

TINY COFFIN EXCERPT

*Characters:*

*JOHN: 30s. A father. His child Elijah (11) died a year ago.*

*THERAPIST: 50s. Female.*

*John sits on a comfy yellow couch. Therapist sits in a stiff brown chair with her back to him.*

*A clock quietly ticks*

JOHN

Are we just gonna sit here, while I talk and you listen, until the end of time? Because that... well that sounds like it would really suck for you. Because I don't want to. I don't want to not be angry. I don't. I feel like if I'm no longer angry, I'll lose all that's left. Because that's all that's left.

I sit here, during our often silences, and I go... do you what to know where I go? I go to the last July. I sit here and I close my eyes and it's July. Without thinking about it, I'm just there again. I don't want to be there... but I don't not want to be there.

Everything is a pale yellow green, like someone forgot to water the sky and it's hot. It's fucking hot... almost unbearably hot. The type of hot that makes your skin tighten and your eyes water a bit. and it's July 4th and I'm sitting in the bleachers and we're watching the game. And it is soooooo hot. Julie is fanning herself turning redder by the minute and no matter what I do... no matter how many times I wipe my forehead, the sweat keeps coming. I feel like I'm drowning in it. And drowning in everyone else's sweat. The air is heavy with it. The sweat. But it's fucking July so what were we expecting? The kids don't care. They are into the game. And they are tied and it's the last inning and there's ice cream for the winning team. Well, really there's ice cream for everyone... but it wouldn't be much of a game if everyone knew that. So the kids are working themselves up into a frenzy each time the ball looks like it's going to get hit and they are excited for that ice cream and the adults are excited for fucking sun to go down.

Eli turns to me, flashes that smile and zeros in on the pitcher. And it was something about the way he stood at the plate. Something about made me stand up... like I knew something awesome was about to happen. I just

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

had a feeling. You know? I mean... every dad thinks his kid is gonna hit that last home run but... I just had a feeling.

I slowly got off the bench and stepped into the dirt. A plume of dust surrounding my feet and I just slowly ... like I'm being pulled by some force... walk closer and closer.

Strike 1! Ball 1! And then like out of a terrible 80's movie it happened. And the crack was so loud. A nuclear bomb of a whack sent the ball flying. And Eli turns to look at us like "Did I really just do that?" and we all just shout "RUN!" And off he goes. The aluminum bad "tink" "tink" "tink" in the dirt behind him. He's a streak of red and dust and he's going so fast. He's going so fast. The ball is still up in the air and it doesn't feel like it's over going to come down. It floats up there ... held up by some cosmic power... floating slowly further and further away. We're all jumping up and down now oblivious to the heat and the sweat and the dirt and he's rounding second and I've lost track of the ball. He's rounding third and the fat out fielder has given up. He's in the final stretch and we're all cheering. The final hit of the final inning and it's a fucking home-run. The ball lost the tall grass past the line. I run to home plate and as he crosses he leaps into my arms and he is so lite... so lite. He's so small. It's kinda shocking. And I wrap my arms around him as tight as I can and he reaches up, throws his cap in the air. His thin blonde hair matted to his face. and looks down at me -- "I hit a homer daddy!" "Yeah, you did!" Yeah, he did. And we hug and spin and cheer and i put him on my shoulders as all the other kids gather around... cheering. My kid was a total bad ass and a complete fucking hero. And he was so happy. So happy.

And then I open my eyes and I'm here with you. And he's dead. So I'm fucking pissed and it's all I've got left. It's all that's left.

PLUS ONE

*Prisoner: An undefined human. It wears shorts cut off at the knees. Its knees are bloody -- this is the extent of its physical damage. It is thin. It is unclear how long it has been in this room. There is a black cotton bag over its head.*

*Smoking Man: 30. He is very clean and striking of military, but wears no uniform or identifying items. He is muscular or maybe a little fat.*

LIGHTS UP

*Prisoner is sitting in an upright fetal position, sleeping. It is dark except for one light over a 4x3 table in the center of the room. The door opens and the Smoking Man enters. He carries a yellow notepad. He closes the door.*

SMOKING MAN

Okay!

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)

Hi.

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)

Yes?

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)

yes

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)

ok

PRISONER

(whisper)

help me

SMOKING MAN

I'm sorry?

PRISONER

Help me.

SMOKING MAN

yes. help...yes. Help!

*Picks up the pen, places one finger on the small device, clicks the pen...*

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)  
Help. Ok! Okay...

PRISONER  
I'm sorry.

SMOKING MAN  
yes...

PRISONER  
Sorry.

*silence*

*beat*

*beat*

PRISONER (CONT'D)  
hello?

SMOKING MAN

PRISONER  
hello?

*silence*

*beat*

*beat*

*Smoking man takes a deep breath and holds it and then pushes the button on the small device. This immediately causes Prisoner some discomfort that gradually builds to excruciating pain. Prisoner tries to hum "Favorite Things" but struggles.*

*Prisoner struggles against his restraint*

*The pain grows more and more and Smoking man continues to hold is breath and begins to experience the same pain. They move in unison.*

*Prisoner begins to hum "Favorite Things" again and this time is joined by Smoking Man until finally it stops and Smoking Man exhales and Prisoner collapses.*

*Smoking Man writes something down.*

*Beat*

*Smoking Man begins to laugh that builds to uncontrollable giggling. He composes himself.*

SMOKING MAN  
Okay?

PRISONER  
I'm sorry. I am sorry.

SMOKING MAN  
Yes.

*Smoking man takes a deep breath and holds it and then pushes the button on the small device. This immediately causes Prisoner significant pain. The pain grows more and more and Smoking man continues to hold his breath and begins to experience the same pain. They move in unison. Until finally it's interrupted by the smoking man's exhale. He beats the table in frustration.*

*beat*

SMOKING MAN (CONT'D)  
ok

*He clicks his pen and places it perfectly back its spot. He takes a moment... pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his brow and puts it back. He gathers his things in the order in which he set them down and almost exits the room.*

PRISONER  
hello?

SMOKING MAN  
yes

PRISONER  
help me.

SMOKING MAN  
HELP ME! Okay? Help me! Yes? Hello???

PRISONER  
I'm sorry.

SMOKING MAN  
help. yes... yeah.