

J: So, how long have you lived in Montana?

E: Probably about three months.

J: Have you been in Billings?

E: No, I was in Roundup before I came here.

J: What were you guys [she has siblings] doing in Roundup?

E: My grandparents live there.

J: Did you guys stay with them?

E: Yeah.

J: How was that?

E: Not fun.

J: Why?

E: They're old... and strict... And not fun.

J: Did you guys live in a house or a trailer?

E: Yeah, in a house. It was a really big house. We could hear my grandma's voice echoing through the whole thing. It had big ceilings.

J: What were they strict about?

E: Everything. Like, if we left our clothes lying around we got them taken away for a week, next time two weeks.

J: What was taken away?

E: Our clothes.

J: Your clothes were taken away?

E: Yeah. And if we didn't put away our toys they'd take them for months, and for eating, she'd have dessert every night, and if you didn't eat your food you couldn't have dessert. And the kids, they were homesick because my mom was away, and they refused to eat, and she made them even more upset by not giving them dessert.

J: Where was your mom?

E: Mississippi, with my dad.

J: So you were just staying with your grandparents.

E: Yeah, it was only supposed to be just for the summer, we left from Mississippi, and from then my parents stayed there. Me and my brother John flew out to Arizona and I stayed there for like, a month, and then my brother was supposed to stay with my aunt because he was bad, and my parents just wanted to see if he'd be happy there. Didn't work out, and he's now back in Mississippi with our grandma that buys him everything he wants, and after I was in Arizona I could either stay there or come up here, and they [siblings] were all crying cause they wanted me up here, so I came up here. And then we complained to our mom about how much we didn't like it, and she said we wouldn't be able to get to Louisiana very soon, and she flew out here and my grandparents don't like my dad. So the only way they would let her come out here is if she told them she was going to divorce my dad. They didn't, and they got in this big fight, and now we're here. They kicked us out.

J: So your dad and mom flew out here-

E: No, my mom flew out here by herself and my dad flew out to Louisiana.

J: So your dad's been in Louisiana all this time?

E: Trying to make money, yeah.

J: Where does your mom work?

E: She doesn't. Cause Samantha has attachment issues because she-

J: Hold on, how many siblings do you have?

E: Four. My older brother is almost 15 in Mississippi, I'm 12, Molly's 9, Izzy's 5, and Samantha is 4. She has attachment issues cause when they put her in the car to go up here for the summer, she said, "See you later." So Sam was under the impression that she would be there, and she wasn't. So now that Mom's here, she won't let her leave the room without her going with her. That's why we think Sam won't be able to go to school. Except she really, really wants to come in here [study room] and play games.

J: So maybe if she finds out you play games here, and at school, she might want to-

E: That's why I wish they'd let her come in here!

J: Is she too young?

E: She's four...

J: Maybe if we talk to Sue, she can come in here.

E: Yeah, I should ask Sue. I don't want her to be home schooled cause that would give her less opportunities to make friends.

J: Would your mom be able to do that? Is your dad making enough money that she can stay at home?

E: Well, possibly. She wants- just in case things don't work out- to be reliable on her own money, so she doesn't have to rely on him. So she wants to open a bakery. She's really good at cooking. She can open a pantry, and there'll be nothing, but she can still make something really, really good. My older brother is the same way, but I have to follow a recipe or it tastes like poo.

J: Are you guys able to cook here?

E: No. Unless you work in the kitchen. I really want my mom to work in the kitchen.

J: She hasn't? How long have you guys been in the shelter?

E: Um, we've been here since... Middle of ----- . And now we're leaving in two weeks!

J: So just after school.

E: Yup, I was at my old school for a few weeks, and then I had to move. I don't have any friends here and I don't plan on making any cause I knew I'd have to move soon. So I didn't want to make it hard on myself and have problems leaving. So school is BORING!

J: So what do you do for friends?

E: I don't. Except for Ally, here.

J: Do you guys hang out?

E: Yeah, on the bus, pass by like we're not allowed in each other's rooms. Cause there's been incidents... with adults... touching the kids.

