

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MISS SIMMONS' (early 30s, small build, blonde, pristine hair pulled back into a clip) classroom is alive with chatter. The desks are set out in neat rows with the entire wall of windows letting the daylight in. There are individual desks with students (14/15 years old) reading and writing with pens and pencils strewn out on the table.

Miss Simmons is teaching English Literature. She holds a copy of JOSEPH CONRAD'S: HEART OF DARKNESS in her hand as she meanders through the various desks.

Two children at the back are throwing notes between one another as others are deep into their work. The classroom is alive with chatter nonetheless as Miss Simmons makes her way between students.

The walls are littered with student work: posters, essays, pictures. Every-so-often, we see a crumpled poster with the acronym: 'ALICE' printed onto it. What the acronym stands for is unclear, all that is visible is the word and the symbol next to it: a gun surrounded by a red circle with a line through the middle.

Miss Simmons arrives at a student, Jordan (14 years old, brown hair, his clothes simple and unexciting) as he messes with his collar and he leans onto his hand. He is scribbling on the paper. He has had several attempts at spelling the same word over and over again but still has it wrong. He is defeated.

MISS SIMMONS

Hey, Jordan. How we doing?

JORDAN

What do you think?

MISS SIMMONS

All you have to do is ask for help. If you don't ask, we won't get very far.

JORDAN

There's literally no point.

MISS SIMMONS

No one's judging.

JORDAN

Whatever. I just don't care anymore.

MISS SIMMONS

Hang in there. You'll figure it out.

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PHONE DINGS.

Miss Simmons makes her way back over to her desk and picks up her phone. She has a text message from her mom:

"HEY JOANNA, CALL ME TONIGHT? HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN A WHILE. I MISS YOU."

She replies:

"SORRY MOM, REALLY BUSY ATM."

Her mom replies quickly:

"OKAY. DON'T FORGET TO BOOK THAT SESSION :)."

Miss Simmons rolls her eyes and puts her phone into her bag.

LUCAS (O.S.)
Hey loser!

The kids, LUCAS (14, tall, brown hair, jock in a basketball jersey) and HOLDEN (14, blonde, his clothes scruffy) are throwing balled up pieces of paper at the back of Jordan's head and several people are sniggering around him.

HOLDEN
Got any friends left?

LUCAS
Hahahah, yeah right. He'll
fucking die alone.

MISS SIMMONS
Excuse me, Lucas! Warning.

The boys just laugh at Miss Simmons' attempt to shut them up. Holden leans forward to the end of his desk to get closer to Jordan.

HOLDEN
(reaching and giving Jordan
a noogie)
You're a freak, you know that?
We'd be better off without you in
here.

Jordan just hides his face in his hands, giving up completely. Lucas just laughs along.

MISS SIMMONS
Holden! Okay. Both of you.
Detention.

LUCAS
What? I didn't do anything!

MISS SIMMONS
I hear any more out of you,
you'll be in detention for the
rest of the week.

THE BELL SOUNDS.

A collective groan.

MISS SIMMONS
(clapping her hands
together)
Okay everyone. It's time.

More groans.

MISS SIMMONS
I know. Just a small break from
our lesson while we go through it
again.

The children start whispering amongst themselves.

CHILD 1 (O.S.)
Jesus.

CHILD 2 (O.S.)
I hate this. Every month.

MISS SIMMONS
(hearing their concerns)
School policy. Sorry guys. The
quicker we start, the quicker we
can get on with our day.
(to herself)
The quicker I can get on with my
lesson.

Final groans mixed with reluctant movements as the students
prepare themselves for the usual announcement.

MISS SIMMONS
Okay. So-
(beat)
In the event of an active
shooter, we will follow the
instructions on the posters up
all around school. Just think-
(beat, gesturing with her
fingers)
"ALICE".

A beat. The BELL RINGS for a prolonged time.

MISS SIMMONS
Everyone stay calm. Grab your
desks, huddle together, out of
sight of the door.

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Following instructions, the students flip their desks over; creating a kind of barricade. They all huddle behind each other as Miss Simmons takes her own place under her desk.

MISS SIMMONS
Everyone remain calm. At the
first opportunity, we will
evacuate.

The faint sound of running footsteps can be heard in the hallways. Subtle but enough noise to add panic in the students' faces.

Silence.

