

THE MISDELIVERED MUMMY

The Residents' River of Crime/Episode #3

CHARACTERS:

Narrator: Middle aged man, pleasant but slightly paranoid

T. E. Lawrence - Sophisticated British accent

Mother: The narrator's mother; slight southern accent; she's in her early 30's

Teenaged Narrator: Teenaged boy 16 or 17 years old

Bill Lancaster: Man in his mid 30's; Australian accent

Miss Poulailier: High school french teacher; mid 60's; French accent; easily flustered

Chubbie Miller: Woman in her early 60's; Australian accent; unpleasant

INTRO

NARRATOR/INTRO

Our lives are constantly surrounded
by unseen streams ...numerous,
invisible rivers composed of love,
power, success, pain ...all that we
detest and desire. Some we navigate
with ease, some we seek forever
...and some are simply whirlpools,
spinning us into oblivion.

While I am not a criminal, crime
has stalked me from an early age.
At this point, I can only see my
life as an unending collision with
evil, leaving me with but one
conclusion: I ride the river of
crime.

(New music - Episode
theme; continues
under...)

INTRODUCTION TO EPISODE #3 - LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

A distinguished voice speaks with a British accent

T. E. LAWRENCE

Those who dream by night in the
dusty recesses of their minds wake
in the day to find that all was
vanity; but the dreamers of the day
are dangerous men, for they may act
their dream with open eyes, and
make it possible.

NARRATOR

Those are the words of T.E.
Lawrence, you probably know him as
Lawrence of Arabia. I love that
goddam movie, ...huge ...heroic
...gutsy, but it does get kinda
weird in the second half ...then he
dies tragically in a motorcycle
crash, kinda like Sid Vicious or
Jesus or or Princess Diana. But he
loved the desert, and this story is
about another dreamer in the desert
...two deserts really ...one where
someone dies and another one inside
someone's mind. The crime here is
suicide ...or maybe murder ...no
one really knows.

CHORUS

Someone dies - in the desert
Someone dies - in their mind
A lack of loving made them fester
Like a boil in brine
(musical interlude)

SCENE 1 - THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS...

A doorbell rings.

MOTHER

(shouting)
I'll get it! (then softer) It's
probably just the mailman.

After a brief pause a door shuts, then footsteps are heard.

MOTHER

(to herself)
It mainly looks like junk mail.
I'll look at it later.
(shouts again)
I'm off to the store. Watch your
sister.

The door slams shut again.
(brief musical interlude)

NARRATOR

My mother was in a hurry that day
...so much of a hurry that she
didn't notice a small package,
wrapped in brown paper and hidden
among the magazines, catalogs, and
junk mail that she dropped on the
coffee table. But Sherlene, my four
year old sister, whose world
coincided with the two foot height
of the table ...instantly spotted
it. And, since her birthday was
coming up soon ...and wonderful
things arrived in the mail around
birthdays...

Small cooing sounds are accompanied by the ripping of paper.

NARRATOR

...she ripped that sucker open like
a shark slicing into a fat man's
stomach. But unlike the shark,
happily munching away on his tubby
burger, little Sherlene only found
a book ...an old worn book with no
pictures. (pauses) ...and that's
when I entered the room and saw the
diary lying on the floor.

CHORUS

Discarded diary on the floor
Discarded diary on the floor
Leads you on a twisted trail
Like a lonely tattletale
Whose secrets are ignored
(brief musical interlude)

SCENE 2 - THE DIARY

BILL LANCASTER (AUSTRALIAN ACCENT)

I have just escaped a most
unpleasant death....It was pitch
dark, no moon being up. I tried to
feel her down but crashed heavily
and the machine turned over. When I
came to I was suspended upside down
in the cockpit.

(MORE)

BILL LANCASTER (AUSTRALIAN ACCENT)

There was a horrible atmosphere in my tiny prison, saturated with petrol fumes. By worming my way around and scraping sand away with my nails, eventually I corkscrewed my way out into the open. My eyes were full of blood which had congealed, but eventually I managed to get them open.

