The Woodsman

By Nicole Kassell
On your left.
On your right.
You must check in
with your P.O. Once a week.
Your P.O. Is entitled
to visit at any time.
You cannot come
within 300 feet of...
You must register immediately
upon return...
- Walter?
- Hey, Bob.
It's good to see you.
That's Mary-Kay.
The only reason I'm doing this is 'cause
I know you did good work for my father.
So you be here on time.
You do your work.
I don't want
any kind of problem, period.
God, that looks awful.
Yeah.
Now, this looks good.
Want some? Homemade.
No, thanks.
You won't taste
a better chicken salad in town.
I said no, thank you.
I'm sorry. I got to get back to work.
- So, how are you adjusting?
- I'm adjusting okay.
- And your new apartment?
- Apartment's okay.
- How's the job?
- The job's okay.
Do I take "okay" to mean
you feel good about working there?
I said the job's okay.
That's right. You did.
- Vicki!
- Fuck you, asshole.
- Come on. What's wrong, huh?
- Kiss my ass.
Boy, you still think fast.
You don't need to think fast
to handle a beer.
Well, it took some talking
to convince your super I was a relative.
Yeah, well, I told her
all my relatives were good-looking.
- Jesus Christ, man, it's good to see you.
- Yeah, you too.
You look good...
damn good,
considering you're an old man now.
Feels like the whole world's
gotten younger.
So, you're doing okay?
Yeah, I'm okay.
- How's business?
- Booming.
Can't keep up with the work.
In fact, I just hired a few new guys.
Just until, you know, we catch up.
Living across the street
from a grade school. Jesus.
Something wrong with that?
I'm just thinking of the noise.
It's the only landlord in town
who'll take my money.
So, how's Annette?
A little tense.
You know, you're the only member
of the family still speaking to me.
Yeah, well, I remember when
they all gave Annette shit...
because she married the brown-skinned boy
from down the street... except her brother.
And what about Annette?
I'm workin' on it.
- So how old is Carla?
- She's gonna be 12 next week.
We're gonna throw her
a big party on Saturday.
I wish I could ask you to come.
Good enough
to eat today, baby.
Ooh, yeah.
What the fuck do you think you're doing, huh?
How'd you like it if someone did that shit to your sister, huh?
Piece of shit!
Fuck off!
Clean that shit up!
- Oh, yeah.
- Play with yourself, asshole!
You okay?
What?
- Are you okay?
- Yeah, I'm fucking fantastic.
So, what'd he do?
- What did who do?
- You know, the new guy.
Drugs, armed robbery, manslaughter...
Mind your business, Mary-Kay.
Have you made any friends there?
I'm not running for Mr. Popularity.
You seem a little hostile today.
It's called sarcasm, Dr. Rosen.
No need to call me doctor.
I'm a therapist, not a psychiatrist.
It's all the same to me.
Walter, I'd like you to try something for me.
- What's that?
- I'd like you to keep a journal.
- No fuckin' way.
- Why not?
Evidence.
Perhaps a journal would encourage you to reflect.
Try it?
Sixteen, 17, 18, 19, 20.
How about that?
Want a ride?
- I'm all right.
- It's fucking freezing out here.
- I'm fine.
- Come on. I won't bite.
Something wrong
with this picture.
Here's this nice, hard-working guy...
suddenly appears out of the blue.
Takes the bus to and from work.
I mean, who takes
the bus anymore?
People who don't have cars.
- It's very weird.
- Not as weird as a sharp, young...
good-looking woman
working in a lumberyard.
Oh, yeah?
What's weird about that?
Most women wouldn't choose it.
Guess I'm not like most women.
You never spoke to me before.
I thought you were a dyke.
- Are you?
- What do you think?
You plan on drinking
both those beers?
I'm sorry.
- Is that a school?
- K through sixth.
Doesn't it get noisy?
I like the noise.
I used to think you were shy...
but now I think it's something else.
What?
- Something happened to you.
- Yeah?
I'm not easily shocked.
I get that impression.
So, you gonna tell me your dark secret?
Why do you want to know?
Don't you think I should know
before we have sex?
I don't like to waste time.
So, you gonna tell me
your deep, dark secret?
No.
Okay.
So, you're not a dyke.
Not tonight.
Hey, that was intense.
You're still here.
I didn't say I didn't like it.
What are you doing?
This table's a heavy little bitch, man.
It's cherry.
This wood. It's cherry.
It's a nice table.
