

New Arrival

By

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OVER BLACK:

Screeching tires. Glass and metal collide in a catastrophic collision. A chorus of SCREAMS.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

SIX PEOPLE in different fashion sit on flimsy fold up chairs in a perfect circle. One chair is empty. A support group?

A distraught BOBBY STRANHIEM(27) enters with a CARETAKER(60's) at his side. The Caretaker leads the young man to the empty chair. Bobby takes his seat.

The Caretaker circles Bobby and stops behind him. He places his hands on his shoulders, there, there kid.

CARETAKER

This is Bobby Stranhiem.

In unison...

GROUP

Hello Bobby.

CARETAKER

Bobby has been through a great trauma. It is different for all of us but one we all must face. The purpose of this meeting is to ease Bobby into his new reality. It is a custom here at Morningside that the new arrival be granted three questions that I will answer to the best of my ability. So Bobby Stranhiem, what would you like to know?

BOBBY

Will I be able to leave this place?

CARETAKER

You can not. Except for certain occasions.

BOBBY

Occasions?

CARETAKER
Birthdays, Anniversaries...

BOBBY
So I'm a prisoner?

CARETAKER
We don't use that term here. It is your station, but do not despair Bobby Stranhiem. Everyone at Morningside gets the chance to graduate. Once a year. The graduate is promoted by the Administrator himself.

BOBBY
Are you the Administrator?

The group Chuckles.

CARETAKER
Hardly...

BOBBY
But, I just want to--

CARETAKER
-- No more questions Bobby Stranhiem.

The Caretaker enters the group circle.

The group hangs on his word. It's clear, he runs the place.

CARETAKER
I want you all to introduce yourselves. Help Bobby feel at home.

One of the six, SANDY HARRISON (19) In an old cheer outfit bounces in her seat. She can't wait to go first.

SANDY
I'm Sandy Harrison, I arrived well, quite some time ago. The group helped me get through the worst of it. I know it's overwhelming right now but It gets better. It did, for all of us. I just want you to know that you're not alone.

Looking around the room, he really isn't. They are all invested.

SANDY

Everyone says always go to Sandy
if you want anything, must be my
generous nature.

Next to Sandy, GEORGE CLEVELAND(40's) 1930's gangster.

GEORGE

Generous nature...we know exactly
why a fella like Bobby would go to
you for help.

SANDY

That's George. He's a stray.

GEORGE

George Cleveland. I am the guy who
will introduce you to some folks,
I'll get you around.

CARETAKER

Let him get his footing first, do
not rush him.

GEORGE

That last guy wasn't entirely my
fault. I got a feeling about this
one though. Reminds of one my boys
back in Chicago. I think he can be
taught, what you think there
Sheik?

CARETAKER

Sheik? I always thought of myself
as more of a model for the Garden
of Earthly Delights.

GEORGE

I stand corrected.

George lays a modest jab into the shoulder of the man
beside him...

GEORGE

Take it away Dwayne.

DWAYNE HOLLY(50's) Farmer. The salt of the earth kind.

DWAYNE

Names Dwayne, had a farm upstate,
A lovely family, four girls.

Got here about twenty years ago?
This group...

Dwayne looks around the room, his face full of pride.

DWAYNE

They will never give up on you.
How you lived matters. You're a
young lad, got a big family
coming?

BOBBY

A small one. Just my wife and my
little boy, a girl on the way.

DWAYNE

Poor bastard. My wife would come
and support me on her own at
first. They were never together
though, the girls and her.
Eventually they forget about you.
Best you know that now save you
years of heartache. I do wish I
could have done more for them
though.

BOBBY

It'll be different with us.

GEORGE

That's what they all say.

DWAYNE

You did good by them though?

BOBBY

The best I could.

Sandy grabs his hand in reassurance.

SANDY

We'll be with you right guys?

The group let out a resounding cheer of reassurance.

Bobby cracks a smile.

Then...

VEHICLES approach from outside.

CARETAKER

We'll have to save the
introductions. Ironically, time is
running short.

GEORGE

Time is all we have.

They stand to their feet and surround Bobby, meet and
greet, shakes of hands.

The group quietly makes their way to the flimsy metal
door.

Sandy grabs Bobby's hand, Dwayne grabs his other hand.

They all share a glance, they've been here before.

Arm in arm they leave the basement and step into...

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A limousine and a few cars crawl up the dusty gravel
road.

A DOZEN MOURNERS exit the vehicles

They make their way into a field of headstones.

They all gather around a particular headstone overlooking
a large empty hole. The headstone reads:

Bobby Stranhiem
1996 - 2023
Loving Husband & Father

The Caretaker leaves the group and heads toward the
limousine.

The group is completely ignored by the mourners as they
approach the silver casket being unloaded from the back
of a hearse.

The Caretaker greets the mourners.

Stepping out of the limousine is...

JUDY STRANHIEM(27) Heavy with child. Filing out after her
is STEVEN STRANHIEM(6) He clutches on to his mothers
dress as the Caretaker greets them.

Sandy looks to Bobby with a profound sadness.

SANDY

Quite a turn out. You're a modest
one aren't you?

BOBBY

What happens now?

SANDY

It's different for all of us, but
we can't wait to show you.

Bobby's face fills with a bitter-sweetness. Broken that
his life was cut short, but excited for what comes next.