

## Episode 12: White Washed

Sugar Stop's sheriffs sat atop the water tower once more, Lucy's papers were still scattered across the surface.

"I'm sorry Lucy, the old man told me you weren't on the best terms with your mom, I just, I just wanted to say anything I felt like would hurt you. I wanted you to be as miserable as I am. My mom was the sheriff before, and like a lotta other people she came here for a better opportunity. That scar that Walter has across his chest...He got it protecting me and my mom from some raiders ...But...my mom didn't make it..."

"Damn...I'm sorry to hear that."

"This country used to be dangerous as hell, even after the Love-Bomb, but the old man Walter stepped up and started lookin' after me. He made sure I ate, took me on walks with Cain, pretty much became my dad. Once I got old enough I took the sheriff job to honor my mom, and to pay back Walter for everything he'd done for me...But..."

"You wanna do movie stuff?"

"Every Friday night he'd sit down with me and Cain and we'd watch a movie and...Boom. For just a few hours I'd forget that I was grieving. When you watch a good movie the whole world fades away. I got to escape my problems watching movies. Fiction can make you feel so many things, make you think about stuff you never even cared about! During my shifts I'd just sit up here with a big notebook and write ideas or scripts or whatever, act out scenes even. And just like what you did I looked up auditions and...I stopped. I went back and forth with myself for years, was it right to leave and chase my dreams...?"

"Wait so this was before or after Cain and them left?"

"Oh wayyy before way before all that...and...It's not really my place to say but, Walter has lost more family than just his son...He tries to hide it, but he's a lonely guy..."

"So, so you didn't wanna leave him out to dry cause he's done so much for you."

"Yeah exactly. BUT THEN, all the kids left. I was stuck in this weird gap. Too old to go with Cain, but too young for Walter's crowd. And...It might sound bad, but I don't, I don't wanna exist just to help him. I have my own dreams. I want to write. I want to change the world. I want to help people through my stories."

**JUMPI** "Alright! So everything rides on these kids huh?! If I bring 'em back you'll be free to chase your dreams!"

"Why. Why are you the way you are?"

"Are we doing this again?"

"No, no no like... We FOUGHT, a few hours ago, RIGHT HERE. Some of your papers are still scattered. I mean I apologize, but I said some hurtful things to you. I was irresponsible, inconsiderate, immature. You saw right through me an-and seeing you try so hard for me pissed me off, it wa-it was scary!...I'm so gross."

"Wellllll. There were a few things. One, you were dru-"

"STOP! STOP! Please, do not finish that sentence."

“Huh?”

Nancey looked down at her hand. **VBMWW!** “S-Sorry, just hearin’ certain things f-flares me up.”

Your hands are shakin’ like crazy. Can I do something?”

“Just I don’t know, let’s keep talkin’ I just gotta distract myself.”

“Fuck around with onna these.” **WHOOSHI!**

**GRABI!** “You make these with your power.” **SQUEEZE!** “It’s sturdy, but it gives just a little.”

“Yeah I can, blow em up whenever, or just blow straight air out of my hands orrr...”

Lucy **STOMPED!** her foot. “Store.” **PUARI!** “And release energy. Storein’ don’t take none of my air tho.”

“Jeez. So what you’re saying is if you’re such a nice girl, you could have kicked my ass even harder? Gahlee...”

“I mean you were dr-” **SQUEEZE!** “You wer-” **SQUEEZE!** “...drowning.” **SQUEEZE!**  
“There’s no swag in punching down.”

“Well I appreciate it kid.”

**GRABI!** Lucy snatched Nancey to her feet. “That Raph guy, under these same stars, above this same sand, found what you were lookin’ for, and ya know he wasn’t Jesus Christ or anything so you can too Ms.Nancey!”

“I’m gonna throw my hat back in the ring, and when I win a Deccy I’m dragging you on stage with me.”

