

Manor Characters

Ivy

****Scene**:** Ivy's room, lit with a bare bulb. Ivy is sitting on the trundle bed, looking out the large square window onto the deck. Watchers come in and look along the left side of the bed. Ivy is dressed in work clothes, tomboyish.

"I was born in 1912, 17 years old when the Market opened. I was the youngest girl working there and stayed in this small room downstairs. Some thought me tall and thin, called me a tomboy, but coming from the farm and having run away from my mother, a well-known temperance woman, I was always happiest when I got in a good day's work.

They gave me menial chores around the Market, one of which was gathering the greens for the salads and herbs used in the Market and The Club next door.

I knew better than anyone where to go to fetch the good stuff; heck, I fenced some of it off from the bears. I left some outside the fence so they would leave mine alone...

They all warned me about the bracken ferns that were common in the valley. 'Only pick the small, young stems,' they told me, 'never the large, older ones, they're poisonous,' they'd say. As if I didn't know, a farm girl and all. Silly city folk, if you ask me.

I left abruptly after that dinner party at the Market went awry. Well, it started as a simple thing, not meant to be a dinner party. Twelve people were coming for dinner—people staying in the surrounding cabins, up for a week to get out of the Los Angeles heat.

Around 2 in the morning, there were people knocking at the front door frantically. I was the only one on the first floor. I answered the door and found a family of four that had been at the dinner party, doubled over with cramps.

Soon, the other eight were back at the Market, lying on couches, chairs, some on the floor.

Truth be told, and I can tell it. I knew they were going to die, each and every one of them. I just didn't know they would all come back to the Market and die that very night.

I saw them all moaning, and well, I always heard it would take a while—days even—for the Bracken Fern to work. But there they were.

I'd done it many times before. They were all nasty people. What they did at the Market with the other ladies, well, that was wrong.

Anyway, I saw them dying, and the sun coming up, and me there all alone. I didn't think, I just ran. I ran as far and as long as I could.

Then I stumbled and fell into one of the small creeks a few miles back on the rim and caught my ankle.

I heard the crack in my ankle before I felt it. It was god-awful. It swelled up real bad, right away! I couldn't walk on it.

At 6 in the morning, the rest of the girls would have woken up to find the 12 dinner guests, now all dead in the living room, and I was gone, never to be heard from again.

I know what they thought, or at least what they said. I remember the stories well.

A bear later that day saw to it there wasn't much left of me to be found. Thankfully, I died quickly. Probably the moment the bear tore my neck open, I died. I never felt it at all, and my ankle stopped hurting, all at once.

The world went black. I have no idea for how long, but it did. And then I was awake. Sitting here, forever, along with those people."

****She points outside her room.****

"Are they still out there dying?"

****She looks, then pulls back.****

"My god, when will they move on? Well, at least I have my little visitor Brian. Have you seen him around? Ask Rose about him if you see her..."

Violet

****Scene****: Violet's room, Violet is sitting on the edge of her bed, holding a gun, staring out the window as the door is opened. Violet looks towards the door with a

somber look on her face. She weeps constantly. Violet has a bleeding wound in her abdomen, but no one can see it until she reveals it at the end of her scene.

"I was born to a beautiful mother and Irish father in 1910, and was 19 when the Market opened. I came here after my mother left me with my aunt and uncle. They hated me, or at least he did. The things he would say to me, the way they both made me feel.

But, I guess I blame my mother most. She left me constantly as a child. I taught her. Coming here and all. If she knew...

This was my room then, and, well, I guess it still is my room. Closest to the washroom, which used to be one of my extra chores at the manor—wash duty. I worked across the street in the dining room of the Club as well.

They used to call me Shy Vi, because I used to put on an act of being shy. The patrons liked it, and frankly, it kept me from having to make up a bunch of small talk.

My real fella was Joey, a young man that worked at the stables across the street. We would often hole up in this room, surrounded by the sounds from the rooms of the “working” girls who filled out the rest of the rooms in the market.

We were known as the lovers.

Then that man came here. I saw him show up on Friday, along with several other tough-looking guys. He must have gotten all liquored up Friday night because after midnight, I heard a banging on my door. Joey had just left through the window as he usually did. Well, after what happened to Ralph, all the guys were really careful. Haven’t met Ralph yet? You will.

I almost can’t remember much about the guy, just another drunk. Then he got violent. I tried to scream, but he put his hand over my mouth.

I awoke the next morning to find out that he had beaten me so badly I could barely walk. I told Virginia, and I’m sure she told Mr. Siegel, but he mustn’t have believed her.

The word was out that Joey was going to get it. No one thought he beat me; it was just the way they dealt with things. One takes the beating for someone else. Always someone paying for another man’s crimes.

