

A Spot in the Shadows

by Mia McCullough ©1999

Scene 7

It's early morning. The soft dull light that comes before dawn falls on the building. VINCENT stands out front smoking a cigarette. PEACE comes out of the building, shaking off sleep.

PEACE

What are you doing out here, Vinny?

VINCENT

I'm always out here this time of morning.

PEACE

Have you been up all night?

VINCENT

No. I like to wake up about four and stand out here. All the bums and the gangbangers have gone in for the night, and nobody else is up yet. It's quiet.

PEACE

You get the whole world to yourself.

VINCENT

Seems that way. At least I got a couple hours when nobody's telling what a fucking disappointment I am.... Sorry.

PEACE

Don't be sorry.

There is a long pause.

VINCENT

Thanks for showing me how to use the pottery wheel.

PEACE

Oh, sure.

VINCENT

I like the cold wet feeling of the clay. It's kinda... I don't know. It makes my hands feel different.

PEACE

I know what you mean. It's hard to put words to.

VINCENT

Yeah.... My father, he tried to teach me the business, workin' with stone, makin' gravestones, but I hated it. All that chiseling was too loud, and it made me think about death all the time. Not like what you do. What you do makes you think of possibilities, you know?

PEACE

Yeah.

VINCENT

It's really made me think about my hands. I know that's weird thing to say, but I hate my hands. I wish I could cut 'em off someday and just get rid of all the bad things I ever did with 'em. The trouble is, you can't cut off both your hands. You could cut off one, but then you'd have to get someone else to cut off the other one, and who would do that?.... Now that I said that, you think I'm a nut-job.

PEACE

No.

VINCENT

No, I know it sounds crazy. You can't know what it's like unless you done something.... unless you done something so bad that your hands don't feel like a part of you anymore. That's why I like the pottery stuff. There's something about having my hands in the clay that don't make me feel like that anymore.... Are you all right?

PEACE

Yes.

VINCENT

I wasn't trying to upset you.

PEACE wipes her eyes.

PEACE

You didn't....I could give you lessons if you want. In exchange for helping me distribute the stuff, helping me down at the shop.

VINCENT

Yeah, okay.

PEACE

I didn't know if I was going to find a place to work over here. I don't know anybody. I was lucky they had room for me over at the shop. It's nice that they let me do my own thing.

VINCENT

Lived around the corner from that place my whole life. Never even knew it was there. Never knew people was making things in there. Sculpting and painting. Never knew. I figured art was only in museums. I didn't know it was something you could touch, or make, or be a part of.

Another pause.

PEACE

You're mother doesn't like me much.

VINCENT

(amused)

Yeah, well, join the club. She don't like me much either.

PEACE

Do you think it bothers her that we're friends, you and me?

VINCENT

Nah, I don't know. Sometimes I think my mother makes up reasons not to like people. You... you come from a totally different universe than the rest of us, you know?

PEACE

How so?

VINCENT

Well, you know. You more educated than all a us put together. Except for maybe Mr. Solomon. Ma's used to people like you lookin' down on 'er. She just can't figure you out, is all. You got a little air a mystery about you.... And you'd do yourself a favor not to ask questions about my father. That's a topic of conversation that ain't gonna get you on her good side.

PEACE

A sensitive area.

VINCENT

Yeah.

PEACE

For you too?

VINCENT

I don't know. I'm glad he's dead. I don't think about it much beyond that.

PEACE

I didn't mean to pry.

VINCENT

I'll tell ya when you're pryin'So what're you doing up at this hour, anyway?

PEACE

I couldn't sleep.

VINCENT

Too hot?

PEACE

Too many nightmares.

VINCENT

Bad dreams?

PEACE

Yeah.

VINCENT

I don't remember my dreams.

PEACE

That would be nice.

VINCENT

What do you dream about?... Never mind. It ain't none of my business.

PEACE

You never remember any of your dreams?

VINCENT

A couple now and then. Whaddo I got to dream about? All I know is this place. Maybe I have dreams but they're so much like bein' awake that I can't tell 'em apart.

PEACE

I can never run in my dreams. I don't know why that is.

VINCENT

Run?

PEACE

Yeah.

VINCENT

Whaddo you gotta run for?

PEACE

Sometimes I have dreams where I'm being chased. And I try to run away, but I keep stumbling forward. My legs keep buckling under me.

VINCENT

You have one of those chasing dreams tonight?

PEACE nods.

PEACE

I've been having it a lot lately.

VINCENT

What's chasing you?

PEACE

A hawk, I think. Some sort of huge bird. With talons and a big beak. And I'm running through a forest trying to find a spot in the shadows where it can't see me. But the shadows keep moving and my legs keep stumbling under me. The bird gets closer and closer and then I wake up.

VINCENT

Hmm. I've never seen a hawk. Wouldn't know how to dream about one.

There is another pause. PEACE is lost in her own thought.

PEACE

I should try to get some more sleep.

VINCENT

Yeah. I'm gonna turn in again, too. Gotta get to sleep before Ma wakes up.

PEACE starts up the steps.

VINCENT

You know, come to think of it, I mighta had a dream earlier this mornin'. I got up and went to the kitchen for some milk and I thought I saw a light out in the back. And when I looked out the window, you was crouched down on the ground burning some papers. And I thought, "Why would she be out there in the middle of the night burnin' papers?" Didn't make no sense, so I figured I must be dreamin'. And then I thought maybe you looked up and saw me watchin' you. And I didn't want you to worry. I wanted you to know that it was all just a dream and there was nothing to say.

PEACE watches him for a moment, though
VINCENT does not turn around to meet her gaze.
PEACE goes inside. LIGHTS FADE.