J: Here?

E: Yeah. A couple times. And they don't allow other people in rooms, in case it's- you know.

J: Do you know anyone it's happened to?

E: Yeah. They moved by now. It was a baby last time, and they couldn't talk, so the person didn't get in trouble. They have cameras, but still, it was kinda covered by a block thing. So the person is still wandering around someone cause they didn't get in trouble cause the little baby couldn't talk and say what happened.

J: Do you feel safe here?

E: NO! Because of that reason. We've been advised- and it's happened a few times- that people befriend you- like my mom is lonely, so she tried to make a few friends- they befriended her to take what she had for stuff. Yeah. And like, the laundry room. We thought it was safe here so in the laundry room we left our stuff on top of the dryer, and every time she went in there she noticed the pile was getting smaller... And smaller. So we isolate ourselves in our room, eating,

and we basically stay here and in the nursery. With all the toys. We bought this movie- our dad sends us money- we bought the Lorax. We are addicted to this movie!

J: It's a good movie!

E: It's a great movie. You should do a play there, of the Lorax. And someone could play the Lorax and put on this giant mustache and run around the trees. I've memorized it- I've probably seen it 12 times in the past week. Dr. Seuss is a good one for plays.

J: Alright, let's focus again.

E: Right! Focus!

J: So have you ever lived in a shelter before?

E: No.

J: So before this you all lived together?

E: We lived with my uncle and we all- except for my brother- he shared a room with my cousin Cassandra cause she's 21 now, and they were very fond of each other, I don't know, they were really good friends. The six of us- there were two twin beds and we'd put them together and we'd all sleep in the living on the floor on the beds.

J: So money was always tight?

E: Yeah. Mom got laid off from work so we got evicted, and we had to live with him [the uncle]. We were considered homeless then, and they were making car payments and since my mom got laid off she couldn't afford the car payments, so we had to borrow my uncle's truck to get to school. And we were staying at his house for- to live- but he's not blood family, he's by marriage. He had this girlfriend and a drunk friend that lived there, and they would both fight in the back room. Eventually he got kicked out and we got the back room, so we didn't have to live in the living any more. It was good. Oh yeah, his girlfriend, her kids, we got kicked out of the backroom for her kids, cause she was moving in. But she- did drugs. My parents didn't like us being around that, so that's why we came out here. I came out to Arizona and they went out there. Mom didn't want us around the fighting, or use of... Yeah.

J: Do you know what she used?

E: Weed. So for Christmas her kids bought her this pot thing.

J: How old were her kids?

E: Four and eight. Yeah, and she named them on purpose so their initials would be THC.

J: Wow. That's strange.

E: It's special.

J: It is special. So how many of you guys lived in that house?

E: Well we lived there for about a year

J: How many people were there?

E: My uncle, his daughter, us is seven, um, Jamie, and sometimes his girlfriend, my uncles girlfriend and her kids. So fourteen in a three bedroom house, one bathroom, teeny tiny kitchen, and a living room and a garage. Oh, and they had rabbits and two dogs. Actually three dogs, cause we had two but we gave them away. Well, one ran away and we gave away the other. Narni, my cousin's dog, this Lhasa Apso, was really mean. Really mean. It bit my finger, and it is like this rabid dog. I told it to go to bed, because it was nipping at Samantha's feet, so I told it to go to bed, and it jumped up and bit my finger. I had to wrap it up real fast and wait for my mom to get home and made an appointment at the doctor. And the next day I went there and it was infected. I refused to get stitches, so I kept it wrapped up for a month, and when I unwrapped it, it was fine.

J: Do you have a scar?

E: No. Well, yeah, just a little one.

J: So before you lived in there, where did you live?

E: We lived in the city in walking distance of my school, and before that we lived in a different house when I went to a different school, and then we lived with my grandma for three years in her haunted house. And it was scary. Scary!

J: Clearly!