It's my own design. You're not gonna find another one like it in the world.
- It was a beautiful gift.
- So, why are you giving it back to me?
Because, man, you need a table.
Carlos, I made this table for you and Annette as a wedding present.
- I put a lot into it.
- I know, man.
I love the table too.
But I also love my wife.
Hey, you got a beer?
"I watch the kids arrive at school.
But for the last few weeks,
I've noticed someone else watching them.
I call him Candy."
She's at the top of her class at school.
How about your kids?
- They're good.
- Yeah?
- Mm-hmm.
- Yeah?
She's really doing great at school.
I don't see her much, but...
- I'd keep away from him.
- What?
The new guy.
I'd keep away from him if I were you.
- Oh, yeah? Why's that?
- I think he's damaged goods... real damaged.
- You know what I mean?
- Yeah, Mary-Kay, I think I do.
Thanks a bunch for the advice.
Suit yourself.
Close, but no ciggy.
Thanks, babe.
Thank you.
Hey, Walter.
Hello.
Hello.
You okay?
Walter, what did you do?
What happened to you?
Walter?
Why do you want to know?
Because I like you.
What's the worst thing you ever did?
The worst?
I fucked my best friend's husband.
I mean, my best friend since second grade.
He had the hots for me and...
Yeah, he was cute.
We'd get it on for days.
And then he told her... the shit.
Broke up their marriage.
Ruined our friendship.
I still feel like the lowest piece of shit when I think about that.
So, what did you do?
I molested little girls.
Twelve years in prison is no joke.
How young?
Between 10 and 12.
Once a nine-year-old told me she was 11.
Once a 14-year-old told me she was 12.
I always asked how old they were.
What did you do to them?
It's not what you think.
I never hurt them.
Never.
Look...
I want you to go now, all right?
I told you
I'm not easily shocked.
Yeah, well, you should be shocked.
- Or do you get off on this shit?
- What?
When will I be normal?
We have a lot of work to do.
- Will I ever be normal?
- What's your idea of being normal?
What's your idea of being a fuckin' shrink?
- Sorry.
- Watch where you're going.
Sorry.
So what's happening?
Braves are kicking the shit out of the Phillies.
Fucking Phillies.
It's just the beginning of the season.
You got to give them a chance.
- So, how was the party?
- What party?
- The birthday party.
- Fuck. It was great.
You should have seen Carla.
She was so pretty.
She looked like a princess.
She's the light of my life, man.
You don't want to love them too much though.
No such thing, man.
I couldn't love her enough.
Oh, I've got photos.
You want to see?
- Nah, it's all right.
- Ah, come on.
I don't want to see any goddamn pictures, all right?
They're just photos
I took at the party.
Carlos, I want to see my sister and my niece in person.
Okay?
Yeah, okay.
I'm just saying Carlos
has a thing for his daughter.
If he's not careful, he's gonna suffer.
You think I'm crazy?
Do you think you're crazy?
You know, talking to you is like riding
on a fuckin' merry-go-round.
That's a marvellous image, Walter.
Because by going in circles we find things
we missed the first time around.
When will I be normal?
"So what should I do?
Call the cops?
Yeah, that's pretty funny.
But what if Candy seduces one
to go for a ride?
Yeah, that's right.
If the boy goes for a ride...
it's because he wants
to go for a ride."
Walter.
Cop.
Sergeant Lucas.
You mind if I come in?
You are in.
Yeah, I am.
But I always like to ask.
It's a force of habit.
You don't mind if I look around, do you?
I would.
Why, you got something to hide?
Doesn't everybody?
Have a seat.
I could get a search warrant.
Yeah, if you could get a search warrant,
you would have brought one today.
This cherry?
Yeah.
It's a little unusual design
for a contemporary piece, but...
Walter...
two nights ago a 10-year-old girl
got attacked not far from here.
That's a bit of a coincidence,
don't you think?
- What time did it happen?
- I'll ask the questions.
  If you tell me what time
  it happened, maybe I could...
- Get your hands out
  of your fuckin' pockets!
- Sit down!
  I know every fuckin' move
  you make...
- every goddamn step.
  When you sleep, when you eat...
  when you shit, when you jack off...
- When you're sitting there
  by the window...
- watching the little girls
  in their cotton white dresses...
  and you're sittin' there on your little
  jack-off bench, and you're jackin' off.
  Do you show your cock
to little girls when you jack off?
- You can't talk to me like...
- Like what?