“Hee hee, nah you ain’t gotta do that...butttt...I’m curious, do you still have any of your written stuff? The Nonchalant Cowgirl gave a weird answer before.”

“...Welll...y-yeah...but it’s n-not hrk!

**GRABI WHOOSHI SQUEEZE!** Lucy wrapped her arms around Nancey, lifting her off the ground. “Ahhhhhhhhhh.”

“N-no! N-no! No! No-No! It-it’s not good! Like at all!” **SQUEEZE!** She TRIED to squirm outta Lucy’s arms.

“I won’t make fun of you or nothing I.” **SQUEEZE!** “SWEARRRR! C’mon c’mon c’monnnn we’re sisters now ya know!”

“Huh? This is news to me.”

“The old man said we’re family, I already have a dad so I guess that makes him my uncle. And I made you my sister cause I never had one before. Or unless you wanna be my cousin. But c’monnn it’ll be cool we can like, do nails after and other shit girls do. Uhm makeup, right?”

“I don’t own any makeup, but I’m pretty sure the general store has nail polish so I can meet you there.”

“Alright cool, sooo still, you’ll let me see what you’ve got written? I’m sure it’s good, you know I believe in you already.”

“Fine. But, you know, remember this is old...stuff, I’ve probably gotten better since then, ya know...”

“Yes! Yahoo! I’m going to get to see Decalore’s next star’s hidden works! This is cool as hell, but, but there’s one more thing I want to say

“Hn?”

“No matter what happens, I want you to choose **your** happiness. If I fail, or get killed or drown or something crazy, you better tell Water the truth and do what makes you happy. And if he doesn’t understand, it’s not your job to make ‘im. I want you to promise me.”

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“I promise...Sis.”

“Yahoo!”

**PUARI**

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**CHICK-CHICKI**

**SPI-SPLATI**

“Alright so let’s head to my place, and I’ll go fish out my binder.”

“Cool cool cool this is sick! So, my new and first sister, do you like boyyyyyysssss?”

“Uh yeah, I think?...Everyone around here was either too old or too young so I couldn’t really experience dating or anything. The lead actor from Nine Innings of Love is pretty cute so I guess.”

“I never seen that one, me n’ you gotta watch it sometime.”

“Ok we could do that. We’ll just have to watch A True Man’s Thunder Spirit first.”

“Is that a prequel or ?”

“No no no, they’re completely different movies, but they have the same lead actor, and it’s interesting how he handles the different roles. In Thunder he’s stoic as all hell, but soft in Nine Innings, it’s like he’s a completely different guy. I guess that’s what acting is. But there’s this interesting fan theory, right. People say both movies take place in the same universe and that after Thunder he changes hi-OOP! Well I can’t tell you just yet.”

**SPLASHHH!!!**

“Wh-what the hell?”

“There’s so...there’s so many of ‘em?”

Sugar Stop had been painted stark white.

“Mallow!” “Mallow-mallow!” “Maaalloowwww!”

“Ma-mallow!” Low-Low-Low!”

The Mallow-Men had taken over the town, bleeding out into the desert. Their dead eyed masks were carved into the shapes of beasts. With spears in one hand and torches in the other they just... stood like they’d been waiting for something.

**CHFI CHFI**

As the ladies touched down. **SPLASH!** The crowd split.

“Do they...usually do this?”

“No, not at all.” **SQUEEZE!** Nancey gripped the iron.

“Wait, look at that.”

**CHFI CHFI CHFI**

A sole Mallow-Man slowly stepped toward the sheriffs, followed by a large black box. While the others wore masks, the leader donned a helmet carved into the shape of a woman’s face.

“They don’t seem like they wanna fight.”

“Yeah, but don’t let your guard down, they’re movin’ unusual. Maybe it’s got something to do with your lineage.”

“HmMMM.”

**“MALLOW-MEN... UH BOUNCE ON ONE  
LEGI”**

**“MALLOW”**

**BOING! BOING! BOING! BOING!**

“N-no way....”