CHORUS

Coagulated blood
Coagulated blood
The rusty red crud
Like cherry colored mud
Encased his face in blood

NARRATOR

The diary was apparently the last account of a pilot who crashed in the Sahara desert. Even stranger, along with the diary was a letter addressed to a "Mrs. Chubbie Miller," who lived a few blocks away. The weird part is that this letter was written on what looked like, and I swear it's true ...like the official stationery of the French Foreign Legion.

SCENE 3 - FIFI

NARRATOR

The French teacher's name was Miss Poulailler. She was about 200 years old, looked like a giant tree frog and was known to all the kids as "Fifi." Everyone agreed that she was totally out of it. She also listened to this weird French pop music ALL THE TIME.

A CLASSROOM - DAY

A knock on the door is heard.

TEENAGED NARRATOR

(hesitant)

...uh excuse me, Miss Poulailler?
Could I talk to you for a minute?

MISS POULAILLER

...eh? What's that? Speak up young man? What class are you in? Parle en ton nam!

TEENAGED NARRATOR

I'm sorry, m'am. ...uh, I'm not in one of your classes, but, uh, I have a kind of unusual letter here that I need translated. ...uh, can you help me, Miss Poulailleur?

MISS POULAILLER

...letter? What letter? I don't know anything about a letter. (pauses) ...HUH? What have you got there, young man? Let me see it?

TEENAGED NARRATOR

...uh, thanks, m'am. Here it is
...uh, thanks.

MISS POULAILLER

(mumbles) Monsieur, Madame, Je suis au regret de vous faire savoir que... (then louder) Legion Etrangere? This ...this letter is from the Foreign Legion, young man! Where did you get this?

TEENAGED NARRATOR

...uh, it was delivered to my house by mistake, m'am. I need to know what it says ...uh, please ...m'am?

MISS POULAILLER

...well, I mean, hoo hoo ...the French Foreign Legion...

NARRATOR

Okay, I'm sure by now you must be getting the picture. The old bag hummed and hawed, and grunted and snorted for what felt like a couple of weeks but I finally got her to tell me that the diary belonged to a guy named Bill Lancaster, who crashed in the Sahara desert back in early 1930's. That's where the French Foreign Legion found him 30 years later. But here's the part that really got her.

MISS POULAILLER

...un cadavre momifié (louder) UN
CADAUVRE MOMIFIE! A MUMMIFIED BODY!
...is this some kind of joke, young
man? I don't have time for...

TEENAGED NARRATOR

NO M'AM! It's not a joke. It was
delivered to my house by mistake
...please go on.

MISS POULAILLER

WELL! HUMMFFF! I don't know...
(continues her endless
texture of grunting,
snorting and chirping)

NARRATOR

Yeah! His body was, like,
mummified! ...right there in the
Sarah Desert! It was like he became
Boris Karloff or something. Well,
finally the letter said this Chubby
Miller was the only person
connected to Lancaster who was even
still alive, so they sent the diary
to her. Oh yeah, the old bag
thought I stole it or something.

MISS POULAILLER

...you didn't steal it did you?

TEENAGED NARRATOR

...uh, no. I just wanted to know
what the letter said before I took
the diary to her ...uh, thanks,
merci.

MISS POULAILLER

...you take it straight to her, you
hear? It's a valuable ...artifact
ooo ...my goodness ...Foreign
Legion ...ooo

(musical interlude)

SCENE 4 - TRUE LOVE KNOWS NO DESERT

NARRATOR

Well of course, I had already read the entire diary. I mean, how could I not read it. It mainly talked about loneliness and love, in ways that reflected a great sense of dignity and passion, but also a curious void, not unlike the writer's surroundings. Thinking about this guy, sitting next to his wrecked plane in the middle of the desert, desperately clinging to his one great love, a woman named Chubbie, while counting every drop of water slowly sliding down his swollen throat ...it really got to me. But the weird thing, the unexpected thing, was that he kept referring to a trial, and how he wasn't guilty ...that it HAD to be suicide ...and that, more than anyone else, he knew that Chubbie believed in his innocence. As Bill Lancaster's life faded into the relentless oppression of emptiness and heat, Chubbie's belief in his virtue and honor swelled into a beacon, lighting the darkness of his dying moments. The diary ended with the following statement:

BILL LANCASTER

Chubbie my sweetheart, my essence is only an ember, fading far from the fire that is you. I have only myself to blame for everything. That foolish, headstrong self of me.

