

MONSTROUS BEINGS: EPISODE 7 "OPEN HIGHWAY" BY J.M. TATE

EXT. OPEN HIGHWAY - DAY

The RV is driving down a rural highway. Open grassy fields off the mainliner road, with mountainous forests of beautiful tall trees beyond them.

CUT TO:

INT. RV - DAY

Michael and Joshua Waits sit inside the RV. Michael is driving, Joshua shotgun. Joshua still looks dazed, out of it; Michael intense.

MICHAEL

(somewhat to himself)

I wonder what it's like? There's probably no town left at all, just ruins. But the town was always a front. The forest, that's where they'll be. And we got enough weapons and ammo to send them all right back to hell where they came from.

Joshua doesn't reply. Michael looks over at him.

MICHAEL

Got something on your mind?

JOSHUA

I was thinking about Grandpa Seth.

MICHAEL

Did you ever talk to him at the hospital?

JOSHUA

He's dead, how could I have talked to him?

MICHAEL

That surgery did a real job on you. It's hard for me to figure out what you'd remember or not. About your grandpa, he saved our lives in Nilbog, but he wasn't there for you - or your mother - back home. And that's a lesson. You can't depend on anyone but yourself.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 Which reminds me of a song that's  
 helped me through the years. Why  
 don't you sing along, it will make  
 the trip seem shorter.

Joshua rolls his eyes.

JOSHUA  
 I'm not in the mood for a sing-a-  
 long, dad.

MICHAEL  
 Well I am, so here goes...  
 (singing)  
*Fighting soldiers from the sky.  
 Fearless men who jump and die. Men  
 to mean just what they say. The  
 brave men of the Green Beret.*

JOSHUA  
 I've never heard that tune...  
 Thankfully.

MICHAEL  
 That's why I'm teaching it to you.  
 Here's the second verse... *Silver  
 wings upon their chest. These are  
 men, America's best. One hundred  
 men will rest today. But only three  
 win the green beret.*

Joshua notices something up ahead, as does Michael: a mini van pulled over to the side of the highway, with an abundance of black smoke pouring out from the open hood.

JOSHUA  
 That van is on fire.

MICHAEL  
 My God, son. You're right.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The GATES family stands outside the smoking van, watching passively as if they were viewing Old Faithful. The husband/father, PHIL GATES, kind of an accountant/yuppie looking guy; the wife/mother, MARGO, fitting nicely with Phil; the thirteen year old daughter, CONNIE, who is dressed in black with Goth style makeup; all three of them Caucasian/WASP types; and then the youngest son, REGGIE, eleven years old, who is African American.

REGGIE

Dad, why are we just standing here?  
Why don't you do something?

CONNIE

(rolls eyes)  
He isn't made of water, you know.

The RV has pulled up about twenty yards behind the mini van. Michael is running towards the van, and has his flame thrower with him.

MICHAEL

(to the Gates)  
Move back, folks.

The Gates family complies. Michael aims the flamethrower at the car.

PHIL

Excuse me, sir, but isn't that a  
flamethrower?

CONNIE

You're going to spray our burning  
car with fire?

REGGIE

Yeah! Do it! Do it!

MICHAEL

(to Phil)  
It also has a built in fire  
extinguisher. Watch and learn.

Michael presses a button on the handle, but the RED instead of the WHITE.

A long streak of flames shoots out, adding fire to the smoking engine.

Michael pulls his finger from the white button.

MICHAEL

Shit!  
(looks at Gates)  
I pressed the wrong one... My bad.

REGGIE

(to everyone)  
We should run, don't you think?

MICHAEL

The kid's right. Come on everyone.

Michael runs away from the road, everyone following except Joshua, who's walking at his own pace.

The mini van explodes. No one is harmed, but some frags land near Joshua, who's oblivious.

Michael is standing near the Gates. All of them are watching the burning van.

MICHAEL

(awkwardly)

So... are you guys on vacation?

PHIL

We were.

CONNIE

Guess we'll have to hitchhike, huh dad?

REGGIE

Cool. I always wanted to do that.

MICHAEL

Nonsense.

(motions to RV)

My RV has plenty of room. We'll give you a ride, no problem.

Joshua walks up, joins them.

MICHAEL

This is my son, Joshua. I'm Michael. We're the Waits family.

