

Isolde

By

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - MORNING

An attic door. A boy, HUNTER (13) grasps the handle and pulls the door open.

The ladder comes down; he climbs it.

ATTIC

It's dim. Hunter feels for the light switch, but cannot find it. He continues to probe the wall, and after a moment, flips the light switch and struggles to his feet.

The room is branches out with a hallway. Judging by Hunter's sweat, it's hot.

Hunter leans down.

HUNTER
(yelling)
What did you want me to get?

HUNTER'S MOTHER (O.S.)
There's a box up there with some
beach stuff in it. Volleyballs and
boogie boards.

HUNTER
(irritated)
Okay.

Hunter sighs and enters--

ATTIC HALLWAY

There is a door in the middle of the hallway, as well as one at the end. Boxes line the walls, each crammed with various items.

Hunter gets on his knees and begins sorting through a box. He retrieves a FLASHLIGHT. He pockets it.

Hunter approaches the door at the end of the hallway. He tries it; it's locked. He returns to double check the boxes.

He finds a box containing a volleyball and various other items.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER

Finally.

He pulls the box away from the wall and sorts through the contents.

He looks up.

There is WRITING on the wall where the box had sat.

Hunter leans closer. Upon further inspection he sees that the writing is the word "LOOK" and a small arrow aimed downwards.

He scrutinizes the writing, looks downward and sees another arrow on the floor, this time pointing to the left.

HUNTER'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Hunter! You coming?

HUNTER

Yeah! I'll be right there!

He lifts the box and heads downstairs.

EXT. BEACH - NOON

Hunter's family plays in the surf as he sits in the sand, alone. Nearby, a group of boys play football and wrestle.

He lowers his head, isolated.

A rain drop stains the sand before him. More join it, and before long, rain begins to fall.

Hunter looks up to the sky in thought.

INT. HOUSE - HUNTER'S ROOM - EVENING

Thunder claps.

Hunter lies in bed, listening to the rain. He glances at his PHONE, which lies still on the dresser. He stares at it, but it does not ring.

He lies back in the bed, staring at the ceiling. Then, abruptly, he sits up and exits the room.

ATTIC HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Hunter crouches before the wall, studying the arrow. He follows it down to the second arrow on the floor.

However, he cannot find the third. He looks around the floor, but to no avail.

There is a RUG on the floor. He lifts it, raising up clouds of dust. The third arrow is there, drawn on the floor.

Hunter smiles.

BOOM. A lightning strike. All goes black; the power is out.

Click. Hunter's flashlight illuminates a small, focused circle on the floor.

Slowly, he creeps along the floor, guided by the small light. He continues to find the arrows until the last one leads to the door in the middle of the hall.

Slowly, he stands and opens the door; he steps through--

SIDE ROOM

The flashlight illuminates what lies inside: the room is empty, save the small BENCH resting against the left wall.

Hunter shines the light on the floor: there's another arrow pointing at the bench.

The bench is little more than a raised slab of wood. Hunter feels along the surface. It's dusty.

He runs his hand along the side. His fingers glide over a small lump.

The flashlight illuminates it: it's a hinge.

Hunter grasps the "lid" of the bench and lifts upwards, revealing the hollowed interior. He aims the flashlight.

There's a BOOK inside.

Hunter grabs the book and looks it over. It's dusty and worn. The cover says, "Diary".

He closes the lid to the bench and sits down. He opens the book.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

Okay, so I lied to you, sort of. This is only part diary. I guess I'll be writing some of my personal experiences in here, but writing to myself seems a little pointless. An open letter sounds better. I'm moving from this house in a month or two. So I'm leaving this for you, whoever you are, and the word Diary was already written on the cover, so I guess it will have to do. Anyways, on to formalities: my name is Lorna, but I hate that name. So I call myself Isolde.

The lights flicker back on. Hunter looks up.

He turns off the flashlight, and begins to close the book--

CUT TO:

HUNTER'S ROOM - A MINUTE LATER

Smack.

Hunter slams his door shut and jumps into his bed. He opens the book.

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

Let me start off by warning you: I'm a rambler. And I say the word "so" way too much. I hope you can suffer through.

Hunter turns the book on its spine. It's thin, good news. He flips back to the page.

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

I like to think of myself as intelligent. I'm not a prodigy or anything, but I'm smarter than most of the kids in my class, especially in Mrs. Grayson's eighth grade math. You might not know who Mrs. Grayson is but chances are, you do. You could be like a forty year old man reading this, and you've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER (V.O.) (cont'd)
probably had her as a
teacher. Also, it's kinda weird if
you're a forty year old man.

Hunter smiles.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
Mom says I'm a bit too
intelligent. She says I think I'm
too smart for everyone else and I
don't try to make friends. I don't
think that's right, though. I
think I just don't really want
to. Sometimes I do, but I don't
really know how. I think I doubt
myself too much. But what do I
know? Maybe it's my
subconscious. That's always been a
weird thought to me. That I'm
thinking things, but not aware of
it.
(pause)
I'm rambling.

Hunter lowers the book. He glances at the clock: one in the
morning. He feels around his desk and finds a bookmark,
puts it in the book, and turns out the light.

BLACK

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
Mom says I'm lonely. Which is
funny, because she doesn't really
make any effort to spend time with
me. I guess the rest of my family
have kind of accepted that I am
used to being alone.

MONTAGE

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Hunter brushes his teeth, book in hand.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
It's because of this so called
isolation that I can't afford to be
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER (V.O.) (cont'd)
lazy. I figure if I dwell too much
on it, I'll get depressed or
something. So I have to find
things to do.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MORNING

Hunter walks the dog, the leash in one hand, and the diary
in the other.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
I don't really complain when Mom
tells me to clean the dishes or
scrub the walls. And when she
doesn't give me anything to do, I
like to draw.

INT. HOUSE - HUNTER'S ROOM - NOON

Hunter sits on his bed, reading.

The book is opened to a page filled with drawings. They
depict flowers and stars and smiling stick figures.

The edge of one of the pages is ripped; something has been
removed.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
I'm not that great. That thing on
the left is supposed to be a dog.

Hunter scans the page. The "thing on the left" is a mess of
discombobulated lines.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
I think it's good that I know my
weaknesses.

EXT. FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

Hunter mows the lawn. He struggles to keep the book still
in his vibrating hand.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
Sometimes I feel like I've never had an original thought. If you can relate to someone, doesn't that just mean they thought of something first?

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Hunter eats dinner at the table, alone. The book stands before him.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
Then again, I don't relate to a lot of people. I might, if I didn't think I was intellectually superior to them or anything. Which I don't think. At all.

INT. HOUSE - HUNTER'S ROOM - EVENING

Hunter sits on his bed again, the book in his hands.

HUNTER (V.O.)
(reading)
For instance, I don't think I'm smarter than you. I don't even know who you are. You could be a genius, who knows. Maybe that's why I'm writing this. Maybe my subconscious is telling me to relate to you. Maybe you need someone to relate to.
(pause)
Again, if you're a forty year old man, this is really, really weird.

Hunter chuckles and puts the bookmark in the spine of the diary. He sets it on his dresser.

He gets up from his bed and opens the closet door. He shuffles around in it for a moment, and retrieves a small BOOK.

Hunter gets a PEN from his dresser. He writes the word "Journal" on the cover, sits on his bed, and begins to write.

INT. HOUSE - CLOSET - MORNING

Hunter pulls down the attic door and climbs the ladder.

SIDE ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Hunter has both books under his arm. He pulls out the journal, opens the bench hatch, and puts it inside.

He closes the bench and sits on it. He looks at the diary: the bookmark is on the final pages. He opens the book.

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

I know I've said that I don't like to be alone or have time to think, but sometimes I have to. Sometimes I go up into the attic and lock myself in the room at the end of the hallway. I'm going to keep it locked, even after Dad and I move away.

(pause)

Unless you find this book. Here's the key.

Hunter turns the page. There's a key taped to the paper. He removes it.

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

I want to tell you something first. Why I'm so "isolated" or whatever Mom says. Daddy says I'm different from the other kids because I still hear Mom. He said he made the room at the end of the hallway to remember her, but when I go in there I still see her and hear her. Even when I leave, I still think she's with me.

Hunter stares at the diary. He's awed.

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

Please don't think I'm weird like the other kids. Go in and see. Maybe you of all people can relate to me.

Hunter slowly closes the book. He sits in thought for a moment, and then stands.

ATTIC HALLWAY

Hunter stands in the middle of the hallway. The locked door is a few steps away; it looms eerily over him.

Slowly, he approaches the door, holding the key out before him as if it were a sword.

Silence. All we can hear is Hunter's steps, slow and careful.

He arrives.

His hands are shaking as he puts the key in the lock.

Turns it.

The door slowly pushes open.

STRANGE LOCKED ROOM

Hunter flips the light switch.

Writing and drawings plaster the walls.

The far wall of the room is a concave hole, which contains a mattress with a wooden block above it.

Hunter looks around. He runs his fingers across the walls: the writings say "Clean these walls", "NO", "Charlie + Isolde", "I miss you so much", "This is Isolde's room".

Hunter approaches the mattress.

The wooden block above it states, "This room is a shrine to my late wife Patricia. Do not disturb her resting place."

The drawings on the walls depict more stars and stick figures, but there is one torn piece of paper taped to the wall.

Hunter examines it. It is a picture of a smiley face and the words, "I'm glad we're the same".

Hunter raises the diary. He flips through pages until he gets to the one with drawings and torn paper.

He puts the page against the wall, matching the tear marks.

They fit perfectly.

He flips to the last pages.

(CONTINUED)

HUNTER (V.O.)

(reading)

I guess this is where you either think I'm strange or... don't. It doesn't matter, I guess. I'll be gone before you read this, and the book has to end somewhere.

(beat)

Mom told me to scrub the walls, but I just wanted to keep adding. It's like each drawing is a friend that I've already made.

Hunter turns the page.

It's the back of the book.

He looks closely: pages have been torn out.

He lowers the book.

Looks around the room.

His face is a mask of disappointment.

He backs out of the room.

ATTIC HALLWAY

He closes the door and locks it.

Crosses the hallway.

SIDE ROOM

Hunter opens the bench and retrieves his journal. He puts the key in the bench hole and shuts it. Leaves.

ATTIC

Hunter stops.

His face is full of regret and resentment. He breathes heavily.

He sits; places the book down beside him. Lowers his head.

A long beat. His face contorts with thought.

Hunter raises his head. He has an idea.

(CONTINUED)

He removes his phone from his pocket.

No messages.

He looks over at the journal.

Back to the phone.

He types the word "Hi".

Presses send.

Puts the phone back in his pocket.

He gathers his journal and stands.

He climbs down the ladder, leaving the attic light on.

CLOSET

Hunter hops off the ladder and walks out of the closet.

The attic door is left wide open, the ladder unfurled.

FADE OUT.