

Nameless  
(excerpt)

By

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EXT. RURAL WISCONSIN LANDSCAPE-MORNING

It is Spring in west central Wisconsin. Green buds are appearing on the trees that line the wooded hills. Wildflowers bloom in the meadows.

In a valley wrapped in early morning fog, a tractor pulling a cultivator makes it's way up and down the rows of fertile soil.

Cows graze in the morning mist.

A far away pickup truck rolls slowly along a winding road.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLSTADT FARM-THAT MORNING

A small dairy farm overlooking the valley. An old barn built into the hill sits below an even older farmhouse. The house is a two story, 4-square style building with a wide, wrap-around porch. A porch swing dangles off to one side. The paint is peeling on the white clapboard and the screen door hinge squeaks loudly as...

Emerging from the house is EMILY HALLSTADT, an attractive, but tired looking woman in her mid thirties. She has messy, dishwater hair piled into a scarf. She wears a canvas work jacket, jeans and high rubber work boots. She is followed by her daughters AUDREY, who is five years old and MARTHA, who is twelve. They both wear dirty jeans, muddy jackets and boots. They all head for a rusty, 1995 Dodge minivan parked in the gravel driveway. Following the ladies is KARL HALLSTADT, Emily's father-in-law. He is a portly, crusty old soul in his seventies. Grey hair lines the sides of his bald head and he sports a long, walrus mustache.

EMILY

Come on, girls. Pile in.

Martha opens the sliding side door of the van and she and Audrey climb in.

KARL

You got the ad?

Emily holds up a folded sheet of paper.

EMILY

Right here.

KARL  
Don't forget the spaghetti.

EMILY  
Okay.

KARL  
And oyster crackers--oh, and we  
need maple syrup. Mrs.  
Butterworth's.

EMILY  
There's a full bottle on the shelf.

KARL  
I hate that stuff.

EMILY  
It's *real* maple syrup.

KARL  
It's too runny...tastes weird.

EMILY  
It's organic.

KARL  
Probably give me the shits, too.

EMILY  
(Heading for the van.)  
Fine...

KARL  
And Fig Newtons.

EMILY  
Did you want to come along?

KARL  
What for?

Emily gets in the van, starts it and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD-THAT MORNING

From behind we see the feet of a man walking on the gravel shoulder of the road. His shoes are black Chuck Taylor Converse high-tops, at least thirty years old. The canvas is worn with holes and covered with duct tape. He wears no

socks. As we pan up we see his pants are tattered denim overalls. They are faded and torn in the seat. His shirt is a white, collarless work shirt made of linen. It is yellowed at the collar and seams. Long, unruly salt and pepper gray hair cascades out from under a straw hat with a wide brim. He carries a canvas bag over his shoulder and a knobby walking stick.

CUT TO:

Emily and her daughters are heading down the same road in the minivan. In the back seat, Audrey slaps Martha on the arm and giggles.

MARTHA

Ow! Mom, she's hitting me.

AUDREY

No I'm not.

EMILY

Hit her back.

Martha raises her hand as if to swat Audrey. Audrey recoils and giggles. Martha laughs.

Emily sees the walking man out ahead on the side of the road. Martha sees him as well and leans forward. She stares, transfixed. The van passes him. Martha turns back for a better look.

From the front we see the man has a long, tangled mass of mustache and beard, and horn-rimmed glasses. He waves, gently.

MARTHA

Should we pick him up?

EMILY

No.

MARTHA

Why not? Let's pick him up.

AUDREY

Yeah.

EMILY

No.

MARTHA

Mom...

EMILY  
He doesn't need a ride.

MARTHA  
How do you know?

EMILY  
Did you see his thumb out? Was he waving us down? Okay then.

Martha sits back, dejected. The van passes a sign reading "Dodgeville - Population Unincorporated."

CUT TO:

EXT. FEED STORE-THAT MORNING

EARL, a jovial fellow in his fifties wearing a checkered wool jacket tosses a large bag of corn seed into the back of the minivan, piling it on top of three others. He has an antiquated 1950's style hook for a right hand, but he seems to manage just fine. Emily stands nearby. Martha and Audrey are throwing stones out into a nearby field.

EARL  
That be it?

EMILY  
Should be. Put it on the tab, would you, Earl?

EARL  
Sure thing. Here's your receipt.