E: Yeah, and you'd see shadows and stuff, cause my grandpa- we knew it was him- cause you could hear him talk. It was really weird. And I knew it was my grandpa but it was really weird, cause he's dead. And you'd see him in his favorite room, watching you. I'm just like, *duuuuude*, and when a car would drive by you'd see his shape every time. Yeeeeeah. And there were evil ones too. I don't know if she trapped any one there. That's what my dad said, that's she's evil.

J: So was that where you first started living when you were little?

E: Yeah, I'd been there before. We've lived all over.

J: Oh. So start at the beginning.

E: Okay. So I was born in Arizona. So was my older brother. And then my grandma convinced- no, after that we went to Mississippi. Then we went to Arizona, then we went to Colorado, then back to Mississippi, back to Arizona, to Florida, back to Mississippi, to Louisiana, back to Mississippi, and now we're here.

J: Why do you guys move so much?

E: We want to see what atmosphere we like best. We like the warm weather, so that's where we're all happy. My dad said he's never going north of Louisiana ever, ever. Even for a funeral of a loved one. Nope. Have a funeral in Louisiana if you want him to attend. Never moving again.

J: Do you guys have an apartment you're going to move into?

E: We're actually going to live in a camper, for 125 a week.

J: Oooh, nice.

E: It is! Cause he makes 5,000 a week, and we're going to have a lot of saving money. The house we were going to move into- the day before when he was getting the money is the day they sold the house to someone else. So he was 24 hours too late. It was right next to his best friend. 4 bedrooms with a pool, and huge kitchen for my mom, and a really, really big living room, and a den. So we were really upset, because before we lived in a three bedroom, really small everything with no pool, and it was the same price.

J: So you guys are going to save money and wait.

E: Yeah, cause we wanna live in this really nice locked in place, cause there's been killers running around the city. And my dad is like, Oh no, so he wants us to live in a gated-in community where nobody can get in. I think he'll feel safer there.

J: That'll be nice after moving around so much.

E: Yeah. Cause I lived there awhile before, so I know a lot of people there. I hadn't seen those people since the 2nd grade, and it'll be really cool cause I remember their baby faces and I see their pictures and they're old but they still have their baby faces. It's so cute.

J: It takes a long time to grow out of your baby face!

E: Yeah, like this girl I knew, she had this really cute red hair, freckle face, buck teeth, and she still looks like that but taller, and more girl-like. I thought she'd be different, but she's not, and it's awesome.

J: So you're excited to get to Louisiana.

E: Yeah.

J: So what's your least favorite thing about living in the shelter? Is there anything that's really hard?

E: Just like... Probably being in the city. I like having a backyard to run around in. I don't like having a limit on- I like having food around. We can't have food in our room. We can't go to the store to buy food, because we'd have to put it in the fridge here and that's only allowed for a week. So we aren't going to "nom nom" all that food in a week, so we haven't been able to get anything. The food here isn't too great. Depends on who the cook is for the chore. We got a new cook and she's pretty good- I think it's Linda. Yeah. So it's probably lack of food- not lack of food, but it's not good. And a place to run around. And the quiet time is 10 o'clock, but I'm okay with that. And we live on the 3rd floor, so we have to tip toe everywhere cause the floor is really squeaky and we have a LOT of complaining neighbors.

J: And you guys all live in one room, right?

E: Yeah. We actually have an extra bed. There's six beds and five of us. In our old room, down here, across the hall, they're actually remodeling it, but we're not going to be here when it's done. Cause my mom has always kept our room really clean, and they told her- they have tile on the floor, and baby blue walls, and they told us we could move in there. But a week after we leave it will be ready.

J: Are you guys all able to live in one room? Do you get along?

E: No. Little tiny bathroom, without a shower. But across the hallway is a big bathroom with a tub and a shower. So, like, in our other room we only had a shower and the little kids hate taking showers, they whine the entire time, cause it was so small the shower curtain stuck to them and they got upset. So now we have a bathtub, and it's awesome! But Molly likes to pick on everybody, including me. And she's just a turd. Like, when we're all confined in a room and then Izzy likes to be a turd, and Samantha is always yelling- I think she enjoys yelling. As weird as it sounds, she enjoys it, *she enjoys it!*

J: Some people just like to yell.

E: Like, she'll be singing in the bathroom. She came up with a new song, "Sometimes we sing, sometimes we sing," and she does it over and over. And she yells the whole time!

J: And what does your mom do?

E: She actually video taped it once, recorded it on her phone. She tried sending it to my dad, but it didn't work and she just deleted it. But she just laughed. We all laughed, and she doesn't know. She thinks she's being quiet and no one can hear her through the door, but there's a big old crack under the door. One time she was in the car, singing, and we all thought she was cute, so she doesn't sing in front of us anymore. So she thinks we can't hear her through the big gap in the door, and it is so cute hearing the songs she comes up with.

J: Do you know any others?

E: Sometimes she goes, um, you know the You Say Goodbye, I Say Hello song?

J: By the Beatles? Yeah.

E: She does new ones to that, but with new things like trains and sharks and stuff. She'll be like, "You say goodbye, I say hello train." Or toss shark in there somewhere.

J: That's hilarious!

E: Yeah!

J: So she's like your evening entertainment!

E: Yeah. She sang Beat It, once, and said Beat It, Beat It, Beat It for like an hour once. So she just sat in the shower singing that over and over. I think she just stands in the bathroom, "beat it,

beat it!” And one time there’s this new song called, oh god, it’s by Neon Trees, and it’s called Everybody Talks. And she sings it, and she showed me once, she dances while doing it. And Izzy, one day she taught Sam how to, “Tssss.” [Move where you make a hissing sound of steam when you touch your buttocks.]

J: OH GOD.

E: Yeah, and she does it, and it’s so cute!

J: Your sister does sound really cute. So when you lived in the big house and all your previous houses, were you ever scared?

E: Yeah. Like, in the house, me and my sister shared a room. Yeah, in our house in Louisiana, John and I shared a room, Izzy and Molly shared a room, and Samantha stayed with our parents. And we came out to Mississippi, Sam and Izzy shared a room, the corner room was my big brother’s, and Molly and I shared a room. Then another time, John had a room, and the three of us were in another room, my parents in a room. I don’t know how, but we’re all going to be in this big thing in the camper. And my brother, I don’t know if he’s coming back, he’s almost an adult, but then it’d be the six of us. So Sam gets her own room, I get my own room, my parents, and Molly and Izzy in one. Four rooms! I’ve never, ever, ever had my own room. My mom, in all of her years, she said she’s never had her own room. Cause she’s been with my dad, and she had four siblings, but it’s the opposite. She had four brothers and was the youngest as a girl, and here we have four girls and a boy. It’s cool. Except my aunts are like my grandma, and they’re all crazy.

J: How so?

E: They just like to run their mouths. Like, they’ll talk to themselves a little. It’s interesting.

J: What do they talk about?

E: Everything, like they all have kids, sometimes they’ll talk about their kids and go off and laugh to themselves, “Haha, that was so cute!” And then, like, they talk about their bills and stuff, and their dreams and hopes, like, “I want this car!”

J: So, when you lived in that house with 14 people, did anyone ever like, push anyone? Did anyone ever get hurt?

E: Oh yeah. Like, my sister and John, they didn’t get along with my dad, so that’s why he is where he is. He’d call him names, and go by and elbow everybody else. He’d trip us, yell at everybody, and my uncle thought it was funny to pinch our underarms so we’d jump five feet in the air. And this cat, I swear, he likes to mess with your heels if you wear bare feet. So I had to wear socks everywhere, and I hate socks, but I had to wear them so he wouldn’t nip at them. Once he took off a chunk right at my heel. And Jamie, since he was drunk all the time- he had, like, a serious problem- he would wobble around and run into people in this really tight hallway.

J: But he never hit any of you guys? Did he ever get angry, or did he just get drunk and wobble around?

