

THE OTHER TRUTH

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BUS (MOVING) - DAY

Wearing a PALE DRESS under a HEAVY OVERSIZED JACKET, WOMAN 1, 30/35 curls up in a corner seat, her face bearing the signs of distress and worry.

She glances over at the other passengers:

A family - FATHER and MOTHER, 40, both impeccably dressed, their eyes fixed on her - and their BOY, 5, playing with a TOY GUN; when his eyes meet Woman 1's, he aims the gun and pretends to shoot her. His mother gently covers his eyes and moves his face to the other side.

A MAN WITH GLASSES, 60, observes her from behind the newspaper he's pretending to read. He takes his mobile phone and makes a call, whispering incomprehensible words while staring at her.

THE BUS DRIVER, 30, smirks at her from the rear mirror.

Woman 1 opens the external pocket of her worn-out RUCKSACK to fish out a CRUMPLED SLIP OF YELLOWED PAPER. Scribbled in a hurried handwriting are the words "*Merciful Angels' House*".

She stares at it for a second, then folds it and stuffs it back inside the pocket.

She looks out the window: they are approaching a bus stop.

She is about to press the STOP button when the bony hand of an OLD WOMAN, 85, does it for her. Woman 1 watches her walking down to the exit, dragging her walking stick across the floor with a SCREECHING sound.

Woman 1 grabs her RUCKSACK and follows the old woman to the exit, struggling to maintain her balance as the bus shakes and wobbles.

She discreetly queues up behind the old woman, aware of all those inquisitive eyes following her movements.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The bus screeches to a halt, leaving Woman 1 along a deserted road.

It sets off, revealing no passengers inside.

Woman 1 walks on the road for a few yards then intentionally takes a little path that disappears into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Woman 1 walks through tangled foliage-less branches, her breath forming little puffs in the air.

She stops to take off her RUCKSACK, sits down and takes a slow deep breath.

Silence.

Suddenly, the sound of SOMEONE WALKING TOWARDS HER.

She looks around: no one is there.

Silence.

A GUN SHOT hits the tree immediately behind her.

She jumps up.

Another GUN SHOT hits the ground right at her feet.

She grabs her rucksack and runs off, chased by REPEATED GUNSHOTS and noises of DOGS BARKING AGGRESSIVELY.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The woods abruptly break into an open field with nowhere to hide.

Woman 1 stops for a moment, panting.

A TALL DARK BUILDING becomes visible in the distance.

The noises of GUNSHOTS and BARKING DOGS approach her.

She runs across the field.

EXT. ENTRANCE OF THE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Woman 1 reaches the entrance of the building, which reveals to be an abandoned empty shell, with hollow windows and boarded-up doors.

Looking back to see if anybody has caught up with her, she frantically bangs at the door, impatient to be let in.

A figure appears behind the dirty glass.

WOMAN 2, 30/35, wearing a loose HOSPITAL GOWN, opens the door.

Woman 1 goes in without hesitation.

INT. BUILDING, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Woman 2 ushers Woman 1 along an empty corridor, the only light coming from a few ajar doors dotted at the sides.

WOMAN 2
(neutral)
How many are following you?

WOMAN 1
(confused)
I don't know. I ran as fast as I could.

Woman 1 looks around and peers through the doors: they give in to empty bare rooms.

WOMAN 1 (CONT'D)
Just us???

WOMAN 2
(inscrutable)
They were all taken away... One by one.

The corridor never ends.

WOMAN 1
Where??? I didn't see any of them out there...

The corridor gets darker and darker; the glimpses of light filtering through the doors become feebler as they walk past them.

WOMAN 1 (CONT'D)
Are you feeling better?

WOMAN 2
(a light smile of accomplishment)
I'm healed now.

WOMAN 1
So... why are you still here? You can go!

Woman 2 doesn't reply.

WOMAN 1 (CONT'D)
Are they coming to pick you up?

WOMAN 2
My mission isn't over yet.
Let me show you to your room.

INT. ROOM WITH A BED - NIGHT

Woman 1 lies in bed, Woman 2 pulling a WHITE BLANKET over her body.

WOMAN 2

It's good you found your way back.
Nobody can hurt you here.

Acting like a nurse, Woman 2 pulls out some straps attached to the bed and firmly fastens them around Woman 1's wrists, which are showing signs of healed cuts.

She takes Woman 1's rucksack.

WOMAN 1

Can I keep it?

WOMAN 2

You won't need it. I'll keep it
safe for you.

WOMAN 1

Thank you.

Woman 2 closes the door behind her.

INT. ROOM WITH A BED - LATER ON DURING THAT NIGHT

Woman 1 is asleep.

A SCRATCHING NOISE - like of something being carved into a hard surface - pierces the silence.

(N.B. The following lines are intended to reproduce different voices in Woman 2's head, by changing the tone with which they are delivered)

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)

(in her own voice)
Where are you? Will you be coming
to see me?

(as voice 2)

You are safer without me. I'll be
back soon.

(in her own voice)

When??? We could walk in the snow,
holding hands and digging our feet
into the whiteness...

The snow covers all shameful
things... it lulls them to sleep...

(as voice 2)

I'll be back soon, when the snow
melts...

