

[Footsteps on the sidewalk while a car slowly comes to a stop. The door opens, and there is a second set of footsteps.]

NICK:

Excuse me, um... *[Laughs nervously.]* Sorry to bother you, but... could I ask you a few questions?

[A long pause.]

VINCENT:

...Sure.

NICK:

Thanks. Um, have you seen this girl?

[NICK holds up a missing persons poster.]

VINCENT:

Can't say that I have. When was she last seen?

NICK:

About... 8 years ago.

VINCENT:

[Very concerned] Oh. And what's her name?

NICK:

Saddie. Saddie DeRosio.

VINCENT:

[Relieved] Oh.

[Beat.]

NICK:

What was that... *reaction?*

VINCENT:

Nothing. Uh, thought she might've been someone else.

NICK:

...Okay, but who—

VINCENT:

[Interrupting] Not important, doesn't matter. Anyway, uh, sorry.

[NICK puts the missing persons poster away.]

VINCENT, CONT.:

I really haven't seen her.

NICK:

[Grimly] Right... Well, could you just answer one more question, if you don't mind?

[Another car drives by.]

NICK, CONT.:

If *you* were a missing teenager in this town, where would you go?

VINCENT:

Uh, that's... kind of a tough one. Maybe someplace that's sort of familiar? I like cafes. Hell, I'm heading to La Vida Mocha right now.

[NICK tries to hold in a laugh. It comes out as a snort.]

NICK:

Sorry, um... Did you say "La Vida Mocha?" That's— that's incredible. *[Laughs again.]*

VINCENT:

Yep, home to the Infinite Coffee, if you can handle the bitter taste.

NICK:

I'll take your word for it. Listen, do you mind if I ask you a few more questions? I'm... making a podcast.

[Beat.]

VINCENT:

Fuck it, sure.

NICK:

Amazing, thank you. I really appreciate it, people have been *incredibly* cagey so far. So, um, what's your name?

VINCENT:

I'm Vincent. And yes, I'm a girl named Vincent, don't get weird about it like everyone else.

NICK:

[Short laugh.] Listen. Uh, my closest friend is named *Solomon Abel Crockett*. I have a *very* high tolerance for out-there names. So, Vincent, how long have you been out here?

VINCENT:

About... 10 years now? My parents moved me out here when I was 11.

NICK:

Ah. And I take it by your tone that you're not... *thrilled* about that.

VINCENT:

[Nonchalantly] My mom doesn't have a lower jaw anymore and my dad is a round creature made of fingernails. Hard to be thrilled when people change the way they do here.

NICK:

I— huh. Um, was...? Sorry, I— hm. *[In disbelief]* Did you say f— *fingernails?!?*

VINCENT:

... Yes? I mean, it's not the worst thing that can happen to people out here. You understand.

NICK:

[On edge] Yeah. Fair point.

VINCENT:

You look uncomfortable. Do you need a minute?

NICK:

No! No, sorry, I just— I wasn't prepared for, uh, fingernails. Uh, listen, are you... in high school?

VINCENT:

I'm a junior in college, so no.

NICK:

[Laughs awkwardly.] My apologies. I'm *really* terrible at guessing ages.

VINCENT:

No worries. "Black don't crack" and all that.

NICK:

Right. *[Being weird about it]* Hey, not to be weird about it, but I *have* noticed this is a very White town. What's up with that?

VINCENT:

Huh. Not going to lie, I've stopped noticing that, considering how faceless most of the people are here.

NICK:

Faceless... how do you mean?

[A long pause.]

VINCENT:

Oh, sorry, uh, didn't know you were a *newcomer*, uh... How do I explain... So, it's like a glamour, you know? When you first move in, you think it's all normal and shit, and then over time, you start to notice that everyone's faces aren't quite right, and they start to get a little... *transparent*, and then suddenly, you're looking at a person with an ice cream scoop for a head and no eyes or nose or mouth.

[Beat.]

VINCENT, CONT.

But they *still* talk. *[To self, annoyed]* Fuck, do they still talk.

NICK:

Um, one moment. *[To his microphone]* Solomon, *[small chuckle]* note here: go back and listen through my descriptions of other Shelterwood residents. Do I ever describe faces? Because I'm now, uh, kind of freaking out.