But what Joey got was no beating. It was a cold-blooded killing. My Joey was dead. No one was ever really sure who shot Joey, or why he was shot, but it was all too much for me.

It was right here. Well, okay, so to be precise, it was outside this window. There used to be a trellis on the outside of the building, and Joey used to use it to come and go. He was shot just outside my window. I watched his face turn from that lover's look he always gave me, to a look of shock, to what looked to me like his soul leaving his body, as I raced to him, grabbing his hand while it was still holding on to the window sill, and felt the life leave him as he slipped from my hand to the cold, hard ground below.

I sat right here for what seemed like hours, though I learned later it was only a few minutes. I held onto a gun that Virginia gave me for protection. I know she loved me, I don't know why, but I always felt like she was watching over me. Except for that night. That night I couldn't have felt more alone.

We had made plans to leave at the end of that season, just a few short weeks away. We were going to travel north until there was no land left to travel. Now, without Joey, I just felt empty.

I wanted to be with him, like we had planned. To be with him forever and ever... So, I took this gun, and thought, if I kill myself, I'll be with Joey forever, and once and for all be done with this place."

****Violet continues to speak, hands covering a slightly revealing and growing blood spot on her abdomen.****

"I didn't know that if you take your own life, you don't go to heaven, you don't go to hell either. Actually, you don't go anywhere."

****Violet fully reveals the self-inflicted wound on her abdomen.****

"EVER!"

Rose

"I was 21 when the Market opened. Born a redhead, to two dark-haired, conservative Jewish parents. Lucky me.

I was always a bit of a handful. Never one to make my own life easier, I was always up for a party. And I loved the men, and they loved me.

Like a few of the other girls, I got pregnant, and some say I became quite the overbearing mother. I so loved my son, Brian.

Everything changed when he, now a growing, rambunctious 6-year-old, ran out into the small road between the Club and the Market and was trampled by a team of horses pulling a load of ice. Brian is still here at the Manor, and can be seen in the first snows of the season by his telltale tiny footprints.

I mean, if you need real signs like that to see him. I hear he's on the first floor most days. Stealing keys, locking people out. He's the same Brian as he ever was.

I moved back to LA after Brian died. I just couldn't stand it anymore. I would see him constantly but couldn't hear him. I'd see his mouth move as he tried to talk to me, but nothing came out.

Maybe I should have tried harder. I don't know, but after not seeing him for a week, I left. I felt a moment of freedom and just left him here. When I died, which was a mere 12 months after I left, I wound up back here. I know Brian knows I'm here. He's got to know I want to see him, but now, I can't even see him. I'm stuck.

Please tell Brian I love him..."

Camilla

"I'm Lola Katz. Sure, the door says Camilla, and the people that don't really know me call me Camilla. But please, call me Lola.

I'm not the first (air quote) 'Camilla.' There was at least one before me. I met her when I first came up here as a guest of Sammy's, my dear departed Sammy the Rat.

The original Camilla was a beautiful Latin girl, barely out of her teens when the Market first opened. She was dark-skinned, dark-haired, and known for her dark thoughts. She, like I am now, was the resident tarot card reader, fortuneteller, and séance guide.

We don't work, at least not like the other girls. They would never give me a (air quote) 'job' at The Club, nor would they ask me to do any of the cleaning at the Market. After all, they're afraid of me, I think.

So, the rest of this is as real as I can remember, and I remember it like it happened yesterday. Camilla grew to be one of The Club's favorite ladies and always had a suitor in waiting. That is until the winter of '38.

It was a bad winter, and with the roads being impassable for most of the season, both food and guests were in short supply. Camilla would hold her séances nightly, and with all of the death that had occurred in the 9 years since the Market had opened, there seemed to be an endless supply of spirits roaming about.

These nearly nightly sessions wore on while wearing down the other girls in the Market. The spirits seemed to know that the girls were basically trapped in their mountain home.

The facts are a bit sketchy, but from what I remember, it was after one of those séances on an especially cold winter night that Camilla was somehow lured out into the snow. Some said she was following a faint light that had appeared in this second-floor window, others claim that she was actually walking with a faint light which seemed to lead her deeper into the woods. Everyone agrees that she was barefoot, and not wearing a coat, as her boots and coat were still hanging in here.

I've seen the light, and I always look away as quickly as possible, but I can feel the pull.

Camilla was never seen again, dead or alive. Though I have seen her during séances. Heck, she may be here right now. I tell you, between her and Sammy the Rat's spirit, it's a wonder I ever get any sleep in this room, Camilla's room.

Now sit down and let me read your cards..."