He has a piece of paper wadded into the two prongs that make up his pinching hook. He tries to take it out, but the hook is stuck. The receipt starts to tear.

EARL  
Oh shoot...

EMILY  
Here , I got it.

Emily wedges apart the two pinched prongs with her fingers and removes the receipt.

EMILY  
That'll do it. I'll stop in next week. Thanks Earl.

EARL  
No problem.

EMILY  
Come on, girls.

The girls trot over and climb into the van. Emily get in and drives off. Earl waves after them.

CUT TO:

INT. DICK'S GROCERY STORE-THAT MORNING

Emily grabs a shopping cart as the girls stand nearby. Emily takes the folded sheet of paper from her pocket and hands it to Martha.

EMILY  
Put this on the bulletin board,  
would you sweetie?

MARTHA  
(Taking it.)  
Okay.

Martha heads over to a community bulletin board near the front of the store. It is covered personal ads like; *Boat and Trailer for sale, Fresh Eggs 4-sale and Church Pancake Breakfast this Sunday*. Martha unfolds the paper. In large type it reads:

"NEED HELP MENDING A FEW FENCES. WILL EXCHANGE LABOR FOR DINNER, BEER AND GOOD CONVERSATION. KARL HALLSTADT FARM - 5372 NORWEGIAN HOLLOW ROAD. SATURDAY MORNING THE 11TH, EARLY. THANKS!"

Martha carefully puts the notice on the bulletin board with push pins. She makes her way through the store. As she rounds a produce bin she is stopped by KENNY and DARLA HIGGS. Darla is Martha's age, skinny and awkward. She has a mouth full of metal braces and continually crosses her arms due to early breast embarrassment. Kenny is a few years older; tall and gangly. He has a mop of long, curly hair on his head. He tries to be hip by wearing a flannel shirt over a Jim Morrison T-shirt and baggy jeans far too big for him. They threaten to fall off of his bony butt at any moment and are belted low around the waist. Black and white checkered loafer sneakers are on his feet.

DARLA  
Hey...

MARTHA

Hey...

KENNY

Whazzzzz-up?

DARLA

Your Mom here?

MARTHA

Yeah.

DARLA

Did you get that paper done for  
Psych class?

MARTHA

Not yet.

DARLA

Oh my God, me neither. Katzner's  
gonna kill me. Can we work on it  
tonight?

Kenny glances over his shoulder.

KARL

(Whispering.)

Hey, hey, hey check it out!

He jogs over to the end of a store aisle and peeks around the corner. The girls follow and look over his shoulder. Standing in the aisle is the Walking Man, bag over his shoulder and walking stick at his side. He is comparing two different boxes of macaroni and cheese, analyzing the labels closely. He smells each box, comparison shopping.

KENNY

It's Harry the Hermit.

DARLA

Oh my God, what's he doing?

KENNY

Picking out a side dish for  
dinner...garlic roasted human  
thigh.

MARTHA

Shut up...

KENNY

The guy's obviously a cannibal.

The Walking Man turns in their direction. They quickly duck back, unseen.

DARLA

(Giggling.)

Oh my God, did he see us?

Kenny carefully peeks around the corner. The Walking Man is gone. Kenny heads down the aisle. The girls follow.

KENNY

He waits patiently in the bushes  
for young girls to get off the  
school bus, and then...

He makes a slitting motion across his throat and gurgles.

KENNY (CONT'D)

...supper's on the table.

MARTHA

You are such a turd.

Kenny stops at the end of the aisle.

KENNY

He lives alone, never talks to  
anyone, walks everywhere and  
dresses like Ed Gein. It's a  
classic serial killer profile.

MARTHA

Serial killers walk everywhere?

Emily comes up with Audrey holding on to the handle of the shopping cart.

EMILY

There you are. Hi, Darla...Kenny.

DARLA

Hi.

KENNY

Hey, Mrs. Hallstadt. You're looking  
very attractive today, if I do say  
so myself.



EMILY  
Well...thank you, Eddie Haskell.

Kenny looks at Darla, confused.

KENNY  
Who?

EMILY  
(To Martha.)  
Grandpa needs his oyster crackers.  
He's down to his last bag.

MARTHA  
(Heading off.)  
Alright. Don't want him going into  
withdrawals.

