

SO LITTLE DONE, SO MUCH TO DO.

Written by

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INT. BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD - DAY

Impressive building, all domed ceilings, ornate sculptures and shelves that go on for miles.

GERALD SAUNDERS, 50s, spectacles, and an academic air bordering on smug, points ahead.

GERALD

And which College did you say?

BETH CARTER, black, early 20s, scruffy jacket, and torn leggings, follows behind clutching a dog-eared satchel.

BETH

Oriel.

GERALD

Great History department, I was Head of it for a while.

BETH

I know, your legend lives on.

Gerald grins at the compliment, doesn't spot her sly smile.

GERALD

Until the Bodleian called. Well, they wrote actually, but not on parchment.

Gerald chuckles. Beth stares blankly for a moment then laughs when she realises it was meant as a joke.

BETH

They were lucky to get an Historian of your stature and wit.

Gerald blushes and puffs up with pompous pride as he stops in front of an impressive antique cabinet.

GERALD

Our rarities collection.

Beth peers into the cabinet, well over a hundred books on display in all shapes and sizes.

BETH

Wow.

Gerald smiles.

GERALD

I assembled it, the books that is,
not the cabinet, it wasn't from Ikea.

He chuckles again, Beth humors him again and laughs along.

GERALD (cont'd)

I have the key, if you'd...

BETH

Really, could we?

Gerald makes an exaggerated show of looking round to make
sure the coast is clear - in a library that's not difficult.

GERALD

Well, we are from the same College.

He pulls out an ornate key and turns it in the lock.

With a theatrical flourish, he takes a separate key from his
wallet, almost drops it, and then waves it conspiratorially.

GERALD (cont'd)

Can't be too careful.

He inserts it in a hidden keyhole on the top of the cabinet.

The door creaks as it opens.

GERALD (cont'd)

Pardon me for squeaking.

Beth laughs out loud, not because it was funny.

BETH

And are these all --

GERALD

Originals? Yes, yes, they are.

Beth looks suitably impressed.

BETH

Which --

GERALD

Is the most valuable?

Beth's turn to nod.

He extracts a small book expertly bound in red leather.

GERALD (cont'd)
To us, this one. The Rhodes diary.

He hands it to her to inspect.

BETH
Cecil Rhodes?

He nods.

BETH (cont'd)
The greedy massive racist, Rhodes?

Gerald peers at her over his glasses, noticing her skin colour properly for the first time.

GERALD
Er, yes. Though we like to think of him as a colonialist with, er... views appropriate to his time.

BETH
Views that he used to justify getting rich off the sweat of the natives?

Gerald looks disconcerted by Beth's change of language and overtly sarcastic tone.

GERALD
Well, I could see how **you** would perceive it that way.

BETH
Perceive it that way because I'm black or because I'm an intelligent, independent thinker studying at the best University in the world?

Gerald looks extremely uncomfortable now.

GERALD
Well --

Beth takes a small hourglass from her satchel and places it on a shelf. The sand runs as she thumbs through the diary.

GERALD (cont'd)
What's that for?

Beth smiles and waves the diary at him.

BETH

It's the sands of time, Mr Saunders,
and they are running out for this.

GERALD

No, no, stop this, right now.

BETH

(quoting)

He did say, "We must find new lands
from which we can easily obtain raw
materials and at the same time
exploit the cheap slave labor that is
available from the natives..."

GERALD

Well, yes, but I think he is a
somewhat misunderstood figure.

BETH

What, a somewhat misunderstood huge
fucking racist type figure?

GERALD

He did good things too.

BETH

Before or after he said, "Africa is
still lying ready for us, it is our
duty to take it."?

Gerald considers his words.

GERALD

Well, he loved education and set up a
scholarship to this very institution
and generously funded Oriel too.

BETH

I am aware of the irony that I attend
a college funded by a proud racist.

GERALD

He wasn't alone!

BETH

What, there were other massive
racists back then? Amazing! What
progress we have made.

GERALD

Well, that wasn't what --

Beth points at the hourglass.

BETH
About thirty seconds left to convince
me this is worth saving.

She pulls out a Zippo lighter, flicks it open, flame on.

GERALD
It's the only one in existence.

BETH
Not good enough.

GERALD
It's historically important.

Beth shakes her head.

GERALD (cont'd)
It's...

BETH
Ten seconds or the racist's words
burn.

GERALD
You can't!

BETH
Five seconds.

GERALD
It's, it's... how we will teach
future generations to be better!

Beth looks at Gerald, stares into his eyes, searches his
soul for the truth. She clicks the lighter shut.

BETH
And if you don't use it for that...
I'll be back.

She hands him back the diary, turns on her heels and
saunters towards the exit.

MS HOBSON, Head Librarian, you can just tell, pokes her head
around the cabinet.

MS HOBSON
Bloody good job you didn't show her
the handwritten Mein Kampf.