

LOST SOULS

Written by

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Based on

The Island of Dr. Moreau

By H.G. Wells

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

As the hawk sees, wide and verdant country spreads below.
Flowing fields of green, thick groves, a winding

ROAD

A large sedan glides around a bend, rustles the high

GRASS

Waves over the head of a huddled RABBIT. It blinks, chews.

SEDAN BACKSEAT

Sunlight glitters on the window chrome. EDEN PRENDICK,
enthusiastic new teacher, a smile that glitters back, turns
from watching the passing scenery to the shaded cabin and

The grim DRIVER in his cap, leather gloves, dark glasses.

Eden studies him. Her smile divides by half.

EDEN

The school is remote, isn't it?

DRIVER

Yes, Miss.

She waits, as if hoping for more. Nothing.

EDEN

Is it--

DRIVER

A few miles, Miss.

She waits again. He offers nothing.

She settles back to looking out the

WINDOW

The sunlight glows on the tops of the high

GRASS

Another rabbit. A shadow above.

From overhead, the shape of a descending

HAWK!

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. RABBIT HUTCHES - DAY

An identical rabbit, safe behind wire mesh, chews away.
Rumble of the approaching sedan, louder, crunch of gravel.
Quiet. Chew, chew, chew. A car door opens. Closes. Opens.

Widen to

EXT. RESIDENCE - DAY

The rabbit hutches sit along one end of a large estate. The bifurcated building has one well-maintained wing and one fallen into disrepair, overgrown with ivy.

Driver pops open the trunk.

Eden stands beside the sedan, looks to the front stairs where

MONTGOMERY, second in charge of Residence, descends.

MONTGOMERY

Ms. Prendick. We're so delighted to
have you join us. Welcome!

Driver extracts a pair of cases from the trunk.

MOREAU (O.S.)

You may leave the bags, sir.

All eyes turn to DOCTOR LOUISE MOREAU, headmistress. At each side of her, muscular senior students, SASHA and DIANE.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Sasha and Diane will take the bags.
You'll want to be back before dark.

Sasha and Diane pass to either side of him. Sasha shoves a bill into his hand. He stumbles back with the force of it.

He examines the bill, looks back to Moreau. Nods.

DRIVER

Ma'am.

To Eden.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Miss.

The Driver returns to his door. Moreau's cold eyes track him as she closes on the other women. He ducks into the car.

Moreau joins Eden and Montgomery. The sedan rumbles to life.

MOREAU

Ms. Prendick. I am Doctor Louise
Moreau, headmistress of Residence.

Eden's reaches to shake Moreau's hand. Moreau's hands remain clasped. She offers a half-smile.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

The driver certainly took his time,
both coming and leaving. Montgomery
will show you to your room. Please
join me in my office in 30 minutes.

The sedan grinds gravel. Moreau pivots, departs opposite.

Flummoxed, Eden looks to Montgomery. Montgomery laughs.

MONTGOMERY

Well, that's out of the way.

EDEN

I'm, uh...

MONTGOMERY

She's worse than she seems, I
assure you.

Eden and Montgomery follow Diane and Sasha toward the stairs.

INT. EDEN'S CELL - DAY

A small, furnished room, dark painted, lace curtains over a small casement window. It could be the 19th century.

Sasha and Diane place Eden's cases beside the bed, wait for Montgomery and Eden to come through the door, exit.

Montgomery opens the curtains, lifts the window. Sunlight falls on the night table, a heavy Bible, wind-up alarm clock.

Eden steps to the table, opens the

BIBLE

A gilded Saint Melangell with a rabbit.

Eden nods toward the door.

EDEN
They seem a bit old for students.

MONTGOMERY
Diane and Sasha are two of our
longest residents.

Again, Eden waits for an explanation that doesn't come.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
The doctor appreciates promptness.
She will notice if you are on time.

The bedside clock. Tick. Tick.

Montgomery pivots, vanishes through the door.

Eden surveys the room: Open Bible, Saint Melangell.

Her rabbit.

Alarm clock. A joyful shriek through the

WINDOW

A cluster of uniformed students laugh and chatter around the

EXT. RABBIT HUTCHES - DAY

Senior ANNE-MARIE supervises the juniors, who do most of the work. GRETA dumps a tray of waste. BARBARA fills a water bottle. MADELINE scoops pellets from a sack, dumps them into a bucket held by BARBARA.

Diane and Sasha lurk at one end of the hutches.

NYMPHA, from a shady spot apart, watches them all. Nympha Montgomery coming, looks for something else to do.