Martha turns down another aisle to the cracker section. The oyster crackers are on the top shelf. She strains and tiptoes to reach them, but can't. An arm reaches out and retrieves the box for her. She looks up. It is the Walking Man. He holds the box out for her and smiles, slightly.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
(Taking the box.)  
Thanks.

He nods and strolls off. She watches after him, fascinated. Kenny and Darla approach her from behind.

DARLA  
Oh my God...

KENNY  
Count all your fingers.

DARLA  
Did he say anything?

Martha shakes her head.

CUT TO:

Emily and the girls are in line waiting to check out. Ahead of them is an OBNOXIOUS MAN with greasy hair and a maroon leather jacket talking a little too loudly on his cell phone.

OBNOXIOUS MAN  
Duuuuuude!...Huh?...It's me!...No!  
It's me, asshole. Duh! You are so  
wasted! What are  
(MORE)

OBNOXIOUS MAN  
 you--What?...What?!...I don't know,  
 I'm in this little, dirt water town  
 picking up some stuff.

Martha glances over to see the Walking Man at the bulletin board. His canvas bag is overflowing with boxes and canned goods. He is scanning all the postings carefully. The Obnoxious Man still talks loudly on his phone as he piles his groceries on to the counter.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)  
 (Laughing.)  
 You are such an asshole!...No! Hold  
 up, hold up...what?...Oh shit,  
 yeah! Shit!

He turns to the checkout woman, a plump woman in her sixties named DORIS.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)  
 Hang on, I forgot something.

The Obnoxious Man heads back out into the store as the ever growing line moans.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)  
 (To everyone.)  
 Shut up.

Martha sees the Walking Man reading the notice she pinned on the board.

Emily looks at the hoard of stuff the Obnoxious Man left on the counter, then reads the sign saying "10 Items or Less." The Obnoxious Man comes back with an enormous plastic bottle of vodka.

EMILY  
 Excuse me, but this line is for ten  
 items or less, you know.

The Obnoxious Man waves her off and goes back to his cell phone.

OBNOXIOUS MAN  
 Duuuude!...Shit, no, man! I had to  
 grab some necessities...

EMILY  
 Excuse me...Excuse me!

The Obnoxious Man looks up at her, annoyed.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

What?

EMILY

This is a ten items or less line.  
You have way more than that.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

The hell do you care?

EMILY

You're backing up the line.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

(Pointing to his phone.)  
Do you mind?

EMILY

You've got, like, forty items here.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

Fuck off!

DORIS

(Wincing.)  
Oh, now...language.

EMILY

Learn to read, dick-head!

The Obnoxious Man pushes Emily.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

You want a piece of me, gorgeous?  
Huh?! Let's step outside, I'd be  
happy to rip you a new one. I'm  
sure you'd love it, too.

He looks down at an extremely fearful Audrey and glares at her.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

The fuck you lookin' at?!

Audrey begins to cry.

EMILY

Real nice...

OBNOXIOUS MAN

I could give a shit.

He looks out over the store.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

That goes for the rest of you  
manure forkin' hillbillies. You  
don't like it, the line for kissin'  
my spotty white ass starts right  
here!

A hand reaches out and grabs the Obnoxious Man by the wrist  
and twists hard. He cries out in pain and drops his phone.  
His head is slammed down till his face is squashed against  
the checkout conveyor belt.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

Owww!

The Walking Man holds the Obnoxious Man's wrist, twisting it  
up in the air.

WALKING MAN

(Softly.)

Problem?

Doris hits a switch on the counter and the conveyor belt  
starts moving under the Obnoxious Man's face.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

Ahhh!

The Walking Man bends down and speaks quietly into the  
Obnoxious Man's ear.

WALKING MAN

I think you might be in the wrong  
line...What do you think?

He twists the wrist harder.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

Owww! Ahhh! All right! Shit! Yeah!  
Yeah, yeah!

The Walking Man glances at Emily. She shoves the Obnoxious  
Man's groceries off the counter and into his cart. The  
Walking Man grabs the cart with his free hand and pulls the  
Obnoxious Man out of line past the checkout counter. He  
let's go of his wrist.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

Fuckin' maniac! You're lucky I'm in  
a hurry, asshole! They'd be wipin'  
you up!

The Obnoxious Man starts to head out.

OBNOXIOUS MAN (CONT'D)  
 I ain't never stoppin' in this  
 shit-hole town again!

