Camp Corinth
Luke Gearing

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You

Desperate. Hungry. Poor. Perhaps you have read your Malatesta or Marx or Macdonald, and this is a strike against the oppressor. In any case; kidnapping a child of the Baas family and holding them to ransom. You have heard he will be away from home and vulnerable.

Or.

In the world of whispers there are those who silence. You are one such individual. Three men, taking their teachings and conducting experiments which unsettle the others. A small matter. Three photos. An address. $10,000.

House Baas

New money. New cars. New house. Tens of millions from dark money investors buying up a language processing company, the product vanishing like a stone in a pond. Gyles argues with his fund managers. Ayda arranges Activities for the children; Abraham, Cydney and Ronan. Neither parent attends. Both make the time to read the feedback given by the professionals they pay to raise their children.

Cleaners, caterers and nannies stream in from the town nearby. The Baas family pay, but they do not pay well. The eldest, Abraham, has spoken back to his father for the last time. Two nights ago, men entered the estate, past the high walls and camera-riddled gates. The private security nodded and smiled, professionals greeting one another. They talked guns a little, shared a cigarette. The intruders donned masks, and took Abraham away in their van; to a place for troubled teens to learn discipline and the meaning of hard work.

Camp Corinth

A single road gives access to Camp Corinth. The last two miles are just a trail. Before this point, it bifurcates; a switchback leads up the valley wall, ill-maintained and unused. It is quicker to turn around and drive back out of the valley. The trails of hikers criss-cross the road, near indistinguishable from the deer paths.

Down in the valley, nestled by the creek. Mountains jacketed by trees press close either side. The mountains would be hidden if not for the clearcut stubble upon the hills. Now, five log buildings join one built of more conventional fare. The valley holds the sounds of animals and birds and burbling water and children crying into pillows.

Jason's House

The oldest building is the home of Jason, owner and operator of Camp Corinth. He is 42 and divorced; she took herself and the kids to "Jew York". Having failed as a father, Jason must not fail again. His clients must learn the values of discipline and embrace the restorative power of wilderness survival skills. Before founding Camp Corinth, Jason worked as a military dentist. He stays in the house alone. His bedroom contains a safe with $28,632 in mixed bills. Downstairs are two shotguns still wrapped in paper, four semi-automatic carbines and twenty worn hunting rifles. There are 48 shells, 256 5.56 rounds and 796 .308 rounds. All staff have keys for the gun safe.

Outside, Jason's black F150 Raptor. He keeps the keys on him at all times. He wakes up from his dreams holding the keys, their imprint angry and red in his palm.

Jason is trained in violence.

Admin

The smallest of the log buildings is an admin office, used by Athena and Hera. They travel as a pair, chainsmoking and continuing a conversation uninterrupted for thirty years. Asked, neither particularly likes the other. Jason only cares about the activities the camp offers; Athena and Hera decide everything else. They have no guilt about the business they have found themselves in. The office holds spare keys for all log buildings, as well as the keys for the eight quadbikes. Athena is paying for her grand-daughter to go to college. Hera does not spend anything. The money accumulates like scum atop a pond. Her children no longer call.

Proctor's Cabin

The six proctors share a single cabin. Each has a simple bed and a locked chest for personal possessions. At night, three of the six are asleep here; the other three are watching the client cabins.

This cabin doubles as storage for the dangerous tools - hatches and axes are plentiful.

1. Meleager. A recovered opiate addict, militant about drug use. He thinks the kids deserve anything that happens to them - that Camp Corinth is about punishment. A boar once broke his leg in four places, and he still walks with a limp. Hunting and shooting instructor. Blooded in violence.
2. Tiphys. A small man, hirsute and scowling. He never feels bigger than when a child cries. He is here to make them suffer, and knows nothing about wilderness skills. Navigation and hiking instructor.
3. Heracles. He claims to have been special forces in Iraq, discharged for violent insubordination against an officer. His records show eight incidents of him firing on civilians without provocation. He has not been sober since arriving at Camp Corinth. General Assistant. Trained in violence.
4. Lynceus. Quiet and withdrawn. After the death of his parents, he joined a Voor's Head Device group. The long hours of contemplation of the Black Ocean have brought him here to enact a closer communication, much to the chagrin of the rest of the group. Quadbike instructor.
5. Admetus. An ex-convict with scars where once affiliations sat. Since his release, he exchanged emails with Lynceus about the Voor's Head Device - a practice he discovered in prison. General Assistant. Experienced in violence.
6. Castor. Previously a firefighter, he cannot get the screaming out of his head. The Voor's Head

Device releases him from the burning ghosts. He joined Lynceus in leaving their parent group to conduct their experiments. Kayak instructor.

The Voor's Head Device devotees, when all three are on night shift, will choose a cabin to conduct a Night March. This practice alone is not unusual, used to punish uncleanliness or talking back. The devotees cut the march short, arranging their clients in a circle. Each has a Voor's Head Device placed over their head. The three observe their panic, and strike any attempting to remove the hood. They are waiting for something to happen from this forced experience of the Black Ocean. They do not know it already has.

The Client Cabins

Each of the cabins has a single door which locks from the outside. The windows are small and barred. Each has ten beds, and at night is nominally watched over by a single proctor. Few clients try and escape; they do not know where they are, and correctly fear violent reprisal. These are the children of families willing to pay strangers to abduct and correct their progeny.

One cabin holds the girls; the other two the boys. In residence are 8 girls and sixteen boys.

1. Kittie Jaworski. 16. Wants to go home.
2. Cornelia Berger. 14. Wants to go home.
3. Avilda Matthewson. 13. Wants to go home.
4. Cecilia Nagle. 15. Doesn't want to go home.
5. Salomea Banes. 16. Doesn't want to go home.
6. Louise Mclaughlin. 15. Doesn't want to go home.
7. Radelle Kyle. 16. Doesn't want to go home.
8. Earline Aalfide. 17. Wants to go home.

Boys 1-8 are in Cabin A. The rest are in Cabin B.

1. Abraham Baas. 15. Wants to go home.
2. Alfie Alders. 16. Doesn't want to go home.
3. Brandon Woodrow Jonker. 13. Wants to go home.
4. Norwood MacDaniel. 16. Doesn't want to go home.

5. Derrick Klerks. 14. Wants to go home.
6. Charley Swift. 16. Wants to go home.
7. Connor Hampson. 15. Wants to go home.
8. Cohen Walmsley. 14. Doesn't want to go home.
9. Timothy Ververs. 14. Wants to go home.
10. Llewelyn John. 13. Wants to go home.
11. Virgil Mencher. 17. Doesn't want to go home.
12. Mo Chadwick. 16. Doesn't want to go home.
13. Dorain Wavey. 15. Doesn't want to go home.
14. Slade Radston. 14. Doesn't want to go home.
15. Roswell Slaski. 15. Wants to go home.
16. Cornelius Hardy. 14. Doesn't want to go home.

The Creek

The Black Ocean has bled through, and pools beneath the water. To fall in is to be destroyed utterly. Once the body is destroyed, memory follows. Physical evidence remains as a haunting; inexplicable photographs, rooms for children unrecognised. History is not changed, even as memory is riddled with cigarette burns where once people resided.

The