

# GRANDMA CALLBACK

→ START

99.

BURRIS (cont.)

Mrs. Gatewood?!  
Is that you??

EMMA

What's left of me, anyway

BURRIS

Wait a minute.  
You're the one?  
The one folks have been talking about?  
The crazy grandmother thru-hiking the A.T.?  
I'll be doggone!  
I don't believe it!  
Here you are...  
Have you summited Katahdin yet?

EMMA

I start tomorrow.

BURRIS

Then you need a good rest.  
You'll stay in my cabin tonight.  
I'll fix you a good supper.  
Got me some fresh corn in...  
How about a steak and some corn on the cob?

EMMA

Roasted tender?  
Dripping with butter and salt?

BURRIS

Is there any other way...?

*(And with that, the memory EMMA has tried to suppress explodes to the surface. EMMA gasps and suddenly has trouble breathing.)*

EMMA

*(Gasping, holding her heart.)*  
Oh my Lord...

BURRIS

Mrs. Gatewood?  
You all right?

Oh my Lord...  
EMMA

Mrs. Gatewood  
what happened?  
What's the matter?  
BURRIS

I think I know why...  
Oh my Lord!  
I think I know why!  
EMMA

Why what?  
BURRIS

I told everybody it was a lark!  
I told everybody...  
Then you said that about the corn.  
Corn on the cob  
roasted tender  
dripping with butter and salt...  
EMMA

We don't have to eat it.  
I can open a can of beans instead.  
BURRIS

*(A bit desperate)*  
Burriss  
I need your help.  
EMMA

Yes, ma'am.  
BURRIS

These folks...  
EMMA

*(Indicating the audience)*  
They've been on this trip with me  
the whole way.  
They know everything there is to know

EMMA (cont.)

Except,  
 except this one part I left out.  
 The part I buried deep  
 tried to forget.  
 I need you to help me tell it.  
 Will you do it, Burris?  
 Will you help me?

BURRIS

Just tell me what do.

EMMA

There's an ugliness to it...

BURRIS

Just tell me what to do.

EMMA

All right then...  
 Hold tight.

*(She turns to the audience.)*

Sunday.  
 Early September.  
 1939.  
 P.C. come in the house  
 looking for a fight...

*(She looks at BURRIS. He nods his understanding and becomes P.C. She turns to face him.)*

We argued.  
 He got going with his fists...

*(During the following, P.C. throws stylized punches and EMMA reacts in an equally stylized way while continuing to narrate the action.)*

Started with my arms...

*Hights  
 + MSE*

P.C.

*(Punching)*  
Stupid bitch...

EMMA

*(To audience)*  
Then my shoulders...

P.C.

*(Punching)*  
Lying whore...

EMMA

*(To audience)*  
Then my stomach...

P.C.

*(Punching)*  
Think you're smarter'n me...

EMMA

*(To audience)*  
Felt a rib crack.  
Fell to the floor.

*(She does so. She holds up a hand to P.C. to halt the action.)*

Something you should know.  
Every other time P.C. beat me...  
forced himself on me...  
he made sure to hurt me where no one could see the bruises

This time...  
something snapped...  
this time...  
he didn't care about that...

*(She lowers her hand.)*

P.C.

By God, I'll show you who's boss...

EMMA

*(To audience)*

He straddled me...

*(He does so.)*

Started in on my head...

*(She raises her arms, trying to protect herself.)*P.C. –  
no!

P.C.

*(Punching)*

You ugly, fat...

EMMA

*(To audience)*

My left ear went numb...

P.C.

*(Punching)*

lazy, stupid...

EMMA

*(To audience)*

Both eyes were blackened...

P.C.

*(Punching)*

Bitch!

EMMA

*(To audience)*

My nose broke...

Then he reared back...

*(P.C. does so, bringing both hands together in one big fist.)*screaming Hate  
spitting Hate...

P.C.

You are a big, fat *nothing*!  
 You hear me?!  
 A. Big. Fat. Nothing!

EMMA

*(To audience)*  
 He hit me full on in the mouth

*((He slams his fists into her mouth. During the following, P.C. stands up, becomes BURRIS.))*

Jagged bits of white...  
 Blood everywhere...  
 My teeth were gone...  
 He broke my teeth...

My son Nelson come in.

NELSON

Mama!

EMMA

*(To audience)*

Nelson grabbed his daddy round the waist  
 lifted him off me...