MISS SIMMONS
Okay. Everyone make your way out
of the room. Stick with your
buddy-

Each child grabs onto another student as they prepare to leave the school.

MISS SIMMONS
Great. Stay calm. Heads down,
straight to the exit.

The students make their way to the classroom door. All waiting in a group. No one opens the door and they remain with their backs to Miss Simmons.

Miss Simmons gets up from under her desk and grabs her copy of Heart of Darkness again. Finding her page, she is ready to continue her lesson.

MISS SIMMONS
(down into her book)
Right, okay.

She looks up. Her students are still stood in the group they formed, looking at the door.

MISS SIMMONS
Guys? Come on.
(beat)
Please take your seats. The drill
is over.

The bodies remain motionless.

MISS SIMMONS
Hello...? What's going on? Not
the time for jokes, guys.
Seriously.

The students turn their bodies in unison, stopping halfway as their heads continue turning; all staring at Miss Simmons, eyes locked on her.

MISS SIMMONS

What the-

BELL SOUNDS.

Miss Simmons stands by her desk once again, exactly where she did at the beginning of the previous drill. She still holds the same piece of paper that she had been reading from. Her brows furrow as she scratches her head, looking rapidly around the room for any kind of hint.

MISS SIMMONS

(to herself)

What is going on?

Miss Simmons walks around her desk, ready to pick up the book once again. Clearly not knowing what to do, she tries to continue like it is any other lesson.

GUNSHOTS. The students jump up, knowing exactly what to do. They flip the tables over like we have seen previously and Miss Simmons, following her own instructions from before, takes her place underneath her desk.

An icy chill sets over the room. GUNSHOTS start getting closer. The classroom gets darker as the only noise is rapid breathing from the children and Miss Simmons.

SILENCE.

MISS SIMMONS

Great. Stay calm. Heads down,
straight to the exit.

The students make their way to the exit, just like before. Miss Simmons follows now, quickly giving a headcount to the group.

MISS SIMMONS

19, 20, 21-

(beat)

21? Who's missing?

(beat)

Anyone?

CHILD 1 (O.S.)

Miss?

Miss Simmons turns to see nothing but desks. She scans the room looking for where the voice could have come from. Her eyes focus on a flipped desk at the end of a row. To the side, a hand lies palm up, fingers twitching slightly.

Blood flows from behind the desk. Slowly, a pool of blood is building up around the child's hand.

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MISS SIMMONS

Oh my God-

Miss Simmons starts to race to the student but-

BELL SOUNDS.

Miss Simmons is in front of her desk again.

The gunshots get louder now and the footsteps are faster.

More people are running up and down the halls than there were before. Sharp breaths can be heard both inside and outside of the classroom.

Screams after each gunshot and something hitting lockers; metal slams against metal.

Miss Simmons hides under her desk again. She discards the information in her hand, looks to and from her terrified students.

Students are running around the classroom, grabbing anything that could aid them. Some are holding chairs up in front of them, ready to protect themselves. Others are hiding in the back, books and backpacks cover their heads.

MISS SIMMONS

EVERYONE STAY UNDER YOUR DESKS!
NOW!

No one listens. Some even start to leave; running chaotically towards the exit.

MISS SIMMONS

NO! Stay in the classroom! What
are you doing?

CHILD 2 (14 years old, blonde, blue eyes, rigid looking clothes) opens the door forcefully and is instantly stopped in his tracks. Riddled with bullets, his body ricochets backwards.

BELL SOUNDS.

This drill is even faster than the last. Simmons stands in her place, runs around and under her desk. Gunshots getting closer still. This time, dead students are dotted around the classroom already.

Simmons' eyes are wide and her breathing is fast. Tears stream as she slaps her face as if trying to bring herself back to reality. She gets out from under her desk and runs up to the children on the floor. They stare straight up at the ceiling, unresponsive.

MISS SIMMONS

I don't understand.

BELL SOUNDS.

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The cocking of a gun.

Children sprinting through the halls.

Lockers smashing.

Motionless bodies litter the ground of the classroom. Some hands hold pencils, rulers, anything that could act as a weapon.

Papers cover the floor and the blinds are destroyed.

Miss Simmons stands in front of her desk once again. She makes her way to the door; the furthest she has been in any of these experiences. She pries the door open and looks up and down the hall. Her breathing is heavy and she is hugging the doorway.