The entire store applauds. The Obnoxious Man exits. NED, the store Manager, a thin, wisp of a man in his sixties with a pencil-thin mustache approaches.

NED  
 Everything all right, here?

DORIS  
 Nice timing, Ned.

The Walking Man tips his hat and walks off.

CUT TO:

Emily and the girls are loaded up and driving out of the grocery store parking lot. As they pull out on to the road, Emily sees the Walking Man strolling on the gravel shoulder. She sighs. The van pulls up along side the Walking Man. The brake lights go on.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD-THAT MORNING

The Walking Man sits in the front seat of the van with his canvas bag and his walking stick on his lap. There is a long, uncomfortable silence as they drive. The girls stare at the Walking Man, fearful and fascinated.

Behind the van we see a Sheriff's car. Its siren lights go on.

EMILY  
 Uh-oh...

The van pulls on to the shoulder. The Sheriff's car pulls up behind and stops. Out of the car steps SHERIFF MATT MEACHUM. He is a chiseled, well-groomed fellow in his thirties with dark, tanning-bed skin. He seems like the kind of guy who likes to stare at his biceps after he works out.

Emily rolls down her window as Sheriff Meachum strolls up.

EMILY  
 Hi-ya, Matt.

SHERIFF  
 (Nodding.)  
 Emily...Hey, girls.

THE GIRLS TOGETHER  
 Hi Matt.

EMILY  
 What's up?

SHERIFF  
 Had a little trouble over at Dick's  
 Market. Some guy says he was  
 attacked.

EMILY  
 Really? Wow...

SHERIFF  
 Yeah...  
 (he leans in and notices The  
 Walking Man.)  
 You notice anything out of the  
 ordinary?

EMILY  
 No...Yeah, we were just at Dick's,  
 but...No, nothing, you know...just  
 giving...

She nods at The Walking Man.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
 ...Our friend a ride home.

SHERIFF  
 Uh-huh. It's no big deal. The guy's  
 kind of a big whiner, anyway.  
 Wouldn't mind slapping him around a  
 time or two myself. Kidding. Well,  
 I won't keep you. Take it easy, Em.

EMILY  
 You, too. Thanks.

SHERIFF  
 Say "hi" to Karl for me.

EMILY  
 Will do.

The Sheriff goes back to his car. Emily pulls out and heads down the road. She sighs, relieved, then looks at the Walking Man. He looks at her, wanting to say thanks. He nods, then stares straight ahead.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - THAT DAY

The van pulls up on a gravel road next to a rickety wooden fence. In the distance is a small, ramshackle, white farm house with a pole barn behind it. The grass is long and unkempt. Wood piles stacked in circular shapes take up space in front of the house.

EMILY

So...you live in the old Sheldon place?

WALKING MAN

(Nodding.)

Uh-huh.

EMILY

Settling in all right?

WALKING MAN

(Nodding.)

Uh-huh.

EMILY

How long you been?

WALKING MAN

About five years.

EMILY

(Embarrassed.)

Oh...

WALKING MAN

Well...thanks.

The Walking Man climbs out of the van and closes the door. He waves slightly as the van drives off. He looks after the van a moment, then heads for the house.

CUT TO:

## INT. HALLSTADT FARM HOUSE-THAT EVENING

Emily, Karl, Audrey and Martha are having supper around the dining room table. The interior of the house is warmly lit. The walls have dark wood wainscoting below and old fashioned wall paper above. The furniture is well preserved, rustic pieces from twenties. An old, upright piano sits in the far corner.

KARL

You could've been killed.

Emily spoons mashed potatoes on to Audrey's plate.

EMILY

Oh Dad, stop with the dramatics.

KARL

You want to end up headless in a ditch 'cause you gave a lift to Harry the Hermit, be my guest.

AUDREY

Harry the Headless Hermit.

EMILY

That's not his name.

KARL

What is his name?

EMILY

He...He didn't say.

KARL

He didn't say?

EMILY

He doesn't talk much.

KARL

You go five miles out of the way to take him home, you don't get his name?

EMILY

It didn't come up.

KARL

Yeah...Real trustworthy fellow.

Karl reads a magazine on the table as he eats.



EMILY

What are you reading?

She lifts the magazine to look at the cover.

