

On The Hill

A clifftop at sunset. Sea birds flock in the ocean below.

The ocean is battered by far-off rain.

A gluttonous party can be heard in the distance.

Oma enters, wearing an ill-fitting dress and dirty trainers. They radiate anger.

They swiftly climb up the path to the top of the hill.

They ride up the skirt of their dress to their hips, revealing boxer shorts underneath. They sit cross-legged. They rustle their hair.

They spit on their fingers and rub away at their makeup.

They put in their earphones and play music on their phone.

Oma begins to silently cry.

A feather lies on the ground. They pick it up and fiddle with it. They come close to ripping it.

They rip at the grass instead.

Their crying becomes audible.

It gets louder.

Louder.

Louder.

They scream.

Someone is approaching, but Oma does not hear them.

Oma shifts, pulling in their knees and hugging their legs.

A man enters in a bland suit and coat. He is unassuming.

He struggles climbing the path.

Chris: Hey there kidd...

...

...

...

Alright.

He reaches the top.

He slowly approaches Oma, and leans around their side.

Chris: He...

Oma: Go away.

Chris: You alright there, kiddo?

*Oma turns their music down.
They swiftly wipe away their tears.*

Chris: Kiddo?

Oma: Uh huh.

...

I just wanna sit.

Chris: How long? Your mum is already worrying, you know how she gets.
Come on, we don't have time for this.

Oma: Sure.

The sun is almost set.

Oma: Go away. Ain't it your party?

Chris: I want you to be there.

Oma: Tough.

Chris: It's already dark. We've not got long left.

Oma: Good.

Chris: Kid, there's no time for this, just come back and...

Oma turns up their music.

Chris: ...we can all have a good last night before...

...

Kid?

Chris realises Oma can't hear him.

He is exhausted.

Chris takes a few steps back. He takes off his coat and lays it on the ground. He sits.

The rain is louder, but still far off.

Chris keeps looking back at the party.

Oma's music shuts off.

They take out their phone. It is out of battery.

Oma starts humming.

Chris checks his watch.

Chris: Come on. If you come now we'll dodge the rain.

...

You don't have an umbrella...

Jo...

Oma: *(now standing)* Will you just fuck off, uncle. I don't care about your stupid party. I don't care about the rain.

If anything, I'm waiting for it to come and you will get scared and run back inside leaving me in peace. I'm not going back. Ever. So stop trying.

Fuck. Just fuck off. I just want to be alone and I want you to leave. Fuck off Chris, you sad, lonely, worthless piece of shit.

Chris: I'm the happiest I've ever been.

Oma: You look like you're about to cry.

Chris: We never wanted you there anyway.

Oma sits back down, back to Chris.

Chris stands, resigned.

He picks up his coat.

He stumbles back down the cliff and leaves.

It is fully dark now.

No moon.

No stars.

The rain is louder, slowly getting closer.

Birds sing and scream after it.

Oma does not listen.

They stare at the oncoming rain.

Until...

Oma: Piece of shit.

Oma takes out their earphones.

They push themselves to standing.

Holding it by the wire, they dangle their phone over the edge of the cliff.

Chris: *(off)* Wait!

Oma: They lock you out?

Chris enters. Panting.

Chris: I brought you something.

Oma: I don't want...

Chris: Power bank. Umbrella. A couple of sausage rolls.

Oma: I...

Chris: If you want, keep my coat as well. Can you help me up this bit?

Oma: You can just leave...

Chris: Give us a hand, would you?

Oma: Whatever.

Oma goes to Chris and takes the items off his hands.

They allow Chris to hold their shoulder as he climbs.

They reach the top.

Oma: I told you to fuck off.

Chris: Didn't I?

Oma: Why (*are you back*)?

Chris: Why don't you come back?

Oma: These rolls are warmer than I thought.

Chris: They just got cooked.

Oma: Isn't this your umbrella?

Chris: You need it more.

Oma: Well, you good now? Done your good deed for the year. Surely you want to get some of the food for yourself if it's freshly cooked?

Chris: You want some too?

Oma: I've got some.

Chris: Indeed.

Oma: So, I'm just gonna sit here for a bit. You sure this bank is charged?

Chris: Maybe. Was in your mum's bag.

Oma: Maybe.

Chris: Why don't you come back?

Oma: No.

Chris: Come back. There's no time.

Oma: No.

Chris: Do you hate us that much?

Oma: Sure.

Chris: Really?

Oma: This look like a liar to you?

Chris: I just wanted to...

Oma: You want me to come back so you can control everything.

Chris: You don't want to come back because you're being a brat.

Oma: I hate it there.

Chris: I didn't mean it like...

Oma: Yes you did.

Why do you want me to come back so bad? Not like we'll be here to remember it anyway.

Did you ever think that people may want to spend time alone right now rather than being forced to perform for a family full of strangers?

Chris: I want you back because it would mean I get to see everyone one more time, together. We were happy way back when.

I want that back. Just for tonight.

It would mean so much to me.

Oma: No.

Chris: Everything would feel complete.

Oma: I'm gonna be honest. I want the rain to come.

I can't wait, because then it means that everything can just be gone and done and I wouldn't need to think about pretending anymore.

Chris: I understand.

Beat.

Chris: I understand.

I have lived for so long, and never have I felt like I belonged anywhere.