As she looks down the hall, there are one or two shadows of children on the floor. The more she looks up and down the hall, the more bodies and the more details to their deaths are uncovered.

Faces are covered in splattered blood, the bodies sit in pools of liquid as the expressions of each victim are captured even in death. Children look horrified, their eyes saying it all. They went painfully.

Miss Simmons backs up into the classroom door, opening it once more with her back. She meanders through the bodies strewn across her floor.

She continues to walk backward, looking to and from the students she has grown to know and love. As her back hits the wall, she slides down it. She lets herself fall as she pulls her knees up to her chest. She covers her ears with her hands-

MISS SIMMONS

Please. Please. Please. I need it to stop.

She opens her eyes, she is still in the classroom.

MISS SIMMONS

This isn't real. It isn't. Just a horrible nightmare.

Again, she opens her eyes. Her classroom is still covered in blood.

BELL SOUNDS. It is prolonged and overwhelming. Miss Simmons shakes her head viciously.

MISS SIMMONS

No, no, no, no, no, no. I can't do it again.

The BELL SOUND can still be heard.

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MISS SIMMONS
Please, please, please, please-

JORDAN
Miss Simmons!

The sound stops. Miss Simmons pulls her eyes open finally. Cringing with her face expecting the worst. She finally brings her hands down from her ears. She looks out over the classroom where everything seems normal until finally focusing on Jordan's face.

JORDAN
Are you okay?

Miss Simmons slows her rapid breathing down. She realises everything is normal.

MISS SIMMONS
I'm fine.

JORDAN
No you're not.

More students join behind Jordan now that Miss Simmons is back to normal.

JORDAN
You were just frozen.

MISS SIMMONS
Jordan, I'm fine.

A teacher stands at the door, arms crossed, putting his phone away in his pocket. MR DAVIES (50s, smartly dressed) has furrowed brows, shaking his head.

MR DAVIES
Miss Simmons? I think we need to talk.

The students looks astonished with them doing double takes from Miss Simmons to each other.

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN. PHONE RINGING. A PHONE CLICK.

MISS SIMMONS
Hello?

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There are slight changes to Miss Simmons' surroundings. The once decorated, busy walls had been stripped down to only the essential displays. Student work was still hanging but only on one notice board rather than the entire room.

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Now, the other walls had been redone. Only the ALICE poster remained now, no longer crumpled and much bigger than before, the information can now be read:

A - ALERT
L - LOCKDOWN
I - INFORM
C - COUNTER
E - EVACUATE

MISS SIMMONS
(still on the phone)
I know. I get it, Mom.

Miss Simmons is leaning on her hand whilst on the phone and doodling into her diary as she hears the response.

MISS SIMMONS
Okay okay. Can you not?
(beat)
No, you don't need to do it for me. I know it's a problem. My problem.
(beat)
You don't get it.

She pauses again. Nodding along to the indistinct response coming through the phone.

MISS SIMMONS
I know. I've made one. I'll speak to him and see what I can do.
(beat)
I've got an important meeting now so anything else will have to wait.
(beat)
Yes it is important. A kid that I'm worried about. Okay, thanks Mom. I'll see you soon, bye.

The last shot is of Miss Simmons' diary. There is nothing planned for the upcoming October break other than *grading student work*.

She flicks through the few days during the break and finally stops on:

MONDAY 1ST NOVEMBER.

There is one thing scheduled in for 9:00am:

FIRST THERAPY SESSION :).

KNOCK KNOCK.

MISS SIMMONS
Come in!

The door opens, it is Jordan.

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JORDAN

Hey.

MISS SIMMONS

Hey, Jordan.

Jordan does not say anything, he just sits down in front of Miss Simmons' desk.

MISS SIMMONS

Okay, so. I just wanted to talk to you about a couple of things.

JORDAN

Okay...

MISS SIMMONS

I've noticed you're having some trouble with the other kids.

JORDAN

It's not that bad.

MISS SIMMONS

Regardless, I want you to feel like you can talk to me.

JORDAN

Yeah, yeah. I know.

MISS SIMMONS

I get what it's like in High School. There are plenty of people that are here to help though.

JORDAN

Miss, I'm not gonna do anything stupid.

MISS SIMMONS

I never said you would. I'm just trying to help. Okay?

JORDAN

Okay?

THE END

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