VINCENT:

Sorry, how long have you been in Overbrook? The glamour should probably come off after about a month or so.

NICK:

Overbrook? I— Is that, like, a subdivision?

[Beat.]

VINCENT:

Oh, you're *lost* lost. Yeah, no, this whole *town* is called Overbrook.

NICK:

What? No, no, I'm— I'm in *Shelterwood*. Across the bridge.

VINCENT:

What bridge? We don't have a bridge in Overbrook.

NICK:

[Beginning to panic] Okay. Okay, hold on, stop. Are we, uh... What does your Town Hall look like?

VINCENT:

We don't... have one?

NICK:

Oh God. No giant spire in the middle of town? Weird columns, lots of doors and windows?

VINCENT:

We have a giant junkyard in the middle of town. Unless you count rusted metals and piles of old furniture, then... no.

NICK:

Oh, *shit. Shit!* Ok, um— listen, Vincent, um, are we, uh... Are we, like... [*Frustrated grunt.*] Are we in reality right now?

VINCENT:

Ugh, don't tell me you've been talking to Locke...

NICK:

I— I don't know who that is. Look, I... *have* to get back to Shelterwood, my sister, she— she's over *there*, I— I think, and now I have to get back. If you were going to go to, like.. the *embodiment* of the American Dream, where would you go from here? I— I have to get back on track, and *fast*.

VINCENT:

“The embodiment of the American Dream—” You realize you're talking to a Black girl, right?

NICK:

Okay, yeah, *point taken*. So, what's, like, the WASPiest part of town? I'm talking town museum or a— a country club, something.

VINCENT:

Oh, we have a museum! I mean, I consider it more of a cluster of weird rock-related attractions, but we— we have *something* like that.

NICK:

[*To self*] Oh my God, this is a nightmare, um— [*To microphone*] Solomon. I have somehow gotten lost *out of Shelterwood*. I'm— I'm working on it.

NICK, CONT.:

[*To VINCENT*] Okay. Vincent. You've already been very, um, welcoming. But I really, *really* have to get back to where I came from. Shelterwood, the place that I— I guess arrived from, it operates on dream logic. I think maybe I— I don't know, maybe I lost focus or something and ended up *here*. If you could get out of this town, *where would you go?*

VINCENT:

If I *could* get out of this town at all, I'd just pick a direction and keep moving. I did say there are worse things than being turned into a creature made of fingernails, and I *know* there are worse things because I've *seen it*.

NICK:

[Very annoyed] Okay. I appreciate your concern, but staying here is *not* an option for me. I will take my chances with the— *thing* worse than being fingernails.

VINCENT:

Fine. If you need directions, I'd go through the Haywood Tunnel. Just make sure you keep your windows up and blast music really loudly so you don't hear what's going on in the tunnel. Her name's Margaret and she gets hungry often.

NICK:

Oh Christ. It's the basement all over again. Okay, yes, that... actually does help a lot, um... I really appreciate it, Vincent. Good luck getting out of — Where did you say we were? Overlook?

VINCENT:

It's Overbrook. By the way, I didn't catch your name.

NICK:

Oh! *[Awkwardly chuckling]* Sorry. My name is Nicholas DeRoso. I'm looking for my sister, Saddy. If you see her, tell her I'm still looking for her, and that if she's here I'll... be back, I guess, okay?

VINCENT:

Will do. Get home safe, Nick.

NICK:

Yeah, thanks. Uh— don't get killed, if you can help it.

VINCENT:

Hm. *[Sarcastically]* Wouldn't *dream* of it.

[NICK walks back to his car.]

NICK:

[To microphone] Solomon, you're never going to believe the day I'm having...

[NICK gets in his car, turns the engine on, and drives away.]

[Overbrook ending theme by Dana Creasman plays in the background.]

RHYS:

This minisode was created in collaboration with Shelterwood, a suburban gothic podcast crowdfunding this July. To support indie queer horror, go to bit.ly/SHELTERWOODPOD. That's bit.ly/shelterwoodpod. Follow them on Tumblr and Twitter @shelterwoodpod or get in contact at shelterwoodpod@gmail.com. Thanks!