

HOUSE OF PAIN

Written by

March Monday

After "The Island of Dr. Moreau" by H.G. Wells

Working Title: Lost Souls

Log Line: An optimistic new teacher's private reform school position becomes a struggle to preserve her humanity when she discovers the headmistress' unsanctioned genetic therapies.

Comps: The Island of Doctor Moreau, House of Whipcord

Young teacher EDEN PRENDICK is dropped off at her new job at Residence, an isolated girls' reformatory housed in a partially-shuttered sanitarium. The school, overseen by Headmistress LOUISE MOREAU, is visited weekly for deliveries, but remains otherwise closed to the outside world. Moreau's secretary, MONTGOMERY, is welcoming, but Eden finds Moreau off-putting and the STUDENTS reticent. When not in class, the students raise rabbits that the school trades for provisions.

Eden learns the rules of Residence. The school is run to nineteenth-century standards. A strict vegetarian diet. Electronic devices prohibited. Don't go outside after dark. There are wild pigs in the forest. Stay out of the closed wing. It's unsafe.

The only creature to which Mme. Moreau shows any warmth is a cat, VAL, which enjoys the run of the school. NYMPHA, a defiant and talkative student, threatens Val. For this and other insolences, she is taken for conditioning in "the HOP". That night, a recording of THE LAW plays over speakers in the dormitories, collective discipline for Nympha's acting out.

Eden gets to know a slow and shy student, GRACY. Why is she here? She doesn't seem the type to have been in trouble.

One evening, Enid spills ink on her blouse. When she goes to the laundry, on the perimeter of the closed wing, she catches a glimpse of an animal-like figure in the dark hall. Montgomery intercepts her, "your eyes can play tricks in the dark", and diverts her away. In Montgomery's room, they discuss Residence and the Headmistress' history. Moreau's genius was ignored at The Academy because she was a woman. Her Haplotype-Orienting Protocol regresses her patients into primitive forms, from which she restores them to "proper evolutionary status". In any case, she produces obedient young ladies, so nobody complains.

Val kills one of the rabbits, a grim spectacle for the students. Terrified Gracy, blamed for leaving the hutch open, is taken to the HOP. Eden, disturbed by Moreau's methods, confronts her. Moreau makes it clear that Eden's influence is limited at academics, and that the schools' families have all delegated medical authority and treatment to Moreau.

Gracy introduces Eden to COCO, the shadowy figure from the closed wing. Sometimes, as in poor Coco's case, the regressed

state sticks. Moreau's banished failures lead a feral existence eating rabbits in the forest. Only Gracy knows that Coco sneaks back into the school to lurk in the closed wing. Montgomery and Moreau catch them together. Moreau stuns Eden unconscious with a cattle prod. Montgomery chases Coco into the woods, followed by Gracy.

Moreau takes Eden to the HOP and begins the procedure on her. The operation causes Eden to regress into semi-animal form, hallucinating the terrors of the jungle as she does.

The "pigs" attack and kill Montgomery in the woods. They prepare to kill Gracy, but spare her when Coco intercedes. They storm the house, tear Moreau limb from limb, kill the cat, and set the building on fire.

Gracy drags Eden to safety on the lawn where the other students congregate, then drops to all fours and follows the retreating "pigs" into the woods.

BIG IDEAS

Internalized misogyny, repression/correction of the female.

Circe and her pigs?

Are the students humans sent to the school, or has Moreau created them from the forest creatures?