INT. MOREAU'S OFFICE - DAY

Moreau pilots a large desk, a file folder open before her, resume of Eden Prendick; transcripts from a well-known liberal arts college, letters of reference.

A knock. Moreau closes the file, looks up to the

DOOR

MOREAU (O.S.)
Come.

The door opens. Eden enters.

Moreau looks to the

WALL CLOCK

The minute hand thunks forward.

Moreau's clasped hands again, now placed on the folder.

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Sit. Please.

EDEN
Thank you.

She draws back a chair, sits on its edge, leans forward.

EDEN (CONT'D)
I just want to say how excited I am
about this assignment, and I think--

MOREAU
You think you can make a difference
in the lives of these young women.

EDEN
Well, yes.

MOREAU
If I didn't already believe that,
you wouldn't be here, Ms. Prendick.
Your credentials and pedigree speak
for themselves.

Eden winces at the word "pedigree".

MOREAU (CONT'D)
Residence is an elite institution.
Each student requires particular
insight. My methods are bespoke,
perhaps unconventional, but I
achieve results. Your predecessor
overstepped the bounds of her role.
You cannot and will not be expected
to understand everything that
happens in our treatment regimen.
Your contribution is to academics.

EDEN
I understand.

MOREAU

I expect discretion. You will not mention the names of our students or the particulars of our treatments in correspondence unless authorized by myself. Montgomery will explain the rest.

Eden waits for more. Moreau is quite finished.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

Montgomery will explain the rest.

EDEN

I understand. Thank you.

Eden rises, turns, shuffles toward the door.

MOREAU

Ms. Pendrick.

Eden pauses, turns back.

MOREAU (CONT'D)

If I seem curt, understand that a great many benefit from my efficient use of time.

Eden follows Moreau's eye line to the

WALL CLOCK

Thunk.

EXT. RABBIT HUTCHES - DAY

GRACY, youngest of the juniors, wide and watery-eyed with a wide smile. She strokes the rabbits, delights in their hops.

Montgomery arrives, scans the group.

MONTGOMERY

Where is Nympha?

Sasha and Diane snicker. Gracy scans around, innocent.

GRACY

I don't know, Miss Montgomery.

Montgomery eyes Sasha and Diane. Sasha nods, a side entrance.

MONTGOMERY

Kitchen?

Diane head-bobs a yes. She and Sasha laugh.

Montgomery wheels and heads toward the side door.

Sasha closes in on Gracy.

SASHA
Buns in the oven!

Gracy shrieks, draws back, clutching a rabbit close.

Sasha takes the rabbit, dumps it through the

HUTCH DOOR

The rabbit joins its peers in the straw-filled enclosure.

Diane grabs Gracy's arm.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Come on.

They drag Gracy to the house with the rest of the students.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A substantial gas-powered kitchen, enameled iron appliances.
Large work surfaces for preparing large meals.

Nympha casually lops discs off a carrot, scrapes them from
the board into an enormous bowl of chopped vegetables.

Montgomery enters, strides silently around Nympha, snatches a
carrot slice from the bowl. Crunch.

Nympha's eyes, a silent *what?*

MONTGOMERY
You saw the new instructor. Do try
and stay out of trouble with this
one, will you?

Nympha's smile, mischievous, conspiratorial.

NYMPHA
Best behavior, Miss. I promise you.

Montgomery takes another carrot. Crunch. She leaves.

Nympha stares after her, reaches into the bowl, raises a
piece of carrot to her mouth.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM

Crunch! Nympha lowers her fork, looks down the long table where the senior students dine. Silver rings off porcelain.

Gracy moves along the table, filling water cups. She pours for Sasha and Diane, turns to pour for Anne-Marie, but spills into her lap.

Anne-Marie jumps to her feet, wipes at her skirt, shoots dagger eyes at Gracy. Sasha and Diane suppress a giggle.

Montgomery appears, followed by Eden. Montgomery tosses a napkin from the table to Anne-Marie, turns to Gracy.

MONTGOMERY

Go. Get a mop. Refill the pitcher.

Gracy nods, scurries out. A bell rings. The students rise, collect their plates, carry them to bussing bins.

Montgomery leads Eden to a sidebar. A buffet is set.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

The juniors eat first, then the seniors, then us.

EDEN

What about the doctor?

MONTGOMERY

The doctor dines alone.

They fill plates with simple vegetarian fare, mostly salad.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

The recruiter explained about the vegetarian diet, I assume?