EMILY (CONT'D)

GQ?...You're reading GQ?

KARL

What's wrong with that?

EMILY

Nothing...Getting some fashion tips, are we?

KARL

They were giving away old back-issues at the library.

EMILY

Uh-huh.

KARL

(Pointing to the magazine.)

That's a slick suit, though.

The doorbell rings. Emily starts to get up. Karl stops her.

KARL (CONT'D)

I'll get it. Need some more gravy, anyway.

Karl rises and takes his plate to the door. He opens it. Kenny and Darla stand in the doorway.

DARLA

Hi.

KARL

Come on in. I'm not payin' to heat the county, you know.

Kenny and Darla step in. Karl looks Kenny square in the eye. Kenny returns his gaze.

KARL (CONT'D)

When you cuttin' your hair, kid?

Kenny takes a small scissors from his pocket, snips a lock of curls from his bangs and hands it to Karl. Karl grins and sticks it in his shirt pocket.

KARL (CONT'D)

Well, it's a start.

MARTHA

Mom, can I eat in my room?

EMILY

Sure.

AUDREY

Me, too?

EMILY

You sit.

CUT TO:

Martha, Darla and Kenny head up the stairway off the dining room. They enter Martha's bedroom.

DARLA

Oh my God! We heard about you guys and Harry the Hermit at the store! Like there was a huge fight or something.

MARTHA

Not really...

KENNY

Did he really bite a chunk out of a guys neck?

MARTHA

He just twisted his arm.

DARLA

Oh my God.

KENNY

I'd have paid good money to see that.

MARTHA

It was nothing. It was over in a second. We gave him a ride home and that was that.

KENNY

You what?!

DARLA

Oh my God!

KENNY

Did he smell like rancid human  
flesh?

MARTHA

No! He's just a quiet...semi-normal  
guy who lives by himself, that's  
all.

KENNY

Oh...That's very disappointing.

DARLA

Still...twisting the guy's arm. Oh  
my God.

MARTHA

(Taking out a notebook.)

Let's get this Psyche paper done,  
all right?

DARLA

I guess...

Kenny takes Martha's plate of food, kicks back on the bed  
and begins munching on a drumstick.

KENNY

So, what's it on?

MARTHA

Anti-Social Disorders.

DARLA

(To Kenny.)

Right up your alley. Bor-ing.

The girls start thumbing through their notebooks. Kenny  
stops eating in mid-chew. He sits up, quickly.

KENNY

Hey...hey, hey, I am brilliant! I  
am a frickin' A-number one genius!

MARTHA

So you keep telling us.

KENNY

No, wait! You guys don't  
necessarily have to write a paper  
do you?

MARTHA

What?

KENNY

I mean, you're allowed to make a video, or a multi-media presentation...or a web site, right?

DARLA

I guess.

KENNY

Oh my God--Check this out. We design a website on Anti-Social Disorders.

The girls look at him, confused.

KENNY (CONT'D)

We do a website about Harry the Hermit!

DARLA

Awesome!

MARTHA

I don't know...

KENNY

(Pacing.)

It's perfect! A site about a notorious serial killer. A lone, anti-social homicidal lunatic who ensnares young girls, slitting their throats and draping them over meat hooks in his pole barn. This is way better than a paper.

DARLA

We could take pictures of him...

KENNY

...and I could Photoshop in some carcasses of raw meat and stuff...It'll be great!

DARLA

Way easier than writing a stupid paper.

MARTHA

It's not very scientific.

KENNY

We'll tuck in some Freudian psycho-babble in between the corpses and severed heads. They'll eat it up.

MARTHA

It's not true, though.

KENNY

Hey...it's not about reporting the truth that *is*. It's about reporting the truth that *might* be. People do it all the time. Look at Fox News.

DARLA

Come on, Martha...Please, please, please? I don't want to write a paper.

MARTHA

(Thinking.)

Well...it's not like he's gonna see it or anything, right?

KENNY

He's probably still on candle power.

MARTHA

Okay.

Kenny boots up Martha's computer.

KENNY

You still have website space, right?

MARTHA

Yeah, we haven't used it yet.

KENNY

Excellent.

Kenny clicks the mouse and the sound of an old, dial up modem kicks in, complete with the buzzes, whirs and chirps.

KENNY (CONT'D)

You gotta get off dial-up.

CUT TO: