

Fundum Hall (W/T)

by
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It's an idyllic Summer day and the sun shines brightly upon **Fundum Hall**, a sprawl of buildings that has the unmistakable, timeless feel of an English boarding school.

In one window of prominent position looks out a man who seems to reflect the character of the building, weathered but noble; this is the headmaster **Mr. Oliver** (50/60's)

His expression changes to something more indiscernible as he sees something. He's looking at **Miss Simmons**, a young teacher of around twenty taking her six Year Eight students on a nature discovery.

The grounds in this school are immaculately kept and we see the groundsman/janitor **Mr. Cratchet** pushing a mower around with unusual focus and precision.

Not far away are **Year Eleven** (all fifteen or sixteen years old) playing tennis under the watchful eye of **Mr. Parker**, an energetic man in his thirties.

The pupils playing are **Ben** (confident and alpha) and the pretty and shy **Laura** against **Florence** (contained and bohemian) and **Peter** (the class joker). There should be something unusual about these children that is hard to work out.

The tennis rackets, clothes of pupils and teachers and old-fashioned mower Cratchet is pushing all suggest that this is sometime around the 1920's.

The rally is fiercely contested mainly by Peter and Ben but when Peter can only put up an easy ball Ben smashes it at Florence who barely manages to get out the way.

FLORENCE

Hey.

BEN

Yes!

Mr. Parker looks curious as Ben celebrates with Laura.

PETER

You're meant to hit it.

FLORENCE

It's a waste of time.

PETER

Sir, can we switch teams? It's not fair.

MR. PARKER

Triumph in the face of adversity, Peter.
Easy on the celebrations, Ben.

Ben's celebrations with Laura rather tactile which seems to disturb **Mary** who is watching on the grass along with **Susan** and **Arthur**. The pale-faced **Jonathan** sits a little further away, disinterested in the game. He looks towards Cratchet who glances up at him and they lock eyes for the quickest of moments before Cratchet returns to his work.

3

EXT. GROUNDS - LATER

3

The class are heading back towards the school. Eager beaver Susan walks ahead with Mr. Parker.

BEN

Would you call it a drubbing or a smashing?

PETER

I'd call it being handicapped.

FLORENCE

I did my best. You know I hate tennis.

BEN

Too beneath you Florenzia? You dismiss anything you're bad at. Doesn't fit your misguided sense of superiority.

ARTHUR

Leave her alone.

Ben turns on Arthur, a venom in his eyes.

BEN

Gosh, leaky! Standing up for her now are we? One or two kisses and suddenly you're her boyfriend?

MARY

Is that all it takes? You and Laura will be getting married soon.

Laura and Mary are holding hands.

LAURA

And you will be my maid of honour.

PETER

(to Ben)

Cut off in your prime.

BEN

Unlikely. Watch this. Sir, you missed a spot.

Ben is calling out to Cratchet who looks up from his flawless mowing. He looks puzzled.

BEN (CONT'D)

Just there. No, over there.

Cratchet looks back confused, agitated by his error.

JONATHAN

He's teasing you. You haven't missed any.

Cratchet nods at Jonathan who avoids eye contact.

BEN

Spoilsport, you used to enjoy messing with Cratchet.

JONATHAN

When I was ten. Then I grew up.

BEN

What's wrong with everyone today?

4

INT. FUNDUM HALL - DAY

4

The class have made it back to the school, the mahogany hallways lined with educational stimulus (diagrams etc).

SUSAN

Really? You mean that?

MR. PARKER

I've told you before. You have a talent.

SUSAN

I've heard Mr. Jeffreys saying that some people get paid to play football. Does that happen in tennis too?

MR. PARKER

Yes. Mainly men but recently women too.

SUSAN

You think I might be good enough to become a professional?

Mr. Parker puts his hands on Susan's shoulders.

MR. PARKER

Perhaps. You could become whatever you wanted to be, Susan.

Susan is blushing at this unusual physical contact. Mr. Parker holding it easily until he looks up and sees **MISS DHAWAN**, a warm and caring Asian woman in her late twenties, observing this moment.

4.

MR. PARKER (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Mr. Parker gets up and goes to Miss Dhawan.

MR. PARKER (CONT'D)

A word, Miss Dhawan.

They move into a quiet classroom, Parker moves close.

MR. PARKER (CONT'D)

Have you thought more about it?

MISS DHAWAN

There is nothing to think about.

MR. PARKER

I strongly disagree.

Miss Dhawan glances over, Arthur is standing there.

ARTHUR

Sorry, Sir. Mary's been sick.

Parker looks at Miss Dhawan with intent before moving.

5

INT. UPPER SCHOOL DINING ROOM - EVENING

5

The upper school consists of years Eleven, Ten and Nine. They stand at different tables all looking at the head table where Mr. Oliver and Miss Simmons are standing with **NURSE FOSTER** (late 40s)

MR. OLIVER

For what we are about to receive...

EVERYONE

May we be forever grateful.

Mr. Oliver gives a nod and everyone sits down.

LAURA

You sure you should be eating?

MARY

I feel much better thank you.

At the Head Table:

Mr. Oliver hasn't touched his stew, he has been staring at Miss Simmons.

MISS SIMMONS

Is something wrong?

MR. OLIVER

No, not at all. Your hair is...

MISS SIMMONS

Yes, I've started wearing it up.

MR. OLIVER

It's...It suits you.

MISS SIMMONS

Thank you, Sir.

MR. OLIVER

Please don't call me that.

Back at Year Eleven's table Peter is looking over at the gap on Year Ten's table.

PETER

Can't believe Elizabeth has gone, just as she was developing great (motions around his chest) personality.

SUSAN

You're so vulgar.

PETER

She was nice. I think. Lucky so and so.

ARTHUR

Or not.

FLORENCE

What do you mean?

PETER

She's with her parents now Leaky, something we've all dreamed of since we can remember.

ARTHUR

Dreams and realities are often very different.

BEN

In your dreams you've never wet the bed but in reality.

ARTHUR

If you stopped joking all the time perhaps you might take a proper look around you.

BEN

Not more of your conspiracy nonsense, Leaky.

LAURA

You wouldn't want to meet your parents?
To live with them?

ARTHUR

None of us have any idea who our parents
are. What the world outside is really
like. There's a reason we are all here.

BEN

Yes, maybe they liked keeping clean
bedsheets.

ARTHUR

(banging the table hard)
It last happened almost nine years ago!

Mr. Oliver looks over, everyone in the room is surprised.
Such acts of aggression are **never** seen at Fundum Hall.

MR. OLIVER

Washing up, Arthur. And detention.

Arthur sits back down calmly. Nurse Foster shares a look
of surprise with Mr. Oliver.

6

INT. FUNDUM HALL - LATER

6

Nurse Foster is handing out pills to all the students.

NURSE FOSTER

You feeling alright, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Absolutely, Nurse Foster.

He chews down the pills. Or pretends to. As he walks on
they can be seen in his clenched hand

7

INT. FUNDUM HALL - NIGHT

7

The corridors are deserted and the lights low.

One door of interest has Security marked on it and a sign
forbidding children to enter.

A rugged man in his fifties comes out, there is a brief
glimpse of something inside.... A strong glow that may
look like that emitted from a wall of televisions. The
door closes before the source is revealed.

This man is **MR. HODGE** and he thinks twice, torn by
something, before walking on.

8 INT. YEAR ELEVEN GIRLS DORMITORY - NIGHT

8

The girls are fast asleep. Or so it seems.

Laura opens her eyes and checks around her. She very quietly gets out of bed, grabs her dressing gown and disappears out of the door; careful not to make a sound.

As the door closes Mary's eyes flicker open.

9 EXT. GROUNDS - NIGHT

9

Laura tiptoes anxiously around the gardens, looking for someone. A sound or movement in the trees surprises her.

LAURA

Ben?

She continues to search the shadows. It is eerily quiet.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Ben? It's not funny.

She is beginning to lose confidence.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Ben? Come on! I'm going back.

Nothing. She pulls the branches of the weeping willow aside, peeking through for her companion...

BEN

Boooo!!

Ben jumps out startling a cross Laura.

LAURA

Ben!

BEN

I couldn't resist. You've been ages.

LAURA

I had to make sure they were asleep.

He kisses her, starts attempting to fondle her but she pushes his hands away. He looks unsure for a fleeting moment but then his confident grin re-appears.

BEN

Come with me.

Laura look sceptical.

BEN (CONT'D)

Come on.

They are walking through the gardens holding hands.

BEN

It's fun.

LAURA

How would you know?

BEN

Because. Volumes of poetry and books are written about it Laura.

LAURA

I don't think we should.

BEN

I love you Laura. Don't you love me back?

LAURA

It's dangerous, illegal.

BEN

You don't care about the rules. You wouldn't be here if you did. We've been together for a year now. It makes sense.

LAURA

I'm sorry Ben. No.

Ben stops her, puts his hands on her shoulders. She backs against a tree, it's not rough but there is a moment of fear in her eyes.

BEN

You've been messing me around, Laura.

Ben is almost angry...but it seems to subside quickly.

BEN (CONT'D)

Can I at least tell Peter that we did?
It's embarrassing...

LAURA

He'll tell other people.

BEN

No, he wo-- shhhhh. Look.

Two other figures are skulking through the shadows. Laura and Ben watch as they stop by a wall. The couple exchange a few words before they start kissing and making love, even in the dark and from afar it looks fast and urgent.

The man's face is revealed in the moonlight to be Mr. Parker, the woman has long dark hair like Miss Dhawan.

Ben watches in fascination, Laura drags him away.

LAURA
Come on, we can't stay here.

11

EXT. GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

11

The young couple are heading back towards the school, Ben trying to keep pace with Laura.

BEN
Mr. Parker and Miss Dhawan?!

LAURA
We shouldn't have been there.

BEN
Why not? Why should they be the only ones having a good time? And they tell us its dangerous!

LAURA
I'm going back.

BEN
Come on, we could at least fool around.

LAURA
No.

BEN
I never knew you were such a prude.

LAURA
Believe me I am not...Gosh

Laura has walked into Mr. Cratchet who is slumped over his mower, not far from his shed. Panicked at being caught she does not notice his unusual pose.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm... we were just getting some air.
It's so... Sir? Mr. Cratchet?

Laura goes to touch him...

BEN
No, don't..

Too late. Laura places a hand on his shoulder and...

The body falls sideways off the mower handle and rolls over. Cratchet's his eyes now devoid of life. A heavy wound on the side of his head.

Laura screams.

DARKNESS

12

INT. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE

12

A skull. Painted on canvas.

Mr. Oliver is staring at a large painting; Joseph Wright's 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump'. A copy. Or perhaps the original.

MR. JEFFREYS

Can you tell us why we are here, Gerald?

The middle-aged man speaking is **MR. JEFFREYS** (cautious and proper), head of middle school. Alongside him are Miss Simmons, Miss Dhawan and Nurse Foster. All are wearing night-wear and look concerned.

MR. OLIVER

Of course. As soon as everyone is here. It won't be long I'm sure.

NURSE FOSTER

Is everything all right?

Mr. Parker comes in with Mr. Hodge, both dressed in day clothes.

MR. PARKER

Sorry. Couldn't sleep. Out for a walk.

Mr. Oliver looks at Mr. Hodge who confirms this.

MR. OLIVER

I'm afraid there has been an incident. Mr. Cratchet is dead.

MISS SIMMONS

What happened?

MR. OLIVER

It is my opinion and that opinion is shared by Mrs. Hodge, who was the first adult there before me, that he has been the victim of some sort of attack. It appears that he has died due to a wound on the side of his head, a blow too heavy it would seem...to suggest an accident.

MR. JEFFREYS

You think he was murdered?

Mr. Oliver nods.

NURSE FOSTER

Are you sure?

MR. OLIVER

It is both mine and Mrs. Hodge's scientific opinion.

MISS DHAWAN

You said she was the first 'adult' there?

MR. OLIVER

Yes. Regrettably the body was discovered by Laura and Ben.

MISS SIMMONS

Are they all right?

MR. OLIVER

Shaken of course. Mrs. Hodge is with them now.

MR. JEFFREYS

Was it someone from the outside? If they know where we are then we need to evacuate. Everyone.

MR. OLIVER

We must remain calm.

MR. JEFFREYS

But if the Guardians know we're here--

MR. OLIVER

Richard!!

Mr. Oliver motions with his eyes to Miss Simmons who seems not to notice.

MR. JEFFREYS

I'm sorry but--

MR. HODGE

No-one has come over the Fence. I'd know.

MR. JEFFREYS

You're sure?

MR. HODGE

I'd know.

MR. PARKER

Perhaps it was one of the children?

Everyone looks at him. Some with shock, one or two with concealed agreement.

NURSE FOSTER

That's impossible.

MR. OLIVER

Far more likely it was someone in this room. I would urge that person to leave tonight. You will not be stopped or pursued so long as you keep to the agreement. I should rather let the rat out of the cage.

A brief glance at Mr. Parker.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

Either way our priority now is the wellbeing and safety of the children.

13

INT. STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

13

A shell shocked Ben and Laura sit on the sofa.

They are handed two steaming mugs by **MRS. HODGE**, an impressive, highly intelligent matriarch in her fifties.

BEN

What is it?

MRS. HODGE

Hot chocolate, it will help with the shock.

Usually an annual treat, the kids take the mugs gladly.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

It must have been extremely upsetting to discover what you did but I promise you the memories will recede. Death is but a natural consequence of life after all.

BEN

Who could have done that?

MRS. HODGE

Done what?

BEN

Killed him.

Mrs. Hodge stiffens for a moment.

MRS. HODGE

You are confused, Ben. Mr. Cratchet was the victim only of an unfortunate accident.

BEN

But his head...

MRS. HODGE

He had suffered a bad fall, yes, but he managed to get up and continue to his beloved mower. A strong, brave man.

LAURA

It wasn't a fall.

Mrs. Hodge's face darkens.

MRS. HODGE

Laura and Ben. It's very sad for me that I get to see so little of you children once you leave my nursery. I remember you alot better than you do me I'm sure. Laura, you always had such a vivid imagination. And Ben, so strong on the outside yet so vulnerable on the inside. More than anyone you needed to be loved.

Ben and Laura shift in discomfort.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

You're all grown up now. So I'm going to tell you a secret. Mr. Cratchet was not a happy man, this much was known. What we didn't know until tonight was that he had found a way to get alcohol into the school. He had been drinking heavily which probably explains his accident. It is possible, though let's hope not, that he inflicted the wound himself, either way it doesn't matter. He was a good man and we must not let his memory be sullied by the nature of his end. It would be wrong, very wrong.

Ben and Laura realise what they are being told to do.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

You know being outside after lights is a grave breach of our rules; the purpose of this breach could have even more serious consequences. Given the circumstances we can overlook it this time; but if I hear that you have betrayed my confidences or worse still spread some vicious gossip then the punishment will be most severe. Better for everyone this way. Have I made myself clear?

Ben and Laura nod their acquiescence.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

Good. Drink up, while it's still hot.

14 EXT. FUNDUM HALL - MORNING 14

A beautiful Summer's day. The morning bell rings...

15 INT. CORRIDORS - MORNING 15

Upper school children walk to breakfast. The Year Eleven boys are in a group though Ben, looking sleep deprived, walks alone. Peter catches up with him.

PETER
(hushed)
So!? Did you do it?

BEN
A gentleman never tells.

PETER
I knew it! Come on, you've got to tell me something. Was it good?

BEN
Use your imagination.

16 INT. UPPER SCHOOL DINING ROOM - LATER 16

Year Eleven are eating their morning breakfast. Laura look particularly pale as Peter has noticed.

PETER
You look tired. Up all night were you?

LAURA
Bad dreams.

PETER
Bad were they? How disappointing.

Peter nudges Ben.

Mr. Oliver stands up at the top table.

MR. OLIVER
Your first lessons today will be cancelled. After breakfast you are to proceed straight to the Hall.

Speculative chatter amongst the children begins.

SUSAN
Probably more maintenance on The Fence.

PETER
Or Flu jabs. I hope it's not flu jabs.

Ben and Laura share a glance, noticed only by Arthur.

17 INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

17

Upper, Middle and Lower school are assembled in the hall, about seventy children aged from around five to sixteen.

On a raised stage are most of the teachers though Nurse Foster and Mrs. Hodge are absent, looking after Nursery. A quiet, excited natter can be heard from the children.

MR. OLIVER

Quiet please.

Silence.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

I regret to say that the news today is rather sad. Mr. Cratchet, who has been here for sixteen years, has left us.

A gasp of shock, teachers leaving is a rare event.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

Last night he packed his things and left to take a new job at another school. He wanted us to say goodbye to all of you as he thought he would find it difficult to part from what--

Jonathan gets up and heads towards the door. Mr. Oliver nods to Miss Dhawan to follow.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

He was a kind and gentle man who always..

18 EXT. GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

18

Outside Miss Dhawan catches Jonathan.

MISS DHAWAN

Jonathan? Are you alright? Jonathan?

She takes hold of his arm.

JONATHAN

I'm... I... I'm fine.

MISS DHAWAN

I understand. You're upset?

JONATHAN

No. It's not that.

MISS DHAWAN

What then. Relieved? I know Mr. Cratchet was not always the most popular. Is there anything you want to tell me?

JONATHAN
He wouldn't leave.

MISS DHAWAN
Why do you say that?

JONATHAN
This was his home.

MISS DHAWAN
Mr. Cratchet was very private, Jonathan.
It's possible that we didn't know all
that much about him. I certainly didn't.

JONATHAN
I did.

MISS DHAWAN
If you know something Jonathan then you
need to tell me. Did something happen
between you?

Jonathan pulls away roughly.

JONATHAN
I'm fine.

He runs away leaving a rattled Miss Dhawan.

19

INT. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE - DAY

19

Mr. Oliver's face is all thunder.

MR. OLIVER
So we have nothing at all then?

MR. HODGE
I'm afraid not.

MR. OLIVER
And no sign of The Fence being cut or
tampered with?

MR. HODGE
No.

MR. OLIVER
That's something, I suppose. So it's
likely that the killer is one of us and
is still here?

MR. HODGE
I guess so.

MR. OLIVER

You guess so? All of our lives are at risk here. Give me a good reason why I should not fire you immediately?

MR. HODGE

Mrs. Hodge would not approve.

MR. OLIVER

I don't need Mrs. Hodge's approval.

MR. HODGE

And anyway. Who'd replace me?

Mr. Oliver cannot answer this.

MR. OLIVER

Get out! Now!

Mr. Hodge makes his way slowly towards the door.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

You realise that you are very much a suspect now.

MR. HODGE

So are you.

20 INT. FUNDUM HALL - CONTINUOUS

20

Mr. Hodge strides nonchalantly down the corridors with till he see's Mr Parker, hidden in the shadows, he gives him a nod that seems to re-assure him greatly.

21 EXT. GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

21

Laura walks with Ben. The rest of the class ahead of them, all holding their notebooks. Arthur is watching them discreetly.

LAURA

It wasn't an accident.

BEN

How do you know?

LAURA

You saw him.

BEN

It was dark.

LAURA

It wasn't that dark, his head--

BEN

And what are we going to do? They must know what did or did not happen. They'll deal with it. We shouldn't even be talking about it. He's gone. That's all there is.

Miss Simmons appears from behind them.

MISS SIMMONS

Everything all right?

BEN

Yes, thanks Miss.

He walks off.

MISS SIMMONS

And you Laura? Are you all right? Have you put on enough sun cream?

LAURA

Yes, Miss.

MISS SIMMONS

Good. Enjoy your History.

22

EXT. GROUNDS, POND - AFTERNOON

22

The class are sat near the edge of a beautiful pond reflecting the afternoon sun. They look unusually interested for teenage students.

MR. JEFFREYS

She was executed at...

MARY

Fotheringhay castle.

MR. JEFFREYS

On the date of...

PETER

8th February, 1587.

MR. JEFFREYS

So it is that the prisoner became the monarch and the first Queen to ever rule the country. Susan?

SUSAN

Surely Mary was the first Queen?

MR. JEFFREYS

Most historians think of Elizabeth as the first true Queen.

BEN

But they are wrong. Mary was.

MR. JEFFREYS

Technically.

ARTHUR

Who is the Queen now?

MR. JEFFREYS

What?

Everyone looks startled by this question.

ARTHUR

Or King?

MR. JEFFREYS

You know such questions are not permitted, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Because any curiosity as to the outside world is dangerous.

Mr. Jeffreys is doing a poor job of hiding his discomfort.

MR. JEFFREYS

Dangerous and inaccurate. History will always stay the same whereas the present is forever changing.

ARTHUR

Why? Why is it so dangerous to know what's going on out there?

MR. JEFFREYS

Arthur.

ARTHUR

We are taught History up until 1850 and then nothing. We aren't even allowed to question why. To know what the date is.

MR. JEFFREYS

You are testing my patience Arthur! George. George is the name of our current King. George the Fifth. Satisfied?

Mr. Jeffreys looks at Arthur who makes no reply and the bell interrupts this moment.

MR. JEFFREYS (CONT'D)

Please stay together in groups for your free period.

FLORENCE

Why?

MR. JEFFREYS

Safer that way.

SUSAN

Safe from what? We aren't usually told to stay together.

Laura looks at Ben, could this be related?

MR. JEFFREYS

Nothing, just... Good to be careful.
Could I have a word, Mary?

23

EXT. GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

23

Mr. Jeffreys has taken Mary into a nearby cul-de-sac.

He checks that no-one can see them and takes something out of his trousers. A small paper bag.

MR. JEFFREYS

No-one can know about this. I'd get the sack and you'd--

Mary smuggles the bag into somewhere safe.

MARY

I know. Thank you.

Mr. Jeffreys nods and Mary leaves him and walks around the corner where Laura and Susan are waiting.

LAURA

What was that about?

MR. JEFFREYS

He thought I needed to pay more attention.

LAURA

Really? He should see you in Maths.

MARY

Are you sure you slept well last night?
Ben certainly seems very pleased with himself today.

SUSAN

Same as usual then.

LAURA

Nothing happened. You know I'd tell you if it did. No secrets, right?

MARY

Of course. No secrets.

24 EXT. CRATCHETS SHED - LATER 24

Away from it all Jonathan creeps up to Cratchet's shed.

He looks at it for a moment as if struck by something and then looks around to check the coast is clear.

Jonathan checks to see if the door is locked. It is.

Straight away he goes to one of the many flowerpots outside and lifts it up revealing a small key. He fits it into the door and lets himself in, closing the door quietly behind him.

25 INT. CRATCHETS SHED - CONTINUOUS 25

Inside Cratchet's shed and home is a bit of a mess, it looks like he may have been the victim of a burglary.

Jonathan looks around the ramshackle place taking it in. He moves though the space brushing his hand over a table cluttered with dirty mugs.

He sees a plant that is withering in the sun from the window and moves it into the shade, watering it with a small can that lies nearby.

He puts the can back and looks at a well-used, large sofa suddenly jolted into a sudden--

26 FLASHBACK: 26

MR. CRATCHET

Sit down. Go on. Sit down.

Jonathan is jarred, almost unable to separate the memory from the present until--

MR. PARKER (O.S.)

What are you doing here?

Mr. Parker is standing at the open door looking both very displeased and somewhat caught off guard.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry, sir. I just...

MR. PARKER

How did you get in here?

JONATHAN

The door was open.

Mr. Parker does not believe this but there is no noticeable sign of break-in and no obvious alternative explanation.

MR. PARKER

Get out, immediately. You know you're not allowed in staff quarters.

Jonathan shuffles towards the door.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry, Sir. I thought he had left.

Jonathan looks pointedly around the room, clearly all of Cratchet's possessions are still here. Mr Parker takes a rough hold of him. Moving close to his face, threatening.

MR. PARKER

Get out! And if I catch you here again you will pay the heaviest of prices.

Jonathan runs off and Mr. Parker shuts the door, checking quickly to see that no-one else has noticed his entry.

27

INT. NURSERY - AFTERNOON

27

Inside the Nursery building is a small holding or play area before the real structure begins. A heavy door to the internal rooms suggesting no-one leave easily. Or comes in.

Mr. Oliver stands with Mrs. Hodge.

MRS. HODGE

Who?

MR. OLIVER

Parker. He was outside, dressed for day. He's hiding something.

MRS. HODGE

Whoever it is must be found and removed immediately.

MR. OLIVER

How? It's not like we can call the police.

MRS. HODGE

My instinct is that the perpetrator is working out their next move and will vanish in the tonight or tomorrow.

MR. OLIVER

And if you're wrong?

A coldness comes over Mrs. Hodge's countenance.

MRS. HODGE

Then you will take whatever steps required to protect our work here. And I will support you in whatever way needed.

MR. OLIVER

Thank you, Mrs. Hodge. I would be lost without you.

He puts a hand on her shoulder and she in turns puts her hand on top of it. There is a long established intimacy there with perhaps a hint of something else that could have been.

MR. JEFFREYS

I'm sorry to interrupt. It's about Arthur...

28

EXT. OUTER GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

28

Arthur and Florence are walking through the woods. Arthur leading with a real purpose.

FLORENCE

You shouldn't push Mr. Jeffreys like that. You'll only get into trouble.

ARTHUR

Trouble is the least of my worries. You don't think its strange we're not allowed to ask the date?

FLORENCE

It's always been like that. Its the rules.

Arthur shakes his head and keeps on going.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

If you want to kiss me I think we've gone far enough. No-one's going to find us here.

No reply from Arthur.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

We're not doing any more than that if that's what you're thinking.

Still nothing.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

What are we doing Arthur?

ARTHUR

Do you trust me?

FLORENCE

Of course.

ARTHUR

More than the school?

FLORENCE

Not this again. They're our family Arthur.

ARTHUR

Then why do they treat us like prisoners?

The wood is clearing and up ahead is the large, ominous Fence that surrounds Fundum Hall and its lands.

29

EXT. THE FENCE - MOMENTS LATER

29

Florence is looking up at The Fence. Designed both to keep people in and stop others getting out. Barbed wire at the top makes it almost impossible to get over.

FLORENCE

We shouldn't be here. You especially shouldn't be here.

Arthur is writing something down in his book.

ARTHUR

Can you count in seconds, you know 'one hippopotamus' 'two hippopotamus'?

FLORENCE

Of course, I'm not 3. What are you writing?

ARTHUR

I want you to start counting from the moment I start climbing.

FLORENCE

What? No, Arthur you can't--

Arthur rips out the page that he has been writing on, he folds it over and hands it to Florence.

ARTHUR

Don't look at it till I tell you, it might affect your counting.

FLORENCE

You can't do this again. What if you fall?

ARTHUR

I won't. You should hide unless you want to get into trouble.

Arthur starts towards the fence.

FLORENCE
Please don't do this. Stop it. For me.

ARTHUR
I'd doing it for you. They're lying to us
Florence. I know it. Hopefully you'll
believe me after this.

FLORENCE
Arthur...

ARTHUR
Don't stop counting till he comes.

Arthur begins climbing.

FLORENCE
Till who comes?

ARTHUR
Start counting!

FLORENCE
One hippopotamus. Two hippopotamus....

Florence continues counting whilst watching Arthur with concern.

She edges backwards towards the woods.

JUMP CUT TO:

30

EXT. THE FENCE - MOMENTS LATER

30

Arthur is quite high up the fence now. He's not as bold as he seems and clearly not comfortable with heights.

He looks out at the world beyond but all he can see are fields and remote landscape.

In the woods Florence is still counting but becoming increasingly uneasy. She looks at the paper Arthur has given her, tempted to look... but doesn't.

FLORENCE
Two hundred and fifty hippopotamus. Two
hundred and fifty one hippopotamus. What
are you doing? Please come down.

ARTHUR
Keep counting.

FLORENCE

Two hundred and fifty three hippopotamus.
Two hundred and fifty four hippopotamus.
Two hundred and fifty--

Florence can hear the sound of something approaching through the woods. She steps back into her hiding place, counting more quietly.

The sound comes nearer. Something motorised making a fair bit of noise.

MR. HODGE (O.S.)

Arthur! Arthur, what are you doing? Get down from there now.

Mr. Hodge is only just coming into sight now. He's on a motorized bike. It looks a little more advanced than something we'd expect from the 1920's. Perhaps a little ahead of its time.

Arthur does as he is bid and starts descending while Mr. Hodge gets off his bike, trying to regather his composure.

MR. HODGE (CONT'D)

You get down here this moment!

Arthur nears the bottom.

MR. HODGE (CONT'D)

What are you thinking? You're lucky I was riding nearby. What if you fell, it'd be the end of you.

Arthur gets off and Mr. Hodge grabs him roughly.

MR. HODGE (CONT'D)

Anyone with you?

ARTHUR

No, sir.

Mr. Hodge scans the trees and Florence hides as he does. Mr. Hodge picks up his bike and starts escorting Arthur back.

MR. HODGE

Stupid boy. Once was bad but trying this shit twice. Big mistake Arthur and I'm afraid you'll be paying for this one, paying for it badly.

Once safely past Arthur glances back at Florence and nods.

She looks down to the piece of paper and opens it.

It reads:

MR. HODGE.

BETWEEN TWO HUNDRED AND TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY SECONDS.

HOW DID HE KNOW?

31

INT. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

31

A heavy stick sits on Mr. Oliver's desk. He is looking closely at it, in particular using a handheld magnifying glass to look at the dried blood that runs down it.

MR. OLIVER

Where was it?

MISS SIMMONS

In the woods, not far from Mr. Cratchit's house.

MR. OLIVER

Hodge should have found it this morning.
Thank you Miss Simmons.

MISS SIMMONS

Perhaps it will be helpful?

MR. OLIVER

Perhaps.

MISS SIMMONS

To the police?

A flash of irritation across Mr. Oliver's face.

MISS SIMMONS (CONT'D)

I know we don't like to have contact with the outside but surely this is a matter for the authorities?

MR. OLIVER

You wish to alarm the children?

MISS SIMMONS

Better to be alarmed than in danger.

MR. OLIVER

Danger comes in many forms.

MISS SIMMONS

They deserve to know.

MR. OLIVER

Why? So we can fill their suggestible minds with fear and anxiety.

(MORE)

28.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

These children have no concept of violence. Of death. It would ruin them.

MISS SIMMONS

You cannot ignore it when there is a murderer on the premises.

MR. OLIVER

Do not presume to tell me what I can and cannot do!

Miss Simmons is taken aback by the force of Mr. Oliver's reaction. She backs away.

MISS SIMMONS

I'm sorry, sir-- I mean, Mr. Oliver

MR. OLIVER

Please leave me now.

Miss Simmons is on her way out. Then she stops...

MISS SIMMONS

Who are the Guardians?

MR. OLIVER

What?

MISS SIMMONS

The Guardians. Mr. Jeffreys said last night that if the Guardians knew where we were...

Mr. Oliver considers this carefully.

MR. OLIVER

The Guardians are a group who would... do us harm, if they knew we were here.

MISS SIMMONS

Why? What could they have against an orphanage?

A knock on the door interrupts this pertinent question.

MR. HODGE

Excuse me, but there's been an incident.

Arthur stands beside Mr. Hodge.

MR. OLIVER

Thank you Miss Simmons.

Miss Simmons leaves offering Arthur a look of sympathy. Mr. Hodge closes the door after her.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

I've been meaning to speak to you.

MR. HODGE

I was on my rounds when I found him
climbed halfway up the Fence.

MR. OLIVER

Again Arthur?

ARTHUR

And again Mr. Hodge happened to be there.

Mr. Oliver's face clouds over. Arthur looks over at the
stick on his desk.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What's that?

Mr. Oliver cuffs him around the back of the head. Hard.

MR. OLIVER

Our rules are here to keep you safe. To
ignore them repeatedly is to assuredly
invite harm upon yourself.

Terrifying Headmaster stuff...

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

Thank you Mr. Hodge.

Hodge leaves them. The door shuts. Darkness.

32 EXT. FUNDUM HALL - EVENING 32

The Summer sun has started its slow descent and resulting
shadows begin to dance across the school.

33 INT. MRS HODGE'S OFFICE - EVENING 33

Mrs. Hodge's smart and well organised office. The lights
are off.

A figure in the dark is looking through her filing
cabinet. Flicking through files. It is Miss Simmons.

She doesn't find what she is looking for and tries
another drawer. She flicks through quickly but again does
not find what she wants. She tries the third drawer but
it won't come. Neither will the fourth, clearly they are
locked.

--The light suddenly switches on.

Mrs. Hodge is there, looking more formidable than ever.

MRS. HODGE

Can I help you with something?

MISS SIMMONS

I'm sorry... I was looking for early notes for Jonathan. His rushing out of assembly today and... I thought--

MRS. HODGE

You thought you would go through my files without asking me?

MISS SIMMONS

I didn't want to bother you

MRS. HODGE

Didn't you?

Mrs. Hodge moves closer to her.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

You're very pretty you know?

MISS SIMMONS

Thank you.

MRS. HODGE

It wasn't a compliment. Prettiness has no use here. It may be dangerous even, distracting. But out there... All your remembered life has been spent at Fundum Hall. You must be curious by now to see the real world. Perhaps you have felt that you don't really belong here.

MISS SIMMONS

This is my home.

MRS. HODGE

Not forever I hope. Life can be so short.

She hands Miss Simmons a file from the top drawer.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

Jonathan's file. Goodbye Miss Simmons.

Miss Simmons wonders out, somewhat shaken

At the Year Eleven table there is an empty space where Arthur would usually sit. Florence looks peturbed.

PETER

(to Florence)

I knew you two headed into the woods but I didn't know that the clap could kill you so quickly.

Only Ben laughs at this.

SUSAN

That's inappropriate, Peter.

PETER

It was a joke. Not my fault you have no sense of humour.

SUSAN

Just because I don't laugh at your puerile offerings does not mean I have no sense of humour.

During this exchange Mary is looking at Mr. Jeffreys who is sat at the head table alongside Mr. Oliver but Mr. Jeffreys will not look her way...

LAURA

You don't know where he is Flo?

No response from Florence.

SUSAN

He's not broken up with you has he?

PETER

Nevermind, plenty more options for you if you play your cards right.

BEN

Shut up, Peter.

JONATHAN

Is he all right Florence?

Everyone is surprised to hear the taciturn Jonathan speak up, even Florence who nods her head.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

What happened?

FLORENCE

He's in solitary.

Everyone is shocked to hear this; solitary is a rarely used punishment.

SUSAN

Why?

PETER

What did he do?

Florence is reluctant to tell but gives in.

FLORENCE

He climbed The Fence.

PETER

Again? Does he have a deathwish?

Florence looks over at the Head table, no-one seems to be watching them. She leans closer, lowering her voice just a fraction...

FLORENCE

Don't look over at them.

Peter instinctively looks.

PETER

Sorry.

FLORENCE

Arthur made me count once he started climbing. He wrote down how long it would take for someone to come and who it would be. He knew they would know. Somehow.

LAURA

I don't understand.

Florence gets out the piece of paper that Arthur wrote on and shows it to them.

FLORENCE

I counted to two hundred and fifty four and exactly then Mr. Hodge arrived.

SUSAN

It says two hundred to two hundred and fifty?

FLORENCE

I'm a quick counter. Still seems strange that Mr. Hodge happened to be there and Arthur knew how long it'd take.

BEN

He's messed up your head with all that nonsense. It's just a coincidence.

JONATHAN

It's more than that.

MR. OLIVER

Jonathan!

They all freeze, as do the rest of the room as Mr. Oliver's deep voice booms out.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

What is that note? Bring it to me.

Jonathan looks at his friends, there is nothing he can do.

He gets up and walks towards the Head table, the rest of the hall is silent. Mr. Oliver is standing and holds out a hand.

Jonathan looks back at his friends. What can he do? He hands it over.

Mr. Oliver reads it.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

What is this?

JONATHAN

It's nothing, Sir.

MR. OLIVER

If I have to ask you again, it will be a weeks detention. Minimum.

JONATHAN

It's a game, sir.

MR. OLIVER

What sort of game?

JONATHAN

You write one of the staff...

MR. OLIVER

Yes?

JONATHAN

And say how long you think they could breathe underwater. Someone thought Mr. Hodge could last the longest. We were debating it.

It seems a preposterous answer but Jonathan is displaying nothing but earnestness.

MR. OLIVER

No more notes at the table. It is bad manners.

Mr. Oliver crumples the paper into his pocket and sits back down.

The background chatter resumes and Jonathan turns to go back to his table.

The children have finished dinner and are streaming out of the dining room for their quiet time before bed. Taking their pills from Mr. Jeffreys.

Year Eleven are the last to go.

Mr. Jeffreys stands at the door handing out the little medicinal cups. Mary sees him as she walks out with Laura.

MARY

I think I dropped something. I'll catch you up.

Mary goes back to the table for a few seconds and mimes grabbing something. She is now the last in the room to leave as she heads to the door.

36

INT. CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

36

Mr. Jeffreys closes the door behind her as they follow everyone else down the corridor.

They are a part of the crowd and yet a few metres back. As much privacy as could be allowed.

MR. JEFFREYS

Have you done it?

MARY

Not yet.

MR. JEFFREYS

You've not had time?

MARY

I feel... scared.

Mr. Jeffreys allows himself a look at her.

MR. JEFFREYS

Of course you are. Don't be. You're not alone. Whatever happens, I will help you.

MARY

Words are easy.

They walk on together for a few moments in silence.

FURTHER UP THE CORRIDOR Year Eleven are still discussing the revelations of the evening.

PETER

Fact is that Arthur was, you know, a bit weird.

LAURA

That doesn't explain how he knew Hodge would be there and how long it would take him.

PETER

That is Hodge's job, right? To make sure people don't get in or out.

JONATHAN

Did he say anything else, Florence?

FLORENCE

Not really. He used to say that we shouldn't trust everything we are told.

BEN

Of course, the teachers want us to behave. They don't want us having too much fun.

FLORENCE

More than that. He said that they were lying to us.

PETER

He's a crackpot, I told you.

SUSAN

They're our family.

BEN

Arthur's always been suspicious. Of everything. Remember that time he thought the porridge was stunting his growth. There's nothing to worry about.

JONATHAN

Mr. Cratchet didn't leave.

PETER

What?

LAURA

How do you know that?

Laura's face and tone betrays something that both Ben and Jonathan see.

BEN

Laura.

JONATHAN

You know something don't you? What? Tell me. Tell me Laura.

MR. JEFFREYS

Right. You know the drill. I'll be up for lights out in an hour and a half. Reading, talking, playing, writing. No misbehaviour please, staff have a meeting but someone will be around. Say goodnight.

The group have come to a stop at the split staircase that leads either up to the seperate boys or girls wings of the Upper School.

Jonathan wants to talk more to Laura but has no choice.

JONATHAN

Let's talk tomorrow. Good night.

They all mumble goodnight to each other and head upstairs, the boys one way and the girls the other.

37

INT. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE - EVENING

37

Miss Simmons sits in the chair in front of Mr. Oliver's desk. She looks apprehensive.

MR. OLIVER

Although you are the first, you understand that all staff will be going through this?

MISS SIMMONS

I do.

Mr. Oliver is sat with Mr. Hodge behind the desk.

MR. HODGE

Where were you between lights out and midnight last night?

MISS SIMMONS

I was in my room. I read for a while and then I fell asleep.

MR. HODGE

At what time?

MISS SIMMONS

I'm not sure. Around ten thirty I would guess.

MR. OLIVER

And were you alone?

NB. During this section different interviews that have been conducted one at a time in similar manner are spliced together.

CUT TO:

MRS. HODGE

Was I alone?

She looks at her husband, something subtle acknowledged between them.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

No. I was with my husband.

Mr. Oliver looks at Mr. Hodge who nods his confirmation.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

He went to sleep around eleven, I read for another twenty minutes or so.

CUT TO:

MR. HODGE

Presumably you were alone?

NURSE FOSTER

Yes. I had my chocolate and was out like a light. A full day in nursery usually ensures that.

CUT TO:

MR. OLIVER

Whereabouts did you go on this walk?

MR. PARKER

All over I suppose. Through the orchard, round the pond, in the woods.

MR. OLIVER

Past Cratchet's house?

MR. PARKER

I don't think so, no... No. I went out past the tennis courts. I suppose I was going to come back that way.

CUT TO:

MR. HODGE

How much did you know of Mr. Cratchet?

MR. JEFFREYS

Can't say I know much at all. Not the talkative type. I do remember one time at the Summer party a few years back he had a few drinks and er... opened up a bit to me. Did you know that he was married, that his wife died?

Mr. Hodge shakes his head while Mr. Oliver nods.

MR. JEFFREYS (CONT'D)

Bus crash apparently. Very sudden, unexpected. Poor man.

MR. OLIVER

That I didn't know.

MR. JEFFREYS

I think that's why he was here. Never got over it.

CUT TO:

MR. HODGE

Did you ever have a quarrel with him? A disagreement?

MISS DHAWAN

No. He always seemed a decent man to me. But then I hardly knew him.

CUT TO:

MR. HODGE

Did you ever see or hear anything that might make you suspect anyone else in this matter?

MR. PARKER

Not that I can recall.

CUT TO:

MR. JEFFREYS

No.

CUT TO:

MISS SIMMONS

No, of course not.

CUT TO:

NURSE FOSTER

Nope.

CUT TO:

MRS. HODGE

I found Miss Simmons earlier snooping around my office. She was trying to get into my locked files.

Mr. Oliver exhales, somehow unsurprised. Mrs. Hodge gets up to go.

MRS. HODGE (CONT'D)

You need to tell her. Before she becomes a problem.

CUT TO:

MR. OLIVER

Have you seen anything at all you think could be relevant to Cratchet's murder?

Miss Dhawan pauses...

MISS DHAWAN

Perhaps. I'm sure it was nothing. A little... altercation.

MR. HODGE

With who?

MISS GEORGE

With you, Mr. Hodge. I passed your room a few weeks ago and I heard what I thought was shouting. I listened for a few moments but I couldn't tell who it was. But... as I had a free period and not much happens round here, I hid and waited. A few minutes later Mr. Cratchet came out. He looked a bit shifty, checking to see if anyone was there. Then he left.

MR. HODGE

I don't think that has any... That was nothing.

MR. OLIVER

Thank you Miss Dhawan. Please close the door behind you.

She gets up out of the chair and walks out of the room, nodding almost apologetically to Mr. Hodge.

She finally closes the door behind her.

MR. OLIVER (CONT'D)

Was that true?

MR. HODGE

Doesn't she know that this is a serious matter not just... gossip corner.

MR. OLIVER

Was she telling the truth? Did you have a fight with Cratchet.

Mr. Hodge has nowhere to run.

MR. HODGE

Was hardly a fight. Just a bad day was all.

MR. OLIVER

What happened?

MR. HODGE

Nothing. Can't even remember. I think he mowed over one of my tarpaulins or something stupid like that. I was just letting off steam.

MR. OLIVER

You didn't think you should tell me?

MR. HODGE

Like I said. It was nothing. Nothing at all.

Mr. Oliver nods his head though is clearly not fully convinced.

MR. OLIVER

If you're lying to me or hiding anything from me I guarantee you will come to regret it most seriously.

Mr. Hodge leans in closer.

MR. HODGE

I'm not one of your pupils. Gerald.

Both men are bristling and either of them might throw a punch at any second.

MR. OLIVER

No. And as such your imminently more dispensable. Lets go through it again and see if we've missed anything.

38

INT. YEAR ELEVEN BOYS DORMITORY - EVENING

38

Ben is lying on his bed throwing a ball against the wall.

Peter is doing stretches, calisthenics.

BEN

Can't believe you still do those every night?

PETER

We're meant to.

BEN

So? Even Leaky doesn't do them anymore.

PETER

Well, I wanna be ready for when we get out there. Alot of women to satisfy.

BEN

Bet they can hardly wait.

Jonathan comes in, he's washed and ready for bed. He goes to his drawer.

PETER

What about you? Gonna be sneaking out again tonight?

BEN

Maybe. She might need a while to recover.

PETER

That bad was it?

BEN

Wouldn't you like to know.

PETER

I would actually. What did it feel like when--

JONATHAN

Someone has been in my drawer.

BEN

No, they haven't.

JONATHAN

They have. Things have moved. Just a bit, but someone has been looking around in here.

BEN

Well it wasn't me.

JONATHAN

Laura knew something, about Cratchet.

BEN

What is wrong with you tonight?

JONATHAN

You stopped her.

BEN

What?

JONATHAN

You stopped her saying something, which means you know something too.

BEN

Why do you care so much about Cratchet?

JONATHAN

Tell me.

BEN

I don't know what you're talking about.

JONATHAN

I don't believe you.

Ben gets up. Starts squaring up to Jonathan...

BEN

Are you calling me a liar?

JONATHAN

Yes.

Ben pushes him but Jonathan comes back.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Tell me.

Ben pushes Jonathan harder and this time Jonathan pushes him back, a scuffle ensuing, it's only brief but there is a strange quality to it... not the aggression you might expect from a teenage scrap.

Mr. Parker is there and intervening.

MR. PARKER

Boy, boys! I will assume this is an enthusiastic rehearsal for our upcoming play and not a genuine fight which as you all know would result in immediate detention. Yes? Yes?!

Both boys nods.

BEN

Yes, Sir.

MR. PARKER

Good. Thirty minutes to lights out. Where's Arthur?

PETER

He's in solitary, sir.

MR. PARKER

Is he? Always the last to know. I'll be back soon. Keep the rehearsals civil, please.

Susan is doing her calisthenics next to Florence's bed. Mary is changing into her night clothes.

SUSAN

I'm sure he's fine. Probably quite a relief to not have to spend a night in the boys dormitory. I dread to think what they get up to.

(MORE)

43.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Most likely solitary is not nearly as bad as people say it is, these things get exaggerated in order to prove effective--

FLORENCE

Susan, please. I'd rather not talk about it. Just...please.

SUSAN

All right. I'm just trying to cheer you up. No need to take your hostility out on me.

During this exchange Mary has been taking the paper bag that Mr. Jeffreys gave her out of her clothes and hiding it secretly into her night gown, all hidden from the others.

She heads towards the door.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MARY

I forgot to brush my teeth.

She walks out.

40 INT. UPPER SCHOOL, GIRLS CORRIDORS - MOMENTS LATER 40

Mary walks slowly along the corridor with both purpose and fear. She clutches at the pocket in which the bag was placed.

A Year Ten girl passes her but she hardly notices. The task before her absorbing everything. Everything except...

The sound of a door slamming somewhere. The sound of running.

Mary is at the top of the stairs and peers over the bannisters as the sound of heavy steps gets louder below.

All she can see is a shadow passing along the downstairs corridor.

41 I/E. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE - LATER 41

A hand knocks urgently on Mr. Oliver's door.

A few moments and then Mr. Oliver comes to open it with Mr. Hodge beside him.

MR. OLIVER

What is it? What's wrong?

Mr. Parker is stood there, almost out of breath.

MR. PARKER
It's Arthur. Do you know where he is?

MR. OLIVER
He's in solitary.

Mr. Parker shakes his head.

MR. PARKER
No. He's not.

42 INT. UPPER SCHOOL, GIRLS BATHROOM - EVENING 42

Mary walks into the dimmed bathroom. There are two Year Nine girls, whispering conspiratorially in a corner.

MARY
Get out. Now!

They scarper quickly, leaving Mary alone in the fading light.

43 INT. MISS SIMMONS'S ROOM - EVENING 43

Miss Simmons is in bed talking to someone unseen.

MISS SIMMONS
She so terrifying. I was scared of her when I was a student with you but now I'm even more so. She's never liked me for some reason, that much I'm sure--

The door knocks, startling Miss Simmons who shoots a look of warning to her companion.

MISS SIMMONS (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Hide!

She jumps out of bed grabbing her dressing gown and looking back to see the poorly hidden lump beneath the bedsheets.

MISS SIMMONS (CONT'D)
Who is it?

MR. OLIVER (V.O.)
It's... er... me. Mr. Oliver.

MISS SIMMONS
I'm coming, one second.

She opens the door, carefully so as not to reveal any view of her bedroom.

MR. OLIVER

I'm so sorry, I didn't realise that you were... I hate to interrupt.

He can barely look Miss Simmons, dressed in her nightwear, in the eye.

MISS SIMMONS

I was just reading, what is it?

MR. OLIVER

It's Arthur. He's not where he should be. All the staff are looking for him. I'm sure he's fine but given....

MISS SIMMONS

The circumstances. Of course. Give me a minute.

MR. OLIVER

I'll see you downstairs.

Mr. Oliver heads off and Miss Simmons closes the door, trying to keep a lid on her worried thoughts.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

What did he want?

Miss Simmons looks back to the bed where Laura is lying.

MISS SIMMONS

It's nothing but I have to go.

She goes to put on her things, evidently rushing.

LAURA

Something is going on. Tell me.

MISS SIMMONS

It's just a staff meeting.