  Like a piece of shit? That's what
  you are to me, a piece of shit.
  Throw you out
  that window right now.
  Think somebody's gonna miss you?
- I could say you jumped
  when I came in.
- Who you think
  they're gonna believe, me or you?
  You'd just be a dead piece of shit.
  We need to make sure...
- that you're being
  a good boy, Walter.
- Okay?
- Okay?
- Okay.
- Okay.
- Okay.
- Have a good day.
  Nice table.
  Yes, may I help you, please?
- What did you think would happen?
  - I don't know.
- What did you want to happen?
  - I don't know!
Would you please stop writing
in the fucking pad?
You know that if anything happens to me,
I go back to prison.
No parole. No nothin'. For life.
- Is this the first one?
- Of course it is!
- Why do you think I'm telling you?
- I want you to calm down.
You followed a girl.
Perhaps you wanted to see
what it felt like after so many years.
Maybe subconsciously
you were testing yourself.
And here you are...
talking about it with me.
This is positive.
Walter, we'll pick up here
next week.
Remember when
you asked me what...
my idea of normal was?
Normal is when I can see a girl...
be near a girl, even talk to a girl...
and not think about...
That's my idea of normal.
What are you lookin' at?
- What's this?
- What's it look like?
A plant. I don't need a plant.
Everyone needs a plant.
This ivy is one tough baby.
It's a cutting from one of mine.
So, here's the deal.
Give it a little water...
go easy on the direct sunlight...
and notice it
every once in a while.
They love it when you look at 'em
or touch their leaves.
Think you can handle that?
Such an asshole.
Thanks.
Want to go for a ride?
Sure.
Get your coat.
Why do you stay?
I see something in you,
something good.
You don't see it yet, but I do.
You know, most people
say the odds are against me.
What odds?
Percentages...
for guys like me.
Most of us end up back there.
Well, most people don't know
what they're talking about.
You want to talk about odds?
Someday I'll tell you how I survived...
as the only daughter
in a family with three sons.
Hell, maybe you should
tell me now.
Maybe not.
You scared?
I got poked around
here and there.
Jesus. Which brother?
All three, in chronological order.
Why are you telling me this?
I'm trying to tell you who I am,
if you're interested.
You must hate your brothers.
- I love my brothers.
- No, you don't.
I love all of them.
They're strong, gentle men
with families of their own.
If you ever asked them about what they did
to me, they'd beat the shit out of you.
And they'd call you a fucking liar.
Hey...
I never told anyone that before.
Yeah, he's right there.
Hey, Jim.
Yeah. Okay.
I'll tell him. Bye-bye.
Bob said you wanted to see me.
He wants everyone to sign
this card for Reggie.
It's a baby girl.
Reggie must be a happy man.
I heard you're lookin' for another job.
Where'd you hear that?
- Around.
- I'm not lookin' for another job.
I just heard they're looking for some
good men down at Dan Shroeder's place.
I like my job. Thank you.
- So, I've got some good news.
- What's that?
Annette will see you.
Aren't you glad?
When?
Early July.
- That's three months from now.
- It's a better time.
Carla will be away at camp.
House'll be quiet.
It's better when it's quiet.
- Tell Annette I'm busy in July.
- Now, come on, Walter.
You should see my appointment book.
It just got crazy.
- It isn't what you think.
- Isn't it?
Look, the important thing
is that you and Annette talk.
She needs to see you,
and you need to see her.
I'm not a monster.
Hey.
So next week, Annette's gonna be away for a few days, right?
And the thing is,
when Annette's away...
I get horny as hell for other women.
I mean, I fantasize about
fucking some beautiful woman.
You don't have to tell me this.
I know. I'm just sayin' I understand.
It's crazy out there. I mean,
girls wearing mini-this, mini-that...
Sometimes when I walk down the street
and I pass a sexy-looking woman...
she makes me feel
like I'm bothering her.
Hey, I see a pretty lady, I look.
That's the price of beauty, my friend.
You wouldn't believe the things Carla
and her friends are wearin' these days.
- Can I ask you something?
- Sure.
You ever have...
feelings for Carla?
What do you mean?
You know, feelings.
Look, man, I ain't got your sick fuckin'...
Disease? Is that what it is?
Whatever the fuck it is,
I ain't got it.
So if you ever touch
my daughter, I'll kill you.
When I say the word "girl"...
what is the earliest image
you can remember?
When I say the word "pretty,"
when I say the word "pleasure"...
who do you see?