E: He got kind of like, a short attention span and my cousin, she’s obese big-time. She’s like these chairs times five, and the halls are really tight, so you can’t get by when she is. So if she’s coming down the hall you have to turn around, go back, and wait for her to go by. She’ll yell at you, and then you go where you’re going. She has this dream of being a model, a really tiny model, and she has all these outfits picked out like these little skirts and little tops. She has really good taste, but she can’t wear them.

J: How old is she?

E: She’s 21 and she really likes high heels, but she won’t wear them with her sweats and her tshirts. Yeah. I hope the best for her.

J: Yeah, that's all you can do. It's her own personal struggle.

E: But she's never had a job in her whole life, she still lives with her dad, and she gets everything she wants. She recently got the iPod 5, and so did my brother, John, cause my grandma gets him everything he wants.

J: So what do you think of the term, "homeless?"

E: I think, like, picture-type thing of some scruffy old dude with a hunch, a big, long beard, holes in his pants and shirt, and bad shoes, possibly even no shoes, and like, bald, and gross looking.

J: Yeah, so you don't consider yourself homeless-

E: No. I consider myself waiting. And I don't really tell people I live in a homeless shelter, cause then they think, "Oh my god, she's like, infected."

J: Has anyone ever treated you that way before?

E: Yeah.

J: When?

E: Like, here. Like, with special needs kids. I, like, smile at them, and make them feel better about themselves. Yesterday, I was in a lunch line and smiled at this kid who was sitting by himself, and I sat with him, but first I was still standing in line. The girl behind me was like, "It's not nice to stare." I was like, Okay. These two girls were still behind me, and these two special ed girls across the way, and they said, "Oh my god, it's the two girls that always try to sit at our table. Looking at them makes me want to throw up."

J: Do they know you live at the shelter?

E: No. It wasn't even to me, it was just talking to themselves behind me, and I thought, "grow up!" It's not cool.

J: Do you get along with all the kids at the shelter?

E: Yeah, except for my siblings.

J: Yup, that's how it goes. I pushed my brother into a marble table once.

E: I know, I pushed my brother into a glass table, and he pretended he was knocked out for an hour. My parents weren't home, and I freaked out. There wasn't a phone, or I would have called 911. I took a glass of water and splashed it on him. He might have been actually knocked out, I don't know.

J: He didn't react?

E: No, but he said he was faking it later.

J: But he was okay when he got up?

E: Yeah. He had a bump on his head. I thought he'd severely hurt me when he woke up, but it was scary. Like, when we were little we had these play knives, and John is horrified of knives. So I would chase him around the kitchen with the little plastic knives- they dye them silver so they look real- and he had this toy that I wanted, so when he was in the corner I said, "You give me that!" And he gave me the toy and I dropped the knives, and he picked them up and said, "Ha-ha!" But I wasn't afraid. He's awesome. We get along really well now, but I haven't talked to him in a month. He has his own phone, and an iPod. He actually has two iPods cause he has an iPhone 4 and 5, and an iPod.

J: That's a lot. How do you feel about that?

E: It's not cool.

J: Your brother gets spoiled and the rest of you don't.

E: Yeah, we're here. We told him, cause we want him to come back, cause we miss him, it's not the same, really, and he's really funny. It's not as bouncy without him. We told him we live in an apartment building, they serve food here, uh, we're getting assistance, that's why we can live

here. And he said, “Yeah, that’s good for you guys. How’s mom?” “Yeah, we got out of ma and pop-ops place,” and then I told him all about this place and he thought it was an apartment.

J: It’s kind of what it’s like, though. Like a small apartment building.

E: Yeah, and they spray for bugs here. Unless you live in the Lewis and Clark Motel. They’re infested.

J: Have you been there?

E: No, but Ally has, and it’s infested with bed bugs and lice.

J: Did Ally get bed bugs?

E: Her sister did.

J: You’re lucky you didn’t have to live there.

E: Yeah. My mom had to deal with it in 1st grade. Never again.

J: Who got it?

E: Me. Never again. Actually, we all got it. Because in my family we always hang out together, so if one person is sick, everybody gets sick, even the dog. Once, all we had in the whole house was bananas and fruit, and we had this juice and barely any water cause we weren’t supposed to drink much. We had to give the dog this corn mush stuff, and it was horrible. Once I had lice, but Izzy hasn’t it yet cause she’s in kindergarten and you normally get it in 1st grade. When I got it, everybody got it. When John got it, everybody got it. Then Molly got it, and everybody got it, including my mom. Then my dad had to shave off his beard. He looks really puny without his beard. So that’s what it’s like here. We all eat in the same place.

J: So that’s a bad thing about living in the shelter? If someone gets sick, everyone gets sick?

E: Yeah.

J: Did you guys ever go hungry in your life?

E: Yeah. In my uncle’s house, what food we did have my cousin ate it, cause it was her house. And all we had- well, I learned how to make- cause my parents, I gave them permission to go work, and they ended up making their own crabbing business, cause people sell crabs for like, 100 dollars for 12. My parents sold them for 20 a dozen, and they were making good business until the crabs migrated. No more crabs. And I was watching them for like, a day at a time, feeding them breakfast and lunch. John was in the house, he could have done it, but he and my cousin were nocturnal. They stayed up watching movies all night and slept all day. It was crazy. And I learned how to mac n’ cheese without butter or milk, and I learned how to make milk and flour biscuits. They weren’t good biscuits, but they were biscuits, and they probably tasted awesome cause we were hungry. Well, I was hungry, cause sometimes I would skip some days, cause I wanted them to have all three meals. Whether it was macaroni for a week, for breakfast lunch and dinner, and my parents sometimes would come home and wake us up in the middle of the night to eat. It was crazy. It was just to make money though, and we barely made a profit off it, cause the fish were really far away. So for the money it took for gas to get there, we barely made ten bucks off it. My dad liked it, though, so that’s why I think they kept doing it for the ten bucks.

J: So that meant some days you could only eat one meal?

E: Yeah, they never- Molly sometimes would have two meals, usually three, never one.

Sometimes I would have none or one, cause I didn’t want them feeling- I don’t know. In school I was really sad that it was only on weekends- it was during the summer, actually- and I think it was the last week of school I stayed home to watch the two little ones cause my parents had to go work. It was really awesome that Molly got school lunch, cause she’d sneak some pineapple home or oranges, and broccoli. It was really awesome cause I could make this soup stuff.



J: What did you make it out of?

E: It was cream of broccoli with cheese. It was good, I think. It might have been cause I was hungry, I don't know. It was good.

J: How did you make it? You had cheese, broccoli-

E: Cheese, broccoli, milk, flour, I don't know why but I sprinkled some yeast in there, and I put some like- Molly started helping me and she put in some garlic and parsley. Just adding things. Cause that's what my mom does- she just adds things and makes them good. So we were improvising, just putting anything we could find in there. It was good. I mean, they ate it.

J: And where were your parents?

E: Crabbing.

J: And you had to stay home to watch the little ones.

E: Yeah. The money that they had left for spending we got cheap stuff like bread, meatballs, cans of soup, but like, for awhile we all ate fast food and we all got fat. And it was bad, cause that's all we could afford. It's crazy the deals they come up with! They are so tempting it's not even cool. We were just waddling out. No, we didn't waddle, we gained like, a pound or something. I'm exaggerating big-time.

J: Was it a week of eating fast food?

E: No, probably a month. Like not boom-boom-boom fast food, it was like, during school, so I had lunch at school, and I loved the fruit and vegetables. Then I went home and ate like a fatty. Cause when my parents came home from crabbing, when there was school they took the two little ones, we didn't have to miss school. Cause you couldn't let our uncle watch them- once Sam went a mile into the backyard cause there was a forest behind my uncle's house. And Sam went really far.

J: Was your uncle or the drunk friend watching him?

