

MONSTROUS BEINGS: EPISODE 9 "THE HIDDEN POWER" BY J.M. TATE

INT. CAFE BRENT - DAY

The Waits and Gates have their menus out, seated around a table in the otherwise empty diner.

REGGIE

What's with all the corn? *Side of corn, Corn on the cob, Corn dogs, Popcorn.*

PHIL

I've never heard of popcorn at a diner. Isn't that usually in movie theaters?

CONNIE

I don't think this town has a movie theater.

REGGIE

What would they show, *Children of the Corn?*

MICHAEL

This is an eerie place, so you better get used to it.

PHIL

You say that like you've been here before.

MICHAEL

Oh, uh. I just meant all small towns in general are different than what we're used to.

MARGO

(to kids while looking at menu)

The Kids Plate sounds good for you guys.

PHIL

Here comes a waiter now.

BRENT PHILLIPS, cafe owner, manager, busboy and waiter (the cook is in the back), walks up with an order form in hand. Brent looks at Michael, and makes no sign of recognition. Brent's expression remains somewhat dull (pretty normal for him).

BRENT  
May I take your order?

MARGO  
We want two Kids Plates, and two  
Adult Plates.

PHIL  
That was easy.

BRENT  
And to drink?

REGGIE  
I'll have a Coke.

MARGO  
Reggie, we don't drink caffeine,  
remember? And besides, I was  
thinking: you kids don't get enough  
calcium.  
(to Brent)  
So we'll have four glasses of...

Michael clears his throat and stands up quickly.

MICHAEL  
Joshua, I almost forgot. You have  
to use your inhaler, remember?  
(to the Gates)  
He'll die if he doesn't take it  
once an hour, and it's been three  
already. He has asthma pretty bad.

JOSHUA  
I do?

MICHAEL  
Yes, son. Let's go to the RV. We  
left it in the glove box.  
(to Gates)  
You guys go ahead, enjoy your meal,  
don't let us take your time... Come  
on, Josh.

Michael takes Joshua by the shirt sleeve. Joshua stands up  
and they both exit the diner.

The Gates seem a bit surprised by the abrupt departure, but  
get over it quickly. Brent watches them go with suspicion in  
his eyes.

PHIL

Okay then... I guess we should finish.

REGGIE

I think we already did.

BRENT

You were about to order your drinks.

MARGO

Oh, yes... Four glasses of milk, please.

BRENT

Sorry, ma'am. We no longer carry milk in Nil... I mean, New Nilbog. It's forbidden.

MARGO

Okay then, we'll just have water.

CONNIE

Water? But I want a coke.

REGGIE

Amen sister.

MARGO

Connie, you of all people should know better than that.

CONNIE

Joseph H. Smith on a popsicle stick! Are we always gonna have to live by these rules!

MARGO

One day you'll marry a handsome man who will have the same exact rules so you better get used to it.

CONNIE

(rolls eyes; a bit under her breath)  
And what number wife will I be?

BRENT

(somewhat impatient)  
Okay then, your plates will be ready soon.

Brent walks off towards the kitchen. Reggie looks at Connie.

REGGIE

One of these days, sis, we're gonna  
have to score Coca Cola in ziplock  
baggies.

CUT TO:

INT. RV - DAY

Joshua and Michael are inside the RV, both seated around the  
middle table.

JOSHUA

I wish we didn't leave. I was  
hungry.

MICHAEL

I got something for that.

Michael goes to the front and opens the glove box, pulls out  
a bag of trail mix, tosses it to Joshua.

JOSHUA

What is this stuff.

Michael sits back down.

MICHAEL

Survival food. Has all the vitamins  
we need for energy. Trust me, we'll  
want to live on that for a few  
days. Your memory might be shot,  
but mine's clear as a bell. When  
the facade of this town eventually  
wears off, it's going to be all  
about survival.

BACK TO:

INT. BRENT'S CAFE - DAY

The waters are on the table, and then Brent brings the food.  
He sets down the plates: the Kids plates in front of Connie  
and Reggie, and so on.

Phil, who seems very hungry, is about to dig in. Margo clears  
her throat.

MARGO  
Honey... You're being a bad  
influence.

PHIL  
Since when is eating a bad  
influence?

MARGO  
When you do it with saying grace.