I see my sister.
Where is she?
She's asleep in my bedroom.
Where are you?
I'm in my bed too.
How old are you and your sister?
Oh, about six.
That would make her four.
What are you doing?
Nothin'. Takin' a nap.
- A nap?
- Yeah, a nap.
Kids take naps.
You ever take a nap, Rosen?
I don't wanna talk about this.
What the hell are you doin' back there?
Did you and your sister
often take naps...
I want you back in your chair. Now!
I'm sorry.
I don't like nobody behind my back.
Walter, what did you do
while taking naps with your sister?
Nothin'.
Did you touch her?
Did you take her clothes off?
- You take your clothes off?
- This is bullshit.
I'm only asking questions.
All right. I'm gonna tell you
just to shut you up.
I smelled her hair.
What else?
Nothin'.
That's it.
I just liked smellin' her hair.
You felt pleasure?
Yes.
- Did you get an erection?
- I was six years old.
I meant later,
when you two took naps...
when the two of you
held each other...
when you were 10 or 11,
and she was eight or nine...
when the two of you
were all alone...
completely alone in that big house.
It was a small house.
All right. A small house...
with small rooms.
I smelled her hair.
That's all.
I just liked smellin' her hair.
Hi.
Hello.
What are you looking at?
Up in that oak tree
there's a nest.
- Where?
- Up there.
- A little higher.
- There are little chicks.
- You want to see?
- Sure.
They're starlings.
- Is that right?
- I don't like starlings.
- Why not?
- They're extremely aggressive birds.
Plus their habits are pretty filthy.
The mother must have her hands full.
So, you always carry these with you?
When I go bird-watching.
It's why I like coming here.
It's just a city park.
You'd be surprised
how many kinds of birds you find here.
Last week, I saw a purple martin...
and the week before that,
I saw a solitary vireo.
- That's rare.
- A solitary vireo?
- I like that.
- Their sound is really musical.
Are you a bird-watcher too?
Me? No, I'm a...
more of a people-watcher.
The way you were staring
at the tops of those trees...
I thought you were
gonna take off and fly.
I should go now.
You come here a lot?
My daddy likes me home
before dark.
- Well, it's good to listen to your dad.
- Bye.
Good morning, fellow sports fans.
The match is about to begin.
Candy enters the arena
looking sweet and trim.
He checks out the scene but plays it cool.
He's definitely holding back.
Uh-oh. Candy's eyes
have locked on to something.
Oh, yeah. A cherub lad has separated
himself from his friends.
Candy quickly makes his move.
He offers the boy a bag of treats.
Round one to Candy.
The cherub walks away.!
Round two goes to the cherub.
Very risky move by Candy.
I have never seen Candy act so cocky.
The cherub looks at Candy.
Cherub looks for his friends.
But his friends are long gone.
The cherub is alone.
The cherub crosses the street...
The cherub gets in the car.
- Hey, Walter.
- What can I do for you, Sergeant Lucas?
You can listen to
my stories about Jesus.
Oh, no. This is too much.
This is too much sun.
- What?
- This is ivy.
These plants don't like
a lot of sunlight.
Don't they grow outside?
Yeah, they grow outside.
But outside they got trees to shade 'em.
So now you're gonna take me
on a nature walk?
Have a seat.
So, yesterday you take
the 12 bus home...
but you don't get off
at your regular stop.
You stay on.
Why'd you stay on?
Fell asleep. When I woke up,
I was confused.
I got off at the wrong stop,
and I walked home.
You walked home?
Yeah.
Some of these guys...
they walk right
into a family's house.
Very...
It's very fuckin' ballsy.
Had this one guy,
he's on death row...
I'll call him Henry...
and he's tellin' me
about his last victim.
She's a little...
little cutie named Adele.
She's seven years old.
And Adele's mother's got
the TV playing so loud...
he can hear Letterman
tellin' jokes in the next room.
And he walks into Adele's room...
puts his hand over her mouth.
He says, "If you scream, little girl,
I'm gonna kill your mother."
So, of course,
Adele doesn't scream.
She doesn't cry.
She doesn't make a sound.
And Henry takes her by the hand.
They walk out the front door.
Ten days later,
they find Adele's body...
what's left of it.
You believe in fairy tales?
Fairy tales?
Yeah, like, Alice in Wonderland and...
No.
Yeah. Yeah, me neither.
What's the one with the woodsman?
- Woodsman?