LAURA

What really happened to Mr. Cratchet?

Miss Simmons is dressing as fast as she can, this slows her abruptly.

MISS SIMMONS

It's nothing to worry about.

LAURA

Please don't lie to me, Sarah. Don't treat me like a child.

Miss Simmons looks at Laura and can see she is upset, she goes to her.

MISS SIMMONS

You know I don't see you that way.

She takes her hand. Kisses her gently and with love on the mouth.

MISS SIMMONS (CONT'D)

I have to go. I'm sorry. Stay here a few more minutes and then go back to the dormitory. I promise I will tell you everything tomorrow.

She grabs her coat and heads towards the door.

LAURA

I love you.

This stop her for a moment.

MISS SIMMONS

I love you too.

She is gone. Leaving Laura alone and afraid, her mind whirring.

44

EXT. FUNDUM HALL, UPPER SCHOOL ENTRANCE - EVENING

44

It's now almost dark outside as Miss Simmons walks quickly towards the doors out of Fundum Hall where Mr. Oliver waits with a gas-lamp.

MR. OLIVER

The others have gone, spread out in pairs.

MISS SIMMONS

It's safer that way.

Mr. Oliver nods he pulls out a pistol from his belt (similar to the motorbike earlier this pistol looks not contemporary exactly but advanced for the 1920's). Miss Simmons has possibly never seen a gun but knows what it is; it scares her.

MR. OLIVER

Just in case.

45

INT. YEAR ELEVEN GIRLS DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

45

Susan has the curtains pulled aside looking out the window. Perhaps some of the lamps are visible in the dark.

SUSAN

Something is definitely going on.

FLORENCE
It's Arthur.

SUSAN
What is?

FLORENCE
He's gone.

SUSAN
What?

FLORENCE
He's always said that we should get out
of here. See what's really out there.
He's gone without me.

SUSAN
Don't be silly. Arthur couldn't get out
of here even if he wanted to. You're just
tired, need a good night's sleep.

Florence slumps down onto her bed and notices something
unnatural about it. She turns around and pulls up her
bedsheets, hidden underneath is Arthur's notebook.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Is that Arthur's? What's it doing there?

FLORENCE
I don't know.

She opens it and a note is there. It reads:

'THEY WILL SEARCH MY ROOM FOR THIS. DO **NOT** SHOW THEM.
THEY ARE LYING ABOUT EVERYTHING'

SUSAN
Who's them?

FLORENCE
The teachers.

Susan sees Laura suddenly coming into the room, her face
full of tears.

SUSAN
What is it? What's wrong?

LAURA
Mr. Cratchet didn't leave. He's dead.

SUSAN
What? How do you know?

LAURA
Because I saw him. I think someone killed
him.

46 EXT. GROUNDS - EVENING

46

Mr. Parker is searching with Miss Dhawan.

MR. PARKER

Arthur!

MISS DHAWAN

Arthur! Something is wrong.

MR. PARKER

He's probably just snuck into the pantry or something trying to score some cake. No need to worry.

MISS DHAWAN

You don't understand. If anything has happened to him...

She is terribly upset at the prospect.

MR. PARKER

We'll find him. I'm sure of it. Come on.

She nods, grateful for the comfort.

MR. PARKER (CONT'D)

Arthur.

47 EXT. GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

47

Miss Simmons and Mr. Oliver are searching through the woods.

MR. OLIVER

Arthur, this will all go much better for you if come back now. Arthur!

Nothing.

MISS SIMMONS

It's so quiet.

MR. OLIVER

He's hiding somewhere.

MISS SIMMONS

I hope so.

They walk on for a moment.

MR. OLIVER

I'm glad we got this opportunity to be alone together.

Miss Simmons looks just a touch apprehensive.

MISS SIMMONS

Yes?

MR. OLIVER

I know. I know it must be hard to have gone from student to teacher here. I think you have handled the transition extremely well.

MISS SIMMONS

Thank you.

MR. OLIVER

I am aware that you think we should be more open with the children but the situation is...

MISS SIMMONS

Complicated.

MR. OLIVER

Yes. It is. Though I'm not sure you realise how complicated. You haven't experienced the world outside--

MISS SIMMONS

Perhaps I should. Maybe I don't belong here.

This seems to affect Mr. Oliver adversely though he does he best not to show it.

MR. OLIVER

I disagree most fervently.

MISS SIMMONS

You do?

MR. OLIVER

I need you here. You were Fundum Hall's first child and as you know I've come to think of you like a daughter. I know that you must have questions. You are aware I'm sure that this is no normal school. I'd like to tell you more but I must be able to feel that I can totally trust you.

Mr. Oliver is coming closer to Miss Simmons. His intensity is unsettling, unnerving her.

MISS SIMMONS

Of course you can.

Closer still he gets.

MR. OLIVER

Trust has to be earned--

There is a woman's scream in the distance. Instantly Mr. Oliver and Miss Simmons start running towards it...

48

EXT. GROUNDS, POND - MOMENTS LATER

48

Miss Simmons arrives at the pond just a few moments before Mr. Oliver, both panting and out of breath.

Miss Simmons goes straight to the sobbing Nurse Foster.

MISS SIMMONS

What is it? Are you all right?

NURSE FOSTER

Down there.

Miss Simmons and Mr. Oliver look towards where she is pointing, into the pond.

Down among some rushes they can now see Mr. Hodge wading into the water. His body blocks the light from the gas-lamp left on the banks but as he moves he reveals something floating in the water. A body.

He turns the body over to reveal Arthur. Cold and lifeless. Mr. Hodge checks for a pulse and shakes his head.

MISS SIMMONS

Oh, no.

Miss Dhawan arrives at the scene and sees Arthur's limp body.

MISS DHAWAN

Arthur. No. No! Arthur!

She tries to go to him but Mr. Parker restrains her and holds her as she is overcome by emotion.

Mr. Oliver looks bereft, he nods to Mr. Hodge.

MR. OLIVER

Get him out. Clean him up. No student is to know about this.

He strides off back towards Fundum Hall with grim purpose.

49

INT. UPPER SCHOOL, GIRLS BATHROOM - NIGHT

49

The bathroom is empty and dark. No-one there, or so it appears...

Inside a cubicle sits Mary.

She looks as though she should be distraught and yet she is not crying. She glances down at something in her hand.

A pregnancy test.

Not from the 1920's but an unmistakably contemporary one.

The test reads **positive**.

50

INT. MR. OLIVER'S OFFICE - EVENING

50

Mr. Oliver strides into his office and quickly shuts the door behind him.

He paces around frenetically for a moment trying to calm himself but his mind is already made up.

He goes to the door and opens it, checking no-one is about.

The corridors are empty.

He shuts and locks the door.

He goes to the Joseph Wright painting on the wall and reaches behind the edges. A latch is triggered and he is able to swing the painting out to reveal a period safe in the wall behind.

He turns the combination dial on the safe and it opens up to reveal a laptop, clearly from the 21st century.

He sits at his desk and opens up the laptop. Double clicks. Dialling....

The dialling stops.

VOICE

Mr. Oliver?

MR. OLIVER

We've lost patient zero zero three.

TO BE CONTINUED