

AUDITION TEXT

Grim Willard – BOY CHILD

The Boy Child - 12 years old. An orphan of unknown origin, boy child has been raised in near seclusion by an elderly couple. He's bookish, quick as a whip, yet socially awkward, as he has little experience with kids his own age. And by the way, he happens to be mute, although this doesn't mean that he's non audible.

The voices coming in over the speakers, Mr. and Misses Wexton. Old as the hills, they're not trying to be mean, it's just with how their voices are projected through the speakers that it makes their voices akin to the sound of fingernails scratching a chalkboard. In essence the listener should be left unsure as to whether or not they are good people, or uncaring evil step-parents.

Chapter 7 The Boy Child

Trapped in his knotted blankets, sweating, still stuck in his dream. Actually, let's call it for what it is. If this isn't a nightmare he's experiencing, then I don't know what is. Stressed, he would be flailing as he's falling, except for how the blankets have his arms and legs pinned. He would also like to breath, only he feels like someone is covering his mouth, not to mention he is in the middle of an extended, silent, ear splitting, dream scream.

Just as he and the girl are about to meet their end, just as he sees the sharp point of a rock about to meet his face, a harsh sound cuts his nightmare short.

A speaker barks at him. Thankfully, just in time, it drags him out of his dreams.

Now, the hangover from a nasty dream, complete with the residual fear, the stress, the accompanying sweat, the knotted blankets, the racing heart, is enough to make any head ache, but what is currently really hurting the boy's head, and let's make no mistake about this, is the insidious mind piercing sound of that voice emanating from a speaker placed next to his bed.

Harsh, ear splitting, brain cleaving, it's an unpleasant sound which he is all too familiar with as it is a sound which consistently accompanies the start of most every day he's lived. And no, it's not the sound of an irritating radio host. Nor is it a buzzing alarm speaking in a high pitch. Nor the recording of the crowing of a rooster, it's not even the irritating metal on metal clanging you would hear with a Big Ben styled alarm clock. Nope, it's something much worse than that. It's THEM!

To clarify, when I referred to THEM!, I'm referring to those responsible for this sound, as I'm referring to the two whom are currently attempting to roust the boy out from underneath his down filled comforter.

For our boy, it matters not which one is calling him, either the cackling high pitched sound of her voice, or the rasping, throat clearing, sound of her husbands, in either case, the way their voices are magnified and distorted by the speaker, it's like he is being woken up by the worlds most disturbing ear shattering alarm clock!

That's right, each and every morning this boy's day starts with the amplified and crackling shouts, nay, the nagging of one, or both, of these voices. In this particular case it's her. Loud enough in normal circumstances, when fed through this speaker, it turns her whispers into yells.

'CHILD! Roust yourself! You have your chores to do!'

This is followed with a grunt, the clearing of a phlegm filled throat, followed by a frustrated voice asking an oft asked question.

'Why do I always have to remind you?!'

Not wanting to hear this, despite knowing that he can't escape his fate, he curls up, he buries himself deeper under his covers. But that doesn't stop her amplified voice from getting through.

'CHILD! GET UP! THE FIRES ARE LOW!'

I have to tell you, even with being buried deep, with his quilt now being clamped over his ears, her voice is still able to cut through not only the quilt, but the flesh and bones of his hands, doing this as easily as a hot knife cuts through butter.

Knowing he can push things for at least a few more minutes, hoping to further deaden the sound, he adds to his defenses by further covering his head with one of his pillows.

About the resistance he's putting up, he's motivated as he desperately wants to go back to sleep, as he was up half the night reading. Mind you, there was that nightmare. Already an unpleasant shadow memory, at best, it left him feeling out of sorts and hollowed out, and worst of all, more tired than when he first went to bed. Only, with that ratty old voice, with its high pitch, the way it cuts into his skull, he deep down knows that he has already been defeated, as it has already done its job, just as she knew it would. But this doesn't mean he's willing to give in.

'BOY! Don't you know that our old bones can't take this chill!'

This bit she delivers in a complaining and particularly shrill manner.

Despite knowing he's already defeated, hoping that she will now give up on him, at least for now, he does what he can to slow his breathing, to slow his thoughts, as he tries to recapture his dreams. Not the nightmare part, but the kind of dream he was having earlier.

By the way, he knows perfectly well that her shrill voice comes from a place of comfort, for she too is in bed, and likely buried under a heavy quilt blanket. In her case, he knows that she's also in her comparatively warm, snug as a bug, bedroom. A place she intends to stay until well after the fire she expects him, the boy that is, to get started. The fighting flames of which she hopes will be enough to vanquish the damp and cold which swept in over the night. Something which she feels wouldn't have happened if someone, him, the boy, that is, had, last night, remembered to close the patio's door.

Just so you know, she's talking to him with the help of what he refers to as her Howler. A thin sounding, crackling, intercom system which happens to have a speaker not so far from where he has his bed. They had it installed there as they assumed, based on how he was often slow to respond to their demands, that he must be half as deaf as they are in their dotage.

Again, when I say 'THEY' I am referring to her, his tutor, a retired archive research administrator, and him, her husband. Now retired, he was once the library archive's head curator. The boy knows them as the Wextons.

About their apparent impatience with him; the fact is that the boy in question is twelve years old, soon to be thirteen, and not too many twelve year olds can be accused of being particularly good listeners; particularly when the words spoken to them primarily include a long list of chores

Speaking of, the Howler screams out again, only this time it's Mr. Wexton.

'Boy Child! Listen to your Tutor! If you're happy enough with us wasting away, that's fine, just know that the cats are hungry, and judging by what is...'

Here the boy can hear old man Wexton sniffing the air like an old bloodhound.

'... greeting my nose, all of, and I mean ALL of the cat's litter boxes... NEED CHANGING!'

This last bit, even though it has been delivered by the less shrill head curator's voice, still makes the boy wince. Not so much on account of its pitch, rather how he talks with such a fractured cadence. Truth is that it seems like after roughly every half a dozen words, that he has to pause, as he chews on his thoughts, and then, with his thoughts processed by his molars, swallow..., before moving on. Trust me when I say that this long drawn out fractured way of speaking can be more than a little challenging to listen to. Kind of... ah ... monotonous..., if you... ah ... know what I mean.

As if to punctuate Mr. Wexton's last demand, suddenly, and may I say startlingly, a large weight lands smack down on the boy's head. In fact, this weight, with how it's settling in, is threatening, with the help of the pillows, to suffocate him. As if this first airborne assault isn't bad enough, it is quickly followed by another. The second one lands on his hip. Evidently there are others in agreement with the Wextons.