- Yeah. With the ax.
- I don't know.
- Yeah, you know it.
The woodsman...
He cuts open a wolf's stomach.
The little girl comes out alive.
- Little Red Riding Hood.
- Little Red Riding Hood.
That's it. That's it.
The woodsman...
He cuts open the wolf's stomach.
The girl comes out without a scratch.
You ever see a seven-year-old...
been sodomized in half?
She was so small...
just broken.
I saw 20-year vets on that job...
hard guys, man...
and they just broke down and cried.
I was there. I cried.
There ain't no fuckin' woodsman in this world.
I don't know why they keep lettin' freaks like you out on the street.
It just means that we gotta catch you all over again.
I'll see you, Walter.
Talk to me like you fuckin'...
Speak to me like you fuckin'...
I am not...
I am not...
- Let's go.
- You don't feel sorry for this sick fuck.
- Mind your own business, Pedro.
- This is my business.
What the hell is goin' on here?
Who did this?
Any man who can't deal with it, you meet me in the office.
I'll pay you for the week.
You can clear the fuck out.
We got a lot of orders today.
Get to work.
This is bullshit.
Are you okay?
Watch your back, bitch.
This is ready whenever.
Where's Walter?
I don't know.
I don't fucking believe this.
- Goddamn it, Mary-Kay!
- Bitch, what the fuck are you doin'?
- What is going on?
- This is bullshit, Bob!
It's bullshit.
People have the right to know.
See anything interesting?
Not yet.
- What are you writin' in that book?
- It's my bird book.
I've identified 67 species
of birds this year alone.
Wow.
Where are your friends?
Don't you have any friends?
I have friends.
A pretty girl like you
should have a lot of friends.
I'm not pretty.
- Well, not in the common way.
- What does that mean?
It means that uncommon beauty...
is commonly overlooked.
You know, like people only notice...
the birds with the brightest colors.
What's your name?
Let's see. Linda.
Susan?
Jennifer?
Jackie?
You tell me your name,
and I'll tell ya mine.
Robin.
Yeah, like the bird.
- How old are you?
- Twelve.
- No, you're not.
- I will be in three months.
I can't wait. I hate being 11.
It has to be the stupidest age in the world.
What's your name?
Walter.
- Do you have many friends?
- No.
How come?
A long time ago, I was sent away f...
When I came home,
all my friends were gone.
Sounds like you were banished.
Banished, yeah.
Birds are my friends.
They know I watch them...
but they don't mind because they like being watched...
if they know you won't hurt them.
- Robin...
- Yes?
Would you like to sit on my lap?
What?
Would you like to sit on my lap?
No, thank you.
Okay.
Doesn't matter.
Do you want me to sit on your lap?
Yes.
I would enjoy that.
I know this place that's really quiet...
except for the sound of these tiny little birds.
They sound like finches.
Yeah, they might be finches.
Do you want to see?
My daddy lets me sit on his lap.
- Does he?
- Yes.
Do you like it when he asks you?
No.
Why not?
Are you two alone when he asks you?
Does he say strange things?
Does he move his legs
in funny ways?
Walter...
do you still want me
to sit on your lap?
I will.
I don't mind.
No.
Go home, Robin.
Come on in. It's open.
Hey, Walter.
What can I do for you,
Sergeant Lucas?
I don't know. We'll see.
You didn't hear? Last night...
all that shoutin'
and screamin' outside?
No.
Yeah, a guy got beat up
pretty bad last night out there.
- You don't know anything about this?
- Nope.
I could take ya downtown.
Yeah, you could...
but it'd be a waste of your time.
There was a boy there.
He could I.D. The assailant.
He gave a description.
It fits you really, really close.
That's a nasty scratch
on your neck.
I got a passionate girlfriend.
What's with the boxes?
I'm movin' in with her.
Congrats. Lucky you.
I count my blessings.
Yeah, I bet you do.
Well, all right.
I'll be seein' you around, Walter.
Hey.
You think you're gonna
catch this guy?
Yeah. Yeah.
We're gonna catch him.
But the victim can't talk.
Among all his other injuries,
he's got a broken jaw.
However, we did run
a check on the victim...
and as it turns out
he's wanted in Virginia.
Raped a boy down there.
You stay out of trouble, Walter.
I'm watchin' you.
I saw my sister.
It was hard.
She's still really hurt and angry.
I understand that. I do.
It's gonna take time, Walter.
Time?
How do you feel about that?
I feel...
okay.