E: The uncle. But it was really awkward cause my dad was friends with the drunk. Cut him off. So my dad was living in this house with this old drunk friend, and then my uncle's girlfriend, when my dad was a teenager he went out with my uncle's girlfriend, so there was this weird tension going on between my dad, my mom, and this girl, and my dad, and this dude, and then my mom and this dude, and John and my Dad, and my dad and my uncle. It was just stressful all the time. It wasn't even cool. You could see it. Staring each other down.

J: Did your mom and dad ever fight?

E: Cause of all the stress, lack of money, and stuff. Cause my dad smokes, and they would spend their money on cigarettes, because the cigarettes were a NEED! They were a need. They would scrounge up money, like hunt around the garage, and they actually came up with a good twenty dollars from quarters and pennies. They spent it on cigarettes for the month. My dad is trying to quit, and my mom did quit. And she gets in trouble when she does smoke.

J: You get her in trouble? What do you do?

E: I raise- I tell her all these facts about how smoking can kill you- 7 minutes each cigarette, and a whole pack is an hour. If you are dying on your bed, that's another hour, that's another hour, mom. In all your days you've probably had, like a week's worth, mom. I tell her that and give her these guilt trips about cigarettes and how we need the money. After of year of that she was like, Done. I was actually getting bored and was about to let her do it.

J: When was the last time she had a cigarette?

E: Well, she snuck a pack and she got in big, big, big trouble. Like, two weeks ago, and she said she doesn't even really enjoy them anymore. She said she sold most of them when people were in need. Quarter a cigarette. She made, like, five bucks.

J: That's nice. Too many people smoke.

E: Do you smoke?

J: Nope.

E: Do you plan to smoke?

J: Nope.

E: Do you have a tattoo?

J: Nope.

E: Good.

J: My ears are pierced, that's it.

E: I want my nose to be pierced, though. I think it's cute for people with freckles to have a pierced nose, cause it kind of blends in. Not a big bulky black one, but just a little one. There's a girl in my school who got her cheeks pierced, and when she takes them out she'll have dimples. But she'll have holes in her cheeks for years.

J: That's a lot of work for dimples. That's dedication. Alright, so do you remember your first day at the shelter?

E: Yeah, I walked in and it stanked. And it looked- like, when you first walk in it's not a good impression. It looks tiny from the outside and the inside. Does it stink in here to you, in the shelter?

J: No.

E: Okay. Cause I think I got used to it, or something, like someone had taken a woo-woo in here when I first got here. And then dinner, was way better than my mom-mom's cooking (grandma) cause she's half blind and she puts eggshells in her cooking and says, "Oh my god, it won't kill you, it's protein." And my grandma, she's embarrassing. We went to a movie and she's an exercise freak and she doesn't know when to stop. So in the middle of the movie she'll get up and start exercising and we sit in the front row cause of her seeing. So she'll get up and dance, at the end of the movie she'll dance. No, never again. She got banned from the Arizona movie theatre! She came to visit us and got banned.

J: That's so strange. The whole time she just moves around?

E: Yeah, in her seat she'll move her legs and wave her arms. And make noise. She can't stop. And if there's a part in the movie, she'll yell out. She wants to hit the bucket soon, she told my mom she was anxious to get up to heaven.

J: Do you know how old your grandma is?

E: She's 61.

J: And she's done?

E: Yeah. And my great-grandma is still alive. She lives in Texas. She's 96 or something, and her jaw can't keep up, and she's French, so when she talks it's like, you can barely understand her [in crazy, wet, garbled language]. She looks the same as she did ten years ago. Like, when I was a baby I remember my grandparent's old house. She was there, in a wheel chair cause she's too old to walk. Her bones will give out on her [snapping sound] and break. I hid under the table from her cause I was terrified of her [garbled imitation of her great-grandma's talking]. I was so scared, and I cried until my mom came home. Until I got kind of used to it, and I'd do this Eeyore dance for her. It was a version of the teapot dance, but in an Eeyore costume. That's what she remembers me by. She calls me Eeyore.

J: So do you guys ever visit your grandparents here now?

E: No, we got away from them. They're cutting us off when we get to Louisiana cause they don't want us to go down there.

J: So right now they give your mom a little money to get by?