PHIL

I'm Phil Gates. This is my wife Margo, my daughter Connie, and my son Reggie.

MICHAEL

Hello everyone.

(to Reggie)

So, Reggie, are you adopted?

REGGIE

(to his dad)

He's quick, isn't he?

CUT TO:

INT. RV - DAY

On the road again - now both families inside the RV. Michael is driving, Joshua shotgun. The Gates are seated around a built-in table in the middle.

MARGO  
It's lovely in here, isn't it  
children?

CONNIE  
(sarcastic)  
Wonderful.

MICHAEL  
(looks back, smiling)  
You can all rest, eat, whatever  
comes natural. This thing is great.  
I bought it off my son-in-law years  
ago. And hey, before we get to  
wherever it is you're going, we can  
stop somewhere and I'll buy you all  
new clothes. How does that sound?

CONNIE  
(to Margo)  
Great. I'm sure there's some  
fantastic malls around here.

MARGO  
Honey, don't be rude to Mr. Waits.

CONNIE  
Mom, he destroyed our van.

MARGO  
It was only a material object,  
dear.

Margo, remaining polite, looks up front.

MARGO  
So, Mr. Waits, where are you and  
your son headed?

Michael has a reluctant tone.

MICHAEL  
(dodging)  
Oh, uh... Just some small town  
you've probably never heard of...  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Going to visit relatives. What  
about you?

Phil reaches into his shirt breast pocket, pulls out a thin  
leaflet brochure.

PHIL  
Thankfully this brochure wasn't in  
the van.

Phil reaches up and hands it to Michael. Michael takes it,  
faces forward, looks at the cover.

PHIL  
It's a place called New Nilbog.

Michael's eyes widen. There's a picture of a man and woman  
and teenage daughter (models) playing volleyball, and on top  
it reads: NEW NILBOG: THE FAMILY PARADISE.

MICHAEL  
New Nilbog, huh?

PHIL  
Yes. A strange name, I know. It had  
supposedly been a ghost town. And I  
don't mean an abandoned mining  
town, but a town full of ghosts, or  
monsters, something silly like  
that.

CONNIE  
That's about the only thing I'm  
looking forward to - ghosts.

MARGO  
Honey, don't be so morbid.

REGGIE  
She's just being herself.

PHIL  
A young Mayor and Sheriff are  
running things there, Mr. Waits. If  
you open up to the last couple of  
pages, you can see their  
pictures... Such nice looking boys.  
The remind me of the Kennedys.

CONNIE  
So they're dead?

MARGO  
Connie... Don't blaspheme!

Michael opens up the book. He does this while driving, but it's a long stretch of road ahead so he can look at the leaflet without a problem.

He sees a picture of the young Mayor, who looks to be in his twenties, wearing glasses, with a big smile. And a blonde guy with blue eyes, the Sheriff.

MICHAEL

Listen to this, Josh.

(reading)

*Our Mayor, Arnold Youngberg, and his counterpart, Sheriff Drew Bullock, run our beautiful town which is as safe and fun as can be.*

(to Joshua)

Here, check out their pictures.

Michael hands Joshua the brochure.

MICHAEL

(quietly so only Joshua can hear)

You remember Elliott's friends, right?

JOSHUA

Yeah. And they look about the same... Poor guys.

MICHAEL

And they're now in charge of Nilbog. Very strange.

In the back, the family isn't listening, only Reggie who has quietly come up near the front.

REGGIE

It's called New Nilbog, not Nilbog.

MICHAEL

Oh, yeah, right. New Nilbog. Thanks, kid.

Michael rolls his eyes at the interruption, turns up the radio, which plays country music in the back area. Reggie returns to his seat around the table.

MICHAEL

(so only Joshua can hear)

Okay, son. Even though you're clueless right now, I'm gonna tell you anyway: the plan has changed.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)

We're not going into town with guns blazing, at least not at first. We're gonna do some investigating. And with this family along, no one will expect anything. We can be undercover, feel things out. And since we're not the All-American family anymore, we are the next best thing: friends of the All-American family.

Michael smiles, but mostly to himself as Joshua is staring blankly at the highway. The road seems endless.

Joshua yawns, rests back in his seat, closes his eyes, and falls into a dream.