Lilly

"My name is Lilly and I was 20 when the Market opened. I was always fair-skinned with light brown/blonde hair; even in the heat of the summer, I managed to stay 'Lilly White.'

Though I had my fair share of suitors over the 12 years I lived at the Market, I was still as pure as my 'Lily White' looks let on.

How could that be? How could I possibly still be innocent while working 12 years in a brothel?

Not being a man, I have never personally experienced this, so I'm a bit vague on the details, but what I can be certain of is that though I had many suitors over the years, none ever spent the night. It is said that there is something about my room, and the way the light does funny things to the shadows in the room. Whatever it is, whenever a man spends the night with a woman in this room, the man usually must leave no later than 2 am, when the shadows seem to take control of the room itself.

I never saw the shadows, and never understood why my guests would sometimes literally run from my room, but it wasn't until 1941 that I found true love. That's when Ralph started working here.

Ralph was always fond of me, but it wasn't until he had worked for her for a few months that I realized how much I cared for him. No, he never spent the night here in this room. We were never together like that, but I knew. I knew...

You don't know Ralph? You'll meet him upstairs.

If you are staying in my room, it might be a good idea to leave before 2, or just wait and see..."

Daisy

"Daisy, Daisy give me your answer do..." The Market had its own sweet Daisy, and she was, well, me. All of 5'2", and most people think scarcely over 18 when the Market opened.

I got my name from my sun-bleached blonde hair and freckled cheeks. For many years, I barely looked over 18, until that one summer—the one that changed everything. Everything...

I worked the night shift at The Club's bar and spent my summer days along the Arrowhead Lake shore. One night, one of the fellows talked me into a little rendezvous along one of the private portions of the shore.

The rules were always pretty clear at the Market. The girls could bring anyone back to their rooms, but they were not allowed off the campus at night. I thought since I had seen this fellow several times in the past, it wouldn't be a big deal.

It was.

After meeting him, and right when we started fooling around, we were interrupted. A group of goons staying in another part of the mountain seemed to come from nowhere. Maybe they were watching us all along. The goons, four of them, I think, went after that poor fella. He was struck in the head by a rock at one point, and left dying there on the shore. I was beaten, and handled badly, and left for dead myself.

The next morning, and I really don't remember this clearly as I was holding on to life, I managed to drag myself to a part of the shore I knew would be frequented and passed out. I awoke two days later at the Market, in my room, this room, and spent the next few days recovering.

I couldn't get those goon faces out of my head. So I started drawing pictures of the men, and stared at them endlessly. I vowed to take revenge.

No one knew what I did the rest of the summer. Everyone thought I was sleeping and getting better, when I was actually out by the shore most nights, laying in wait for those goons. I got my revenge before the consumption got me a few years later.

If you're out by the shore, late at night, and not treating your lady right, you better keep an eye over your shoulder all the time, 'cause most nights, I'm still out there looking..."

Dahlia

"I came here in the mid-30s. That was the year, not my age. I was a little older than the other girls, but we all got along.

Everything went along well, that is until that one night in '41. I'll never forget what I saw, and what I heard that night. I heard the struggle first, just above my room, in Jasmine, three maybe four guys roughing up Ralph. He was a good guy, not my cup of tea, but Lily was sure stuck on him.

Then, right when it sounded like they were done with him, I saw him fly past my window. I must have only seen his face for a split second, but here we are, all this time later, and I can hardly see anything but his face.

I watched what they did to him after he hit the deck below. It was horrifying. They dragged his limp body to the street, and then they brought that big truck they keep in the woods, and they ran him over, and over, and over... The blood, it was just horrifying.

After that, well, yeah, right after that, I started to go into these trances. They usually always resulted in blood-stained bedding, and a dead body to deal with. Heck, many a night Daisy came home to me cleaning up the blood in the bathroom we shared. It was unsettling, but it was a needed skill to have at the Market.

I was usually given the ok from Virginia Hill, and then I would play a tortured game of sex and murder with the poor, unknowing soul in my grip.

Enjoy the Dahlia, few ever get to enjoy her more than once."

Jasmine

"Born in 1904, Jasmine was a bit older than most of the other girls when the Market opened in 1929. This earned her one of the larger rooms on the third floor.

Jasmine was certainly one of the prettiest girls at the Market, and was a favorite of the guests, and especially Bugsy's personal guests from both Chicago and New York. She was so beloved by the New Yorkers that she often traveled to New York during the fall for Christmas shopping, where she would buy all the girls gifts.

This went on like clockwork until 1939. Celebrating her tenth year at the Market, she planned her fall trip, but this year she was going alone, not with a suitor. It was to be a special trip, her last living at the Market, as she planned on relocating to New York the following year.

The problem was that after she left for New York, she never returned, leaving behind all of her worldly possessions, and all of her friends, the other girls of the Market.

What happened to Jasmine? Why did she never return? No one knows for sure, but every Christmas a plain-looking card arrives with a handwritten note for 'all the girls.' The note changes each year, but the handwriting is the same, and there is never any postage or return address.

If these are actually being sent by Jasmine, that would make Jasmine over 110 years old...

Who am I, and why am I telling you about Jasmine?

Well, I'm Ralph, I was the caretaker back in the '40s. Who cares about me, right? So, I figured if I ever got the chance, I would tell the story of Jasmine.

Yeah, I made it up. Wouldn't you? I mean really, if you were stuck in this godforsaken room for eternity, wouldn't you make up stories?

I think I knew for years that this would be my destiny. Yeah, I fell in love with Lily. Is she still beautiful?

Mr. Segal was none too pleased with my newfound love. I told him I would never act on my feelings. Heck, I knew the rules, 'never touch the girls!' and I never did.

That didn't seem to stop Bugsy from having me killed. Right here in the room, they threw me out of that window."

Heather

"I was a bit old for the Market, being 28 when it opened, but I used my maturity to help the girls survive life at the brothel the Market quickly became.

I took my role as the older sister of the girls very seriously, sometimes kicking some of the cruder gentlemen out of the Market by force.

Those that had been kicked out knew not to cross me again, as I was known to be unforgiving when it came to anyone abusing MY girls.

In the winter of 1936, things came to a head here at the Market. There was a group of 'gentlemen' who stayed in the area for Christmas, and frequented the women's rooms nightly. One by one, I had to put them out, at least one a night, until the night before Christmas.

The Market was abuzz with holiday splendor. Music played, breads baked, sweets were out on all tables, and the girls were in an especially festive mood. Until shortly before midnight, when one of the guests dragged Lilly from her room claiming she was a witch, probably after seeing the strange shadows her room was known for.

I was having none of this. I grabbed the guest by his collar and tried to walk him down the stairs and out the front door, when he tried to scuffle with me. The man fell down the stairs, snapping his neck, killing him instantly.

With the snapping of the man's neck, something seemed to snap in me. Though this first death was surely an accident, what happened the next few nights was not accidental.

Facts are hard to come by, but hey, you're talking to me now. There were five more deaths the following five nights. And though none could directly blame me, all five died of a broken neck, and yeah, I did it.

Some folks called this part of my story ironic, I call it bad luck. On New Year's Day, while bringing linen downstairs from the third to second floor, I stumbled on my bed sheets, tripping and breaking my own neck. I died later that day of complications from my injury.

Some say I still walk the halls protecting MY girls. I do! And if you see me on the stairs, it might be a good idea to turn around, and never cross me, especially not on the stairs of the Market."

Fern

"My name is Fern, and I was the queen bee of the Market. After Virginia Hill, Bugsy's girlfriend, I was in charge. I gave out orders for the girls to follow, and I was never at a loss for words.

I was older than the other girls, clearly in my 30s when the Market opened. I always seemed to be sure of myself and knew the right answer to nearly every question the girls had.

Then, one day in 1942, all of my years of being in charge came to an abrupt end. Some say I was an attractive woman, heading into my 40s with my head held high. I had always worked hard, usually out-working the girls in my charge, but that didn't insulate me from the ire of the other girls.

No one can say for sure who started the fight that day, not even me, but the result of it will always be part of the history of the Market. It was a mild spring day, a little cloudy, but otherwise a beautiful day.

Most of the girls were in the front of the Market, working in the garden, pulling weeds, cutting fresh flowers, and generally cleaning up when there was an argument on the third floor, in my room.

By all accounts, all the other girls were outside, so it was never really clear whom I was arguing with. I had been cleaning the windows in my room, which required me to stand on the bed to get to the windows, and they said it made my silhouette appear clearly in the window.

Suddenly, with all the girls now watching, there was a loud crash, and I fell from the third-floor window, dying on impact.

Most of the girls looking on swore later that they had seen another person arguing with me, but after questioning all the girls staying at the Market, it was pretty clear that if I was arguing with someone, it wasn't one of the girls. At least not one that was still alive.

To set the story straight, it wasn't a girl at all I was arguing with, it was Ralph, back from the grave. He thought I should have warned him of the hit coming his way, but truth be told, I'd have helped throw him out the window if I knew about it.

Ralph won't tell you this, but though he claimed to love Lilly, he was constantly sneaking around the manor hoping to get a sneak peek at one of the girls changing, or in bed. He was a nasty man, and deserves to be stuck in Jasmine's room."