CHORUS

Love is like a ladder
Surrounded by mad hatters
Looking for the ladder
Of Love
(musical interlude)

SCENE 5 - THE LOVELY CHUBBIE

NARRATOR

Overwhelmingly compelled by my growing curiosity, but also a little apprehensive, I stood outside the door of Chubbie Miller's house. Anxious to meet the object of such passion, I knocked on the door.

A knock is heard; the door opens.

CHUBBIE MILLER (AUSTRALIAN ACCENT)

(harsh)

What do you want, kid?

NARRATOR

While I knew not to expect the blazing inferno of amour described in Lancaster's 30 year old diary, I was still not prepared for the lack of grace embodied in the 60 year old chain smoker standing in front of me.

CHUBBIE MILLER

I SAID, WHAT DO YOU WANT, KID?

TEENAGED NARRATOR

(timidly)

...uh, uh, this, uh, diary was delivered to our house by mistake, Mrs. Miller. It, uh, belongs to you.

CHUBBIE MILLER

GIMME THAT, KID!

NARRATOR

As Chubbie Miller furiously thumbed her way through the diary, I looked around the living room. The open fireplace was welcome on a chilly winter evening, but the rest of the room was dingy and cluttered, reflecting the world of someone whose needs were both sad and solitary.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)
 Despite the messiness of the room,
 my eyes were quickly drawn to a
 small inconspicuous object: a
 framed photograph of a young woman
 cheerfully standing in front of
 shiny new biplane. But the curious
 part was the photo was torn, with
 one side missing. At that point,
 Mrs. Miller closed the book and
 looked up.

CHUBBIE MILLER
 Yeah, okay, kid ...thanks.

TEENAGED NARRATOR
 Is that you in front of that plane,
 Mrs. Miller? Were you a pilot?

CHUBBIE MILLER
 HUH? Yeah, kid ...yeah, I was the
 first woman to fly from England to
 Australia ...it was a long time
 ago, though (she coughs again)

TEENAGED NARRATOR
 And, uh, what happened to the other
 part of the picture, m'am?
 Something seems to be missing.

A moment of silence is interrupted by the harsh voice of
 Chubbie Milller.

CHUBBIE MILLER
 THE BASTARD! THE GODDAM BASTARD!!!

TEENAGED NARRATOR
 M'am? ...excuse me?

CHUBBIE MILLER
 That goddam bastard killed the only
 man I ever loved! ...shot him dead!
 ...the bastard ...they had a trial,
 but they let him off. THE BASTARD!"

TEENAGED NARRATOR
 Are ...are you sure, m'am? I mean
 ...if they had a trial and all...

CHUBBIE MILLER
 WHAT DO YOU KNOW, KID? WERE YOU
 THERE? WHAT DO YOU KNOW, YOU LITTLE
 ASSHOLE!!! (she coughs again) Where
 are my goddam cigarettes?

TEENAGED NARRATOR
 ...but ...but ...maybe the diary,
 Mrs. Miller ...maybe it says
 something.

CHUBBIE MILLER
 THIS PIECE OF SHIT!

NARRATOR
 Raging with bitterness and bile,
 Chubbie Miller grabbed the diary of
 her long lost lover, and with one
 swift motion, threw it into the
 fire, then turned back towards me.

CHUBBIE MILLER
 GET OUT! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!
 ...YOU LITTLE BASTARD!"
 (musical interlude)

EPILOGUE

NARRATOR
 Once again I stood outside the
 door, freezing in the harsh winter
 wind, but also flushed with
 humiliation and shame. Wedged
 between the extremities of
 Lancaster's dying words and the
 rage of a bitter, used up old
 woman, I was left to wonder: was
 Lancaster's glowing passion an
 isolated fantasy, the product of a
 mind corrupted by solitude and
 pain, or had Chubbie Miller's love
 somehow transformed into some toxic
 bile spewing anger and despair?
 Haunted by visions of a dried and
 decaying body desperately clinging
 to its last precious words, I
 remembered another quote from T.E.
 Lawrence.

T.E. LAWRENCE
 Thirsting to punish appetites he
 could not wholly prevent, he took a
 savage pride in degrading the body,
 and offered himself fiercely in any
 habit which promised physical pain
 or filth.