

BELOW  
(SAMPLE)

by  
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**LOGLINE:**

When two 1940s outcasts discover a hidden society living underground who have voluntarily removed their own eyes, they must decide whether to return to their former restrictive lives or stay in a community where they are welcomed... so long as they amputate a part of themselves.

THE SOUNDS OF MILLIE SCRAMBLING AROUND IN THE DIRT.

MILLIE:

Hello? ... Hello, is anyone there?

EDGAR:

Enh.

MILLIE:

Oh thank Mercy. Hi! Hi. I'm coming towards you. I think.  
Say something else. Anything.

EDGAR:

Unh.

MILLIE:

Just like that. I'm on my-

EDGAR:

Ow!

MILLIE:

Oh, sorry. Hi! I'm Millie.

EDGAR:

(groggy)  
WhrmI?

MILLIE:

Sorry?

EDGAR:

Where am I?

MILLIE:

In a pit. I think.

EDGAR:

I can't see.

MILLIE:

...right. It's a pit.

EDGAR:

Hold on. I think I might have...

EDGAR DIGS AROUND IN HIS POCKET.

EDGAR:

Yes, here.

A CIGARETTE LIGHTER CLICKS.

MILLIE:

You look just like I thought you would.

EDGAR:

Okay...?

MILLIE:

Lucky you have that - do you smoke?

EDGAR:

It's my father's spare. He says that now that I'm almost a man I should start smoking. It's distinguished.

MILLIE:

Hm.

EDGAR:

I just... haven't quite managed to get used to the taste. Yet.

MILLIE:

My aunt Eustace smokes. She always smells like a campfire after you've poured water over it. I suppose that's distinguished, in an ashy sort of way.

EDGAR:

Right.

MILLIE:

You should put it out for now, though - we might need it to last.

EDGAR:

How long are you planning to spend in here?

MILLIE:

Who knows? I wasn't planning to be here at all.

THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER GOES OUT.

MILLIE:

Funny, somehow it seems even darker after the light.

EDGAR STARTS WHEEZING, TRYING TO BREATHE.

MILLIE:

Are you alright?

EDGAR:

(through his panicked breathing)  
Help!

MILLIE:

Are you afraid of the dark?

EDGAR:  
Help!

MILLIE:  
Here, give me the-

A CIGARETTE LIGHTER CLICKS ON.

EDGAR:  
Help!

MILLIE:  
Okay, so that didn't work.

THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER GOES OUT.

MILLIE:  
But at least you're breathing so - you're fine. Sort of.

EDGAR:  
Help!!

MILLIE:  
Right. I'm going to go explore a little. Feel free to continue that for as long as you need to.

EDGAR:  
HELP!!!

MILLIE:  
Yes, quite.

EDGAR CONTINUES SCREECHING IN THE BACKGROUND. MILLIE MAKES HER WAY OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PIT.

THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER CLICKS.

MILLIE:  
Oh! I found something! Er - Boy! Stop shouting, I *found* something!

EDGAR:  
Are you talking to me?

MILLIE:  
Who else would I be talking to, the spider?

EDGAR:  
Wait, there's a spider?

MILLIE:  
Spiders are the least of our worries right now.

EDGAR:

I don't like spiders.

MILLIE:

I made up the spider! Boy, do you want to know what I found or not?

EDGAR:

My name is Edgar.

MILLIE:

Alright, Edgar, do you want to know what I found or not?

EDGAR:

Yes.

MILLIE:

A rope.

EDGAR:

A... rope.

MILLIE:

Yes. A rope hanging down.

EDGAR:

So we have to climb a rope to get out? That sounds hard.

MILLIE:

No, there's a rope going down.

EDGAR STARTS TOWARDS HER.

EDGAR:

I don't understand. We're inside of a pit. How does the rope go down?

MILLIE:

There's a hole. Big enough for us to squeeze through, I think.

EDGAR:

There's a hole inside of the larger hole and a rope hanging down the hole?

MILLIE:

Yes.

EDGAR:

Okay. *Why* would we want to go down?

MILLIE:

Because up is apparently not an option at the moment.

EDGAR:

That doesn't make any sense!

MILLIE:

Of course it does! And I don't hear you coming up with anything else for us to try instead.

EDGAR:

HELP!!!

MILLIE:

I mean besides that.

EDGAR:

I'm not going down a hole.

MILLIE:

Fine. You stay here - you can keep Ralph company.

EDGAR:

Who's Ralph?

MILLIE:

The spider.

EDGAR:

You said you made up the spider.

MILLIE:

I lied.

EDGAR GROANS.

MILLIE:

Please come? If you do I'll give you back the cigarette lighter.