(in her own voice)

Why? I'm... I'm not sick, I'm not
sick... they know I'm not...

(MORE)

WOMAN 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Sometimes I imagine that I'm an
 angel...

Woman 1 opens her eyes, a nerve at the side of her eyelid
 twitching as the SCRATCHING intensifies.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...and I can hear a
 stream...flowing in my chest... A
 stream of compassion for you, for
 me...for the entire mankind...
 (whining in her own voice)
 Mmmmm.....mmmmmm.....mmmmmm...
 (as voice 2)
 It's just thought disorder!
 (whining in her own voice)
 Mmmmm.....mmmmmm.....mmmmmm.

Woman 1 wakes up and sits on the bed, her eyes filled with
 tears of terror, her jaws clenched.

The SCRATCHING now deafening.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (as voice 2)
 You see??? You can't even express
 yourself!!!
 (in her own voice)
 Don't leave me here, please,
 please, I'll do whatever you
 want!!! I'll forget about the
 snow... I promise...
 (as voice 2)
 No you can't! You CAN'T PROMISE
 ANYTHING! Look at you! You don't
 serve a purpose...YOU MUST BE
 LOCKED AWAY!!!!!!

Woman 1 screams ferociously, fighting with the straps.

WOMAN 1
 Get me out!!!!!!!!!! OOOOOUUUUUUUT!!!

She passes out.

INT. ROOM WITH A BED - DAY

Woman 1's eyes open and squint in the sunlight.

Woman 2 is sitting on the bed; she looks as though she has
 been crying all night.

WOMAN 2
 (shaken)
 The gunshots have stopped. Nobody
 will find us anymore...

WOMAN 1

Are you OK?

WOMAN 2

Do you think we ever existed?

The two Women hug; their lips touch before curling against each other in one bundle. The bed has no straps.

INT. ROOM WITH A DESK - DAY

Woman 1 walks along the perimeter of the room, her gaze down on the floor, her hand sliding lazily along the wall.

At the centre of the room is a desk and two chairs facing each other.

She glances out the window and sees:

HERSELF sitting on the grass, wearing her pale dress, her head wrapped inside a white cloth, her wrists bandaged. She sits relaxed, as if admiring the landscape before her. Next to her sits a MAN, 45, seen from the back and wearing a HEAVY JACKET. The two seem engaged in a flirty conversation. They get up and he guides her towards the entrance of the building. Before she goes in, he kisses her lips through the white cloth that covers her head.

Woman 1 can't take her eyes off them; she makes it to the door but she is stopped by Woman 2 on the threshold.

WOMAN 2

Sit down.

After a brief hesitation, Woman 1 does as she is told.

The two women sit at the desk, facing each other in a mirror-like image.

WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)

(passing an envelope to
Woman 1)

He's coming.

Woman 1 opens the envelope and reads the letter. She frowns in confusion.

WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)

How does that make you feel?

WOMAN 1

How long have we been here? Do you know?

WOMAN 2

A day. Ten years. Time hovers above our heads, then it disappears.

WOMAN 1
(looking towards the
window, alienated)
We are ready.

INT. ROOM WITH A BED - NIGHT

Close up on Woman 1 in bed, covered by the white blanket,
sleeping peacefully in a foetal position.

The SCRATCHING NOISE begins.

WOMAN 1 (V.O.)
Do I look nice? Before I came here,
he was in love with me... do I look
the same now?
(beat, hastily)
You need to do something for me.

Woman 1 opens her eyes and sits upright on the bed to listen.

WOMAN 1 (V.O.)
Take our message out there. Tell
everybody that the truth is here...
that WE are the bearers of the
original truth.

Completely naked, Woman 1 gets up and walks purposefully
towards the door.

WOMAN 1 (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Don't let them spoil its purity,
don't let it go unheard.
(whispering)
I promise...

Woman 1 leaves the room.

INT. ROOM WITH WRITTEN WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The blinding whiteness of the snow coming from the open
window fills up the entire room.

At the four sides are rudimental benches; the walls are
completely covered with meticulous graffiti, except for the
areas immediately above the benches, where the wall has been
left untouched in the shape of human busts, as if somebody
had once sat there.

Unaware of Woman 1 coming in, Woman 2 is on her knees
scratching the wall. She is wearing Woman 1's PALE DRESS.

WOMAN 2
(to herself)
I have been here since it last
snowed, I was here to touch the
flakes...

She scratches the words "*I was born free*".

WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)
I was born free.

She drops the carving tool on the floor, catatonic.

Woman 1 reaches the window in awe of the snow outside.

Someone WALKS into the room and reaches Woman 1 from behind:
it's the man with the heavy jacket, towering above her.

Woman 1's eyes fill with tears of happiness, as his arms wrap
around her in a passionate embrace.

He kisses her on the back of her neck.

She closes her eyes, fully immersed in the joy of the moment,
not noticing that he is slowly detaching from her.

He leaves her alone against the light of the snow; she is now
wearing a hospital gown.

Woman 2 is no longer in the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Against a gloomy sky, the man walks out of the building, a
RIFLE across his shoulder.

By his side is Woman 2, carrying Woman 1's rucksack, her gaze
down in passive acceptance. Hidden in her hand, a crumpled
slip of yellowed paper.

FADE OUT.