*(NELSON does so, lifting the now unseen P.C.)*

And he said...

NELSON

Run, Mama!

EMMA

*(To audience)*  
 And I did.

*(She stands up.)*

I ran to the woods where P.C. would never find me.

When Nelson let go of his daddy...

*(NELSON does so. EMMA becomes P.C. for the next moment, while still narrating as herself.)*

EMMA (cont.)

*(To audience)*

P.C. picked up a fire poker  
aimed it at Nelson's head.

*(P.C. picks up the walking stick and threatens NELSON with it.)*

NELSON

Make your first swing a good one, Daddy.  
You're only gonna get one.

EMMA

*(To audience)*

P.C. did not swing.

*(P.C. lowers his arm. EMMA becomes herself.)*

*Flashy  
figw's*  
'Stead he run out.  
Come back a few hours later with the sheriff in tow.  
Had me arrested.

*(BURRIS becomes the SHERIFF, placing EMMA's arms behind her back.)*

SHERIFF

You better come along with me, Mrs. Gatewood.

*(He leads EMMA to a crate to sit as she continues.)*

EMMA

*(To audience)*

Sheriff locked me up in a jail all the way in Milton, West Virginia  
where nobody knew us.  
Next day  
the Mayor come to see me

*(BURRIS becomes the MAYOR.)*

MAYOR

Mrs. Gatewood?  
Emma Gatewood?

EMMA  
 Yes, sir.

MAYOR  
 Who beat you like that?

EMMA  
 My husband.

MAYOR  
 He the one had you arrested?

EMMA  
 Yes sir.

MAYOR  
 Well.  
 We'll see about that.

EMMA  
*(To audience)*  
 And that Mayor  
 that good man  
 he got me out of jail.  
 He gave me a place to stay and a job  
 'til I could get back on my feet.

I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.

*(She stares off, remembering.)*

BURRIS  
 Mrs. Gatewood...

EMMA  
 Burris...  
 That first night out of jail  
 the Mayor's wife cooked me supper.  
 She bought some fresh corn that day  
 corn on the cob  
 roasted tender

BURRIS  
 Dripping with butter and salt...

EMMA

I couldn't eat it.  
My teeth were gone...

He took away my strength.  
My ability to eat Life.  
He took away the one good thing.

He made me a nothing.

BURRIS

That's not true.

EMMA

All these years  
I've pushed it away.  
Pretended...  
But his voice was always there  
reminding me...

And then I read about the A.T.  
And I thought...

BURRIS

"Let me not then die ingloriously and without a struggle,  
but let me first do some great thing that shall be told among men hereafter."

*(She stares at him, a bit stunned.)*

I like the Greeks, too.

EMMA

I wanted to prove him wrong.

BURRIS

And you did.

EMMA

Not quite. Not yet.

*(She points at the summit of Katahdin.)*

Tomorrow.

BURRIS

Tell me, Mrs. Gatewood –  
whatever happened to him?  
Your husband?

EMMA

I divorced his ass.

*(They laugh.)*

Now I tell folks he's dead  
just to save time...

Also got me a new set of teeth  
which the judge made him pay for.  
So I believe I will have some of that corn  
if you don't mind.

BURRIS

Yes, ma'am.

*(He starts off.)*

EMMA

Burris?  
Thank you.

BURRIS

Yes, ma'am.

*(He exits.)*

EMMA

*(To audience)*

I begin the last leg of my journey  
climbing above the timberline  
trading shade and birdsong  
for wide open sky...  
And with every painful step  
I remember who I am  
what I come through  
and what I accomplished.

*(EMMA stands and steps up on a crate.)*

EMMA

*(To audience)*

Now here I stand.  
 Atop a mountain.  
 A mountain in Maine.  
 A mountain called Katahdin.

*(Shouting to the mountains, to the world, to P.C.)*

AND. I. AIN'T. NOTHING!!

END

*(Her voice echoes off the hills. Beat. HUGH enters behind her.)*

HUGH

Well, Emma  
 you did it.  
 You picked up your feet.

EMMA

*(Without turning)*

Hey, Daddy.

HUGH

Expect you'll be wanting me to tell you how special you are.  
 How proud I am.

EMMA

No sir.  
 No need.  
 I said I would do it  
 and I have done it.  
 That's enough.

*(Pointing to the view)*

Look at it, Daddy.  
 Just look at it.

HUGH

*(Looking at her. She's oblivious.)*  
 I'm looking.