EDGAR:

You're bribing me? That belongs to my father.

MILLIE:

Sorry, no, here - I'm not bribing you. I'd just like to have a friend with me.

EDGAR:

We're not friends.

MILLIE:

Not yet. Think of it as an adventure?

EDGAR:

I hate adventures.

MILLIE:

Yes, I thought you might.

THE SWISH OF MILLIE STARTING TO CLIMB DOWN THE ROPE.

TRANSITION TO:

A LOW QUIET THUMPING IN THE DISTANCE.

MILLIE:

Okay, there's another fork up ahead. I think we should go left.

EDGAR:

Why?

MILLIE:

I'm pretty sure that's the way towards the sound.

EDGAR:

Are you sure we want to go towards the sound?

MILLIE:

No.

EDGAR:

I hate this.

MILLIE:

...

EDGAR:

Millie? Millie are you there?

MILLIE:

I'm here.

EDGAR:

I said I hate this.

MILLIE:

I heard you.

EDGAR:

Then why didn't you respond?

MILLIE:

It seemed like you were talking to yourself. How am I supposed to respond to you hating this?

EDGAR:

Well, you could maybe say something reassuring?

MILLIE SIGHS.

MILLIE:

Don't worry, everything will be alright.

EDGAR:

How d'you know?

MILLIE:

I don't. I'm saying something reassuring.

EDGAR:

It feels like we've been crawling for an hour.

MILLIE:

It hasn't been an hour.

EDGAR:

But it feels like it.

MILLIE:

I'm starting to regret letting you come.

EDGAR:

You insisted that I come!

MILLIE:

Only because I knew you'd be more scared staying behind!

EDGAR:

No I wouldn't!

MILLIE:

Really? Up there, in the dark, by yourself, with spiders crawling all around you?

EDGAR:

Stop that.

MILLIE:

Countless spiders with *so many legs*. All crawling on top of you.

EDGAR:

Okay! ... My arm's starting to cramp.

MILLIE:

Don't think about it.

EDGAR:

There's nothing else to think about.

MILLIE:

Spiders.

EDGAR:

Stop it.

MILLIE:

We should sing. To pass the time.

EDGAR:

I don't sing.

MILLIE:

Okay, then I'll sing.

MILLIE STARTS TO SING A POP SONG IN THE STYLE OF "MURDER, HE SAYS" OUT OF TUNE. IT'S PAINFUL.

EDGAR:

You sound like a wailing siren.

MILLIE:

I'd like to hear you do better.

EDGAR:

I told you, I don't sing.

MILLIE:

I don't sing, but that doesn't stop me. And you stopped thinking about your arm cramping, didn't you?

EDGAR:

...yes.

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN, EDGAR STARTS TO QUIETLY HUM A WORDLESS LULLABY. HIS VOICE IS LOVELY.

MILLIE:

Oh Edgar. I thought you said you couldn't sing.

EDGAR:

I said I don't. Father says singing isn't masculine.

MILLIE:

Your father is a fool.

EDGAR:

Take that back!

MILLIE:

Fine, I take it back. But at least on this issue, he's foolish and he's wrong. Edgar, singing like that is a gift from God. And God only gives us gifts that we're meant to share.

EDGAR:

It's not all that.

THE THUMPING GROWS LOUDER AS MILLIE AND EDGAR GET CLOSER TO THE SOURCE. AND THEN, SOFTLY, FAINTLY - VIOLINS PLAYED IN TIME TO THE CLOMPING. A WALTZ.

MILLIE:

Do you hear that? A waltz. Why is there a waltz underground?

EDGAR:

Why is there anything underground? Why are we underground? Why were we in that pit in the first place? Millie, are you sure that we should be going towards-

MILLIE:

Shhh.

EDGAR:

Don't shush me.

MILLIE:

No, really, shhh.

THE MUSIC IS DEFINITELY A WALTZ, WITH LOUD CRESCENDOS OF STOMPING AND CLAPPING IN TIME TO THE MUSIC.

MILLIE:

Use the lighter.

EDGAR:

I thought you said we should conserve it.

MILLIE:

I said we should conserve it for when we really need it. I think this counts, don't you?

THE CIGARETTE LIGHTER CLICKS. MILLIE GASPS.

MILLIE:

Oh my. Edgar, do you see that?

EDGAR:

There are over a hundred of them.

MILLIE:

No, not that.

EDGAR:

Not that?? Millie - there's an underground Ball!

MILLIE:

Yes, there is. But Edgar, look at their faces.

EDGAR:

I still can't see anything, it's too dim.

MILLIE:

Try. ... Now do you see it?

EDGAR:

... None of them have any eyes.