“NOW TELL MS.NANCEY TO FOLLOW HER DREAMS!!”

**“MA-MALLOW” “MALLOW” “MA-MA-MALLOW”**

**“MAAAAAALLOOWW” “MALLOW”**

“Ha ha ha, you guys are all so nice!”

“They’re really listening to you, maybe you could ask them to find Raphael, and and Cain and everyone else. We could end this whole thing tonight.”

“Nahhh I don’t wanna do it that way.”

“H-Huh? Why not? We could end this. Tonight.”

“Wouldn’t feel right.”

“I gotcha, I think I kinda get it, and I know you’re gonna do whatever you want regardless.”

***CHFI CHFI CHFI***

Six buff Mallow-Men brought the black box to the head of the crowd. “Ohhhh it’s uh, those things that rich people ride around in in cartoons and stuff. What is it? Damn, what’s that mug called?”

“A litter. Are they trying to tell us to…” ***PUARI*** “You’re just gonna get in?!”

“If I ask what they’re trying to do, they’d just say mallow, and if they try to beat us up I’ll just tell them to die. OUUUU! Wait wait! We went from two people to a whole production crew! Damn, and an audience too!

“Heh, alright, well tell ‘em to act their ass off!”

***TMPI TMPI TMPI***

***TMPI TMPI TMPI***

“You ready?”

“Yup, I’m goin’ in!”

***EEEEEEEEERRRRRRRI***

“Damn, I ain’t think there’d be **THIS** many!” ***CLUNGI*** Nancey had sent Lucy into a star studded whites only party, their hollow eyes had observed the sheriff on her darkest days. “**Are these hard to make?**”

“They were at first, but I’ve had a lot of time to practice, and you should see Stacy McGuinness from Time Tapers on your left.”

“Ahuh.”

“Then you wanna go a few steps past Uncle Leopold from A Red Heart’s Sore Wound.”

“Ahuh.”

“Wait, you know who these characters are?”

“**No. But, I’m sorry big sis, this smell is fuckin’ oppressive, and it’s dark as hell!**”

“You didn’t turn the lights on?”

“**I thought it’d be fun, like exploring old temple ruins or some shut.**”

“And and and, I just want to let it be known that the smell is **JUST** old cans of be-be-beeswax, and not my natural aroma.”

“**Nah I’ve smelled this on you.**”

“E-Jet! Y-You’re lying right!? Is this a joke?”

“**No.**”

“Jeez I’m a 30 plusser, that fights kids, and smells like booze... Where did I go wrong? Lucy, please come out here and snap my neck. Make it quick.”

**“You WERE those things. Well you’re still 30, but we’ll clean all this shit out later.”**

“Yeahhhhh.”

**“Ohp! Oh! Shit I think I got it. A binder right?”**

“Yeah it should be a real thick binder filled to the brim.”

**“Oh wait, this is like a bunch of DVDs and stuff.”**

“Lucy please that binder is priceless, pleaseeee be careful with it.”

**“Are physical movies even worth anything nowadays? These are all like on the internet and streaming and shit right?”**

“That binder has all the movies I watched with Walter and Cain growin’ up. There were way too many to keep the cases. Buuuuuuut. Some physical versions of movies can be valuable depending on the format, if it’s a special edition, rarity, and even though we have them. Movies and TV shows are taken off streaming services all the time, so you never know when you might need a physical form of media... But uh, look around for a bulky statue. A tall guy with wide shoulders.”

“...”

“Did you hear me?” **DRGGGG!**

“Lucy?” **DRGGGG!**

“What’re you doin’ in there?” **DRGGGG!**

**DRGGGG!**

**DRGGGG!**

Red pushed white out into the hallway.

“I could recognize this silhouette with my eyes closed.”

A ten gallon hat, two revolvers, and a nonchalant expression.

**TMPI TMPI TMPI**

**SQUEEZE!**

**CRASH!!!**