. I couldn't see or hear Ashley anymore, but the knocking came again. And a voice that definitely wasn't Ashley's. It was kind of like the knocking, just impossibly loud, shuddering bass that set the grass waving and seemed to be shaking the old tree apart...

CLEMENTINE:

And?

MILO:



And it said, "let us in," over and over and over. Was more like a growl than actual speech, but I understood what it was saying clear enough. Every word rattled my skull and made me hurt all over. It kept coming and wouldn't stop. I knew I needed to get out of there, but couldn't bring myself to run back into that damn fog.

VAL:

Couldn't you see where it was coming from?

MILO:

Well, I couldn't see anything *in* the fog, that's for sure. Could've been coming from all sides for all I could tell. Didn't have much of a choice in the end. The cloud cover started to move in, and where the light left, the mist rolled in. I couldn't see what propelled it forward, but I could feel it, just hunger and anger and desperation. Didn't even have to be in it to know that much, it was so strong.

I stood there like a twit while it rolled in from all sides. Had barely caught my wind again and my legs were shaking and burning. To be honest, I thought it was pretty much over for me. No clue what was waiting, but I assumed it was probably... not great.

CLEMENTINE:

But you're here now, so...that obviously didn't happen.

MILO:

Yeah, you're right. When it was just a few arm lengths away on all sides, I got pushed.

VAL:

By someone? Or something?

MILO:

Ashley, I think. Or something that sounded like him--I didn't turn around to see. Felt like a human hand though, resting right against my upper back for just a split second. So hot, way hotter than the wet warmth of the fog. And I heard it say, "keep going," and was pushed--hard. Didn't have time to see who or what was behind me. Had a feeling that if I stopped again, whatever decided I was worth chasing wouldn't let me get away.

So I just... ran. And ran. Can't say how far I went or how I managed not to fall. The knocking sound seemed like it was getting further and further away, though, and whatever was chanting faded with it. Eventually, it all just trailed off to nothing, but I kept running.

And then I managed to fall right at the moment I thought it was safe to look behind me. Turned my head, felt my foot slip out from underneath me... and bam. Out cold, I'm guessing. Next thing I see is you two hovering over me, prodding me like I'm roadkill.

VAL:

That's... a lot.

CLEMENTINE:

A lot, a lot.

MILO:

And at this point, I *hope* you two believe me, but I'm honestly too tired to care right now. (*sigh*) Feel free to hang around. I think there's some leftovers in the fridge y'all are welcome to. Can't promise whatever's in there is edible, though.

VAL:

We'll be sure to lock up when we leave.

MILO:

Mm-kay.

[VAL AND CLEMENTINE'S FOOTSTEPS AS THEY START TO LEAVE.]

CLEMENTINE:

So?

VAL:

I mean, we have to believe him, right? Can't imagine anyone would go through the trouble of lying out in the woods overnight to--what? Make us think he's being haunted?

CLEMENTINE:

Neither of us are new to weird. This is just--on a whole new level.

VAL:

For sure.

MILO:

Hey, um... I hate to ask, but can one of you come help me out? Everything's so sore, I can't get this dang shirt and vest off.

CLEMENTINE:

Sure, one second.

[CLEMENTINE'S FOOTSTEPS RETURN, AND FABRIC RUSTLES AS HE HELPS MILO REMOVE HIS SHIRT. THEN SHE GASPS.]

VAL:

Clementine?

CLEMENTINE:

Um, come here, Val.

VAL:

What's, uh...is that, uh--

CLEMENTINE:

A handprint seared into his back? Yeah.

MILO:

*(pained breath)* Ow! Don't poke it! Geez. Well, you two can call it whatever you want, but I'm gonna call it "proof."

NICHOLAS:

*(as the outro plays)* Thank you for joining us on tonight's route. You can find the couriers of Station 103 at [nightpostpod.com](http://nightpostpod.com), or on Twitter [@nightpostpod](https://twitter.com/nightpostpod). If you're satisfied with your postal service, please rate and review us. Send a letter to your mortal enemy, and tell them about *The Night Post*.