E: No. Her dad offered her, but she said no, cause she plans on paying everyone back, cause everyone thinks she's so bad for taking money and not paying it back. She thought everyone was giving her money to help her out and be nice. No. They expected money back. So she owes her family 10,000 dollars. Maybe if they were nice enough they'd come down to visit, but no. We don't want them down there, they'd find out where we live. We don't want them to find out where we live.

J: You want to hide from your grandparents?

E: Yeah. We did that for two years once, but my mom felt bad, and she got back in touch with them when Molly was born. My grandma didn't even know I existed!

J: Ooooh.

E: Yeah, I was a mystery child.

J: So did your mom and grandparents fight before you left?

E: Yeah.

J: Do you remember what they fought about?

E: Yeah. They think my dad is bad, and a drunk. He was in a low state of mind when he couldn't take care of his family, so he got drunk twice, and my mom only called [the grandparents] twice, during the bad times, so that's all they think there is. So all they think is that my dad is a drunk, running around hitting everybody. That's why they wouldn't let us go. And apparently they are going to start trouble. So we're just going to call them when we get to Florida so they can't stop us.

J: What do you remember from when your dad got drunk?

E: He'd walk around kinda wobbly. You could see it in his eyes. He'd yell at you over the tiniest things, like if you stepped over a tiny piece of trash he'd yell at you to pick it up then, gulp gulp.

J: Did he ever hit anyone?

E: Once he pushed my mom onto a bed on accident, cause he was wobbling, and he tripped her on accident.

J: So do you think people only give you something if they want something in return?

E: Depends who the person is. Like my grandma, John is really talented with singing and acting, he was in a play. So I think my grandma is buying him everything he wants so that when he's older he'll take care of her. Cause my grandma plans on taking him to the X Factor. So if you ever see a tall blonde guy named John singing very well, he's my brother and my grandma is stealing his money. John plans on buying my grandma a yacht when he's famous, and they're going to live in Louisiana and reunite with us, and my grandma is trying to get custody of us. That's her big plan she told me, I'm not supposed to tell, but I did.

J: You told your mom? What did your mom say?

E: She was freaking out. She was like, No! NO! She doesn't want John being famous cause they all end up greedy and mean.

J: Has your brother ever had any good auditions or made any money?

E: Well, we went to this talent agency once, it's \$750, they really liked him, they wanted him. They almost ended up paying the fees, but my mom didn't let him know that. She told John she couldn't come up with the money.

J: So your mom lied so he wouldn't be-

E: -Greedy, yeah.

J: So your other grandma doesn't like your mom?

E: No, actually now both my grandmas don't like my mom.

J: Why doesn't your dad's mom like her?

E: Well, my other grandma doesn't like my dad or my mom. But she likes us, very much. She actually went broke, *broke*, cause Molly and I went on this shopping spree cause we thought grandma was made of money, and she thinks she is, too. And she spent 4,400 dollars in one day.

J: Wooo, on what?

E: Clothes, backpacks with hoods, we got three each, and Aeropostale stuff, which she took back- she's an Indian giver- because I stood up for my mom. And she took everything. It was the day before school, too, and we got new shoes, new uniforms, and because I stood up for my mom, she took everything. I was in 6th grade, going to school in a baggy jumper dress every day. It wasn't fun. And sneakers.

J: So why doesn't she like your dad?

E: I don't know. I honestly don't know. She's weird.

J: This is the one with the haunted house, right?

E: Yeah.

J: She just tells you she wants custody of you guys?

E: Yeah, and she had it for a little while until my mom started living with us again and slowly got us back. Cause my mom signed off temporary custody.

J: Where did your mom go?

E: She went to live with her friend cause my grandma was causing fights between my mom and my dad. They figured it out together that if one of us isn't there, then they can't be fighting, unless it's between my mom and my dad, then my dad would get kicked out and we'd go with him. And that's what happened. Their plan worked out perfect and we moved away from her.

J: Do you want to stop now, or keep going?

E: I'm good. I'll have dinner now.