

Trick Or Treat

by

Alexander Lee-Rekers

SLOAN and FINLEY sit together on the porch at dusk. They share one beer and one cigarette, which they pass between themselves without acknowledgement.

FINLEY

I like this.

SLOAN

It's nice.

Pause.

FINLEY

It's a nice time of year, you know? Do you like it?

SLOAN

I just said I did. Relax.

FINLEY

Are you doing anything for Halloween this year? I know we're older than that, but- Sometimes it's fun, like, a party or a movie, or-

SLOAN

I don't do Halloween.

FINLEY

No?

SLOAN

Nope.

FINLEY

Why not?

SLOAN finishes the cigarette, stubs it out on the step beneath them.

SLOAN

We just don't do it in my family.

FINLEY

That's interesting. Why not? Is it a religious thing? Beliefs, or something?

SLOAN

You know what this is, right now? This is one of those moments when you're going to regret pushing for the story the minute you hear it. Don't do that to yourself.

FINLEY

Jesus, okay, sorry! I'll drop it.

SLOAN

Thanks.

Silence.

Now I feel bad for not telling you.

FINLEY

Please don't.

SLOAN

It's actually a pretty good story.

FINLEY

I don't think I *want* to know, now. If it's a personal thing, you don't have to-

SLOAN

It's because of my grandpa. When I was little, we had this big family business—we still have it, just not like it used to be—and my grandpa used to organise all this fun stuff at the office to keep it, y'know, feeling like a family, not a company?

FINLEY

That's pretty cool.

SLOAN

I hate that kind of shit. (*Pause.*) So, anyway, one Halloween, grandpa said everybody had to wear a costume to work that Friday, and be on the lookout for tricks and treats. He'd planned it all out: hidden candy, dressed up like Dracula. So everybody's in costume at the staff meeting, they're listening to Dracula talk about sales or whatever. And the doors of this big boardroom open up ... and it's the cops. "Stay where you are! Nobody move! Hector Curran: you're under arrest!" And everybody freezes. And grandpa, he's standing at the end of this long table, he's gone white—whiter than the vampire face-paint he's wearing. And without a second thought he turned on the spot and threw himself out the window. Fell six stories.

FINLEY

Fuck.

SLOAN finishes the beer.

SLOAN

They were strippers. The cops. Hired by the staff as a “trick” of their own. Guess he didn't notice the boom-box they were carrying. When the cops arrived—the real cops—turned out grandpa had some stuff he'd been hiding. They never told me what. And yeah. Halloween: not so big a thing in my family after that. Took the shine off, y'know?

A long, awkward pause.

FINLEY

Once when I was ten I pushed my brother off a bridge during a school trip and he almost drowned.

SLOAN

Where the fuck did that come from?

FINLEY

I felt like I had to share something traumatic. It's kinda weak compared to your grandpa. Shit. Sorry.

SLOAN

It's fine. We don't really talk about it. I don't really remember him.

Sloan passes the cigarette to Finley, who takes it.

FINLEY

It's been strange getting to know you.

SLOAN

That's how you know the knowing's worthwhile. 'nother beer?

SLOAN walks inside the house. FINLEY holds the cigarette in their absence, staring at the ember.