PHIL;  
Oh... yes. That's right.  
(to kids)  
Now, who will pray for our meal?  
Let's see... Reggie, do you want to  
give thanks?

REGGIE  
No thanks.

PHIL  
Okay then. Will Connie pray?

CONNIE  
I'll pass.

PHIL  
Okay... Will Margo pray?

MARGO  
Looks like I'll have to.  
(bows her head)  
Dear Lord, thank you for this food,  
and may it bless our hearts. Amen.

They all open their eyes.

CONNIE  
How can food bless our hearts?

REGGIE  
(looks at his food)  
It sure won't bless our stomachs.

PHIL  
Just eat and stop complaining.

CONNIE  
But I hate corn.

MARGO  
You hate everything.

CONNIE

(to Phil)

Tell me the truth, would you eat this? You have steaks and just a little side of corn, and we have corn and... more corn.

PHIL

Sure I'd eat it. In fact...

Phil takes the table and turns it around, so that the kids have the adult plates in front of them, and vice versa.

PHIL

There - you satisfied?

CONNIE

Sure am.

REGGIE

Amen.

The family eats their food; the kids going at their steaks with fervor, the parents doing the same with the corn.

Brent is watching from behind the counter. He then turns, looks outside the window, towards the bookstore. His puts his hands on his forehead, and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

LIBRARIAN JANE, an old skinny lady with long black hair, and Mayor Arnold are the only ones inside the dusty bookstore. They are further back, away from the window.

Mayor Arnold is seated on a chair, as Librarian Jane is softly wiping his head with a wet towel. Jane's voice is gentle, tempered; although this seems forced - like she's holding back something.

LIBRARIAN JANE

This is so fun and nostalgic, my sweet little child. I just love nurturing you.

MAYOR ARNOLD

I wish we didn't have to do this at all.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Well, if you want to turn green in front of our new visitors, then you can skip this treatment. Three times during daylight, those are the rules.

MAYOR ARNOLD

It's bad enough I turn completely green from midnight to five a.m. And having to hide myself away all night with my feet in a pot of mulch isn't too fun either.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Consider yourself lucky that I used what magic I had left to keep you alive... You humans, in your original form, do prove as useful idiots from time to time.

MAYOR ARNOLD

After what you did with that chainsaw, there really isn't much to live for... But this political gig is kind of fun. I rather enjoy being a...

Suddenly, Mayor Arnold puts his hands up to his forehead.

MAYOR ARNOLD

Stop that a second, I got a mind-message from Brent.

Jane complies. Sets the rag on the floor.

MAYOR ARNOLD (CONT'D)

(as if reciting)

*The parents ate the corn, but not the kids.*

(puts hands down)

Which means, only the parents will be under our spell tonight.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Oh, you fool. It really doesn't matter... Tomorrow at dawn after the parents have already left, we'll simply snatch up the children ourselves.

MAYOR ARNOLD

I guess you're right. They will be easy to kidnap, since they are kids.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Of course I'm right. Remember, you only pretend to run things around here.

Mayor Arnold stands up.

MAYOR ARNOLD

I'll get the Gates so you can take them to the Presence old house. As for the Waits, I'll make up a new law that they can only park their RV on the outskirts of town, near the highway. That way they won't be able to protect them.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Silly child. You keep talking about that stupid Gates family. But we only tricked them into coming here as decoys. Don't forget our main purpose - to get Joshua into the church-house library to revive the New Wall, giving me *all* my power back.

MAYOR ARNOLD

Luring him to the library is important, but so are our decoys. You must realize, Joshua and his father aren't stupid and naive like before. It will take the kidnapping of that family to get him there in the first place.

LIBRARIAN JANE

(momentum builds)

You were quite naive too before I made you into one of three special little creations that will one day aid me in becoming...

MAYOR ARNOLD

(interrupts)

All right, all right, before you go into one of your overly dramatic monologues, I'll set things up for tonight. Goodbye Cree... I mean, Jane.

Mayor Arnold leaves the bookstore. Librarian Jane watches him with a cat-like grin.

LIBRARIAN JANE

Once I get Joshua Waits to the church to pass through the New Wall, we'll see who pulls the real strings around here, won't we?

Librarian Jane begins to laugh, which starts as an eerie giggle and then escalates into a nerve-wrenching cackle.