I always find a way of fucking everything up.

The family will use any excuse they can to get rid of me.

The only reason everyone showed up tonight was because no one else was doing anything, and your mother sweet-talked them to death.

Oma: I thought mum hated you.

Chris: Times like these do weird things to people.

Pause.

Oma: I really want to tell you to go away.

Chris: Can I sit?

Rest the bones a bit?

Oma nods.

Chris sits on his coat on the ground.

They listen to the birds calling.

Oma remembers they have the power bank.

They take it out, and plug in their phone.

They do not put in the earphones.

Oma: What happened to you?

Chris: Ah, no matter.

Oma: Mum won't tell me. I keep asking but every time she only tells me that you had 'fallen out of line'.

Tell me.

Chris: A shit life. That's what.

Oma: You have until the rain gets here.

A bird feather tumbles down from the sky.

Chris: After all that happened with Angela.

I lost it.

At your mum.

At everyone.

I was going mad.

It was all Angela's fault, you know?

A bird feather falls down from the sky.

Chris: I did some bad things.

I regret everything I did.

You know, your aunt made me return my copy of her house key because of what happened that summer.

But I never stopped loving the family.

A bird feather falls down from the sky.

Chris: I put on this party.

I wanted to see everyone one more time before...

Before I won't be able to anymore.

Oma: Even if everyone is miserable.

Chris: I guess.

Oma: Even if I ran away?

Chris: I'm glad you did. You made me realise they're not really worth it.

Several bird feathers fall from the sky.

Chris: Fucking birds.

Oma: Fucking birds.

Chris: This happen often?

Oma: Not really. Maybe they just don't like you.

Chris: That's fair.

Oma: No it's not.

Chris: I want to do something.

Oma: Do it, then.

Chris: When you were dangling your phone like you did, it gave me a moment of inspiration.

He takes out his wallet.

He takes out a photo of Angela.

His ex-wife.

Oma: Nice.

Chris rips it apart.

He holds it over the edge of the cliff.

And...

Let's go.

Oma: Better?

Chris: It looks like feathers from this far.

Oma: Good. I never liked her anyway.

Chris: What?

Oma: People only took her side because she bribed them. Or that she was a better liar than anyone.

Chris: Bitch.

Oma: Bitch.

Chris: Total bitch. God, this rain has the birds riled up tonight.

Oma: You know, I managed to save one as a kid?

A chick got left in the nest, so I climbed the cliff and took it to the ground.

Fed it some canned tuna and it perked right up.

Took it to the vet after.

It was proper cute.

Chris: You ever find out what happened to it?

Oma: Yeah, they sent me pictures. Wanna see?

Chris: Go on, then.

Oma shows the pictures to Chris on their phone.

Oma: Well, you've had your moment.

You gonna ask me to come back to the party again?

I'll hate you.

Chris: No.

But tell me why.

Oma: I love this place so much.

Because it's not in there.

I ran away because...

Because...

Because I don't have to pretend here, hide here.

Back there, it's like I have to encase myself in steel with no room left to breathe.

Here I can take all that off.

I can rip it away like paper and it floats away.

This damn thing (*their dress*) ... is like chainmail that's too small for me.

Give me your coat.

Chris: The mud...

Oma: Give me your coat.

Chris stands and gives his coat to Oma.

Oma hangs it over their shoulders.

Oma turns their back to Chris.

The dress flies away.

It disintegrates in the wind.

And becomes like the feathers.

Oma: I want to show you something.

Chris: Now?

Oma: Yes, now.

I want you to see me.

Oma drops the coat.

Their clothing has changed.

They are wearing smart suit shorts, a patterned shirt and a bow-tie.

There is a pin of a hawk on the shirt pocket.

More feminine elements may be added to the outfit if desired by the actor.

Oma: Can you see me?

Chris: Who are you?

Oma: Me. I'm Oma.

Chris: It suits you.

Oma: Yeah, it does.

Oma makes a strong pose, hands on their hips, chin raised.

They laugh together.

Chris: Nice to meet you, Oma.

Oma: Your turn.

Chris: *(starting to put his hands on his hips)* You want me to...

Oma: Who are you?

Chris: I'm Chris. Single. Happy. Your uncle.

Oma: Hello Chris!

Chris: Your friend?

Oma: Yeah, friend. You're not all bad.

Chris: That's a relief.

They laugh together again.

Something has been lifted.

Shed.

As they enjoy each other's company, feathers from the sea birds fly out towards the rain.

The rain engulfs them and makes them disappear.

The rain approaches.

Oma grabs the coat and hangs it over their heads.

The rain comes.

It is happy.

Oma sticks out a hand.

Chris does the same.

Oma throws off the coat and rips off their shoes.

Oma: Pick a song.

Chris: Wh(am)...

Oma: Something I know.

Chris: Uh ... just shuffle your phone.

Oma: Can do.

Chris: You know the...(words)?

Oma: One sec.

Oma plays the song through their phone.

Chris removes his shoes.

They dance in the rain together. Singing their song.

The rain continues down the hill, and engulfs the stage.

Screams and yells can be heard in the distance.

Sirens. Alarms. Hurried shouts.

The music takes over. It swells.

The world is about to fall apart.

But not for them.

Chris.

Oma.

It is finally for them.

If only for now.

Blackout.