EDEN

Of course! I was happy to hear it, in fact. So many of the world's ills can be traced to eating meat.

Montgomery stares at Eden, uncomprehending.

MONTGOMERY

Yes. I suppose so.

She returns to filling her plate.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)

I myself would appreciate a bit of fish now and then, or even chicken.

Eden lowers her voice for a scandalous joke.

EDEN
Or rabbit?

Montgomery reacts with contained shock.

MONTGOMERY
I'd keep that idea to myself.

Eden puzzles at Montgomery, returns to preparing her plate.

They take seats at the end of the table. Gracy returns with the pitcher and places it between them.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Thank you, Gracy.

Gracy smiles, shies away.

Montgomery watches until she's gone, pulls out a flask, and pours dark wine into her cup. She offers it to Eden.

Eden, surprised, shakes her head.

EDEN
No. No thank you.

Montgomery shrugs and empties her cup. Gracy returns with the mop bucket. Montgomery stashes the flask.

MONTGOMERY
So, you know about the diet, and the rules about coming and going.

EDEN
From last bell to Friday till Sunday lights out, I am free to leave the school, yes. I don't think that will be an issue.

MONTGOMERY
No one outside? A man, perhaps?

EDEN
I. No. There's no one.

MONTGOMERY
Family?

EDEN
Down East. I'll see them holidays. It's too far to go for the weekend.

Montgomery and Eden eat. Gracy pushes the mop bucket out.
Montgomery retrieves the flask, offers again.

MONTGOMERY
You sure?

EDEN
I'm certain.

MONTGOMERY
Suit yourself.

She empties the flask into her cup, stows it away.

MONTGOMERY (CONT'D)
Stay out of the closed wing. It's
unsafe. Don't go into the woods
alone, and never enter them after
dark. There are wild pigs.

Eden shudders.

EDEN
Wild pigs?

Montgomery enjoys Eden's revulsion.

MONTGOMERY
I forget I'm speaking with an
academic. Feral is the term. From
an old farm. Ugly, vicious things.

Eden shows disgust. Montgomery smiles at her discomfort.

They continue eating.

EDEN
What can you tell me about Gracy?

Montgomery hedges over how to respond, returns to her plate.

MONTGOMERY
She's not been with us long. She's
still in an early treatment phase.

EDEN
I understood this school to be for
difficult behavioral cases, not...

MONTGOMERY
Struggling for the word?

EDEN

Yes, I suppose I am. I expected...
I mean, what is it about her that--

MONTGOMERY

When she arrived she didn't speak.
She was terrified to be around any
of the other girls. She would hide
in the cupboard, chewing on paper.

EDEN

Paper?

MONTGOMERY

You'd call that difficult behavior,
would you not?

EDEN

Yes, of course. I just mean that I
assumed disciplinary issues. She
doesn't seem capable of getting
into trouble.

Montgomery studies Eden a moment, pontificates.

MONTGOMERY

Our students come from a variety of
circumstances. I'm sure the doctor
mentioned her "bespoke" methods,
each "particularized to the case at
hand". But in a way, all our girls
start the same. Incompleteness is
what they have in common, whether
it's disciplinary or developmental.
This school prepares them to join
the world, certain of their place.

She returns to her meal.

Eden ponders her words, then does the same. Crunch!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A rustic instruction room: desks, maps, books,

BLACKBOARD

Eden completes a large chalk triangle with a straight-edge.
She lowers straight-edge and chalk to the tray, turns to the

ROOM

Empty desks arrayed against her.

A shuffle of noise from outside the

DOOR

The senior students enter, Diane and Sasha last. All take their seats in silence.

Eden studies them. They settle, open books.

EDEN

Good morning!

STUDENTS

Good morning, Miss.

Eden marvels at their perfect unison.

EDEN

I am Ms. Prendick. I understand you've had something of a break from mathematics instruction.

Eden waits for someone to answer.

Anne-Marie raises her hand.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Yes, Miss?

ANNE-MARIE

Anne-Marie, Miss. Miss Montgomery did attempt it once or twice.

The other students laugh.

Eden smiles. They're warming up her.

EDEN

Well, we should be able to get things back on track. Let's get started, shall we?

STUDENTS

Yes, Miss.

Eden again absorbs their precise unison, picks up the straight-edge to use as a pointer.

EDEN

Who can tell me what circles and triangles have in common?

Several hands raise.

EXT. RABBIT HUTCHES - DAY

Montgomery kneels at an open hutch. Gracy, at her side, holds a large, lidded basket.

Immature rabbits hop about within. Montgomery snatches one, looks under its tail.

MONTGOMERY

This one.

Gracy lifts the lid, receives the rabbit into the basket.

Montgomery reaches for another kit, peeks under its tail, puts it back. It lops off toward the far end of the hutch.

Montgomery mentally counts the remaining kits.

Gracy peeks into the basket.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Eden finishes a calculation on the blackboard.

EDEN

And so, all the trigonometric functions are defined on the...

STUDENTS

Unit circle!

Eden beams back at their apparent enthusiasm.

Anne-Marie raises her hand.

EDEN

Yes?

Anne-Marie nods to the

WINDOW

Gracy peers in.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Thank you, Anne-Marie.

She strides to the window, raises it, leans out.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Hello, Gracy. What's that you have?

Gracy holds up the basket, lifts the lid.

Eden delights, half-real, half-staged.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Bunnies! Where are you taking them?

MONTGOMERY (O.S.)
Gracy!

Gracy smiles broadly, drops the lid closed, bolts.

Eden straightens, looks back at her

CLASS

A giggle ripples the room.

Confidence flows from Eden's face.

EXT. RESIDENCE - DAY

A delivery truck occupies the driveway. Freshly off-loaded provisions stacked by the door. ANOTHER DRIVER accepts the basket from Montgomery. Gracy runs back toward the house.

ANOTHER DRIVER
Miss.

MONTGOMERY
Another two dozen next month.

ANOTHER DRIVER
Could use twice that, Miss.

MONTGOMERY
We'll see what we can do. Maybe I should hold on to one of those.

ANOTHER DRIVER
And leave me short for the stew?
I've got a reputation to maintain,
and turnips don't maintain it.

He excuses himself, retreats to the truck door.

Montgomery smirks, turns back toward the house.

INT. DINING ROOM

Juniors devour their evening meal. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch.

Anne-Marie hovers.

Nympha strides in, toward the kitchen, ignores Anne-Marie.

ANNE-MARIE

It's not dinner bell, yet.

Nympha pauses, deigns to look at Anne-Marie, deliberately.

NYMPHA

I... just... want...

Anne-Marie eyes the clock, then Nympha.

Nympha shrugs, exasperated, wheels, retreats.

Sasha and Diane block the exit.

DIANE

Come with us.

Sasha's squint-smile suggests she knows a secret.

Nympha's skepticism doesn't prevent her obliging.

EXT. WOODS' EDGE - NIGHT

They stand at the twilight tree-line. Nympha gasps, genuinely shocked. Sasha laughs.

Diane probes a dead rabbit with a stick.

DIANE

It's not from our hutches. Must be
from the woods.

Nympha recovers, peers into the inky dark of the trees, at the rabbit, back to Diane, coolly.

NYMPHA

What are you going to do with it?

Diane curls her nose. Nympha smirks. Upper hand regained.
Sasha's head turns at the ring of a faint bell.

SASHA

Dinner.

Diane shakes her head at Nympha, follows Sasha to the house.

Nympha hangs back to look at the mutilated rabbit, curious.

INT. EDEN'S CELL - NIGHT

Eden enters from the hall, in pajamas, day clothes bundled under her arm. She looks around, drops the laundry into a

HAMPER

Rumpled laundry at the bottom of the wicker basket.

Eden turns away, moves toward the

BED

Moonlight falls over the Bible on the nightstand.

She climbs into the heavy blankets. Looks out the

WINDOW

The pale white moon, nearly full.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The same moon, through the canopy.

Eden, in her pajamas, runs barefoot through the forest.

She enters a clearing, stops, whips her head side to side, but can't identify the source of threat.

A noise in the brush. She jumps!

Nothing.

She walks on, smarts as she steps on something sharp.

She looks at her bare feet. They're covered in fur.

PRELAP: Brass alarm clock bell

INT. EDEN'S CELL - DAY

Eden starts awake at the ringing clock.

She grabs it, fumbles, silences it on the second try. She regards the antique thing, places it back on the nightstand.

She climbs from the bed, rubs her eyes, stretches. The chatter of students outside. Morning streams through the open

WINDOW

Eden walks to it, looks down at the students around the

RABBIT HUTCHES

Eden watches the students below. The industry of the juniors, Anne-Marie's officiousness, Diane and Sasha's indolence, all evident even at this distance.

EXT. RABBIT HUTCHES - DAY

Juniors at their busy, joyful work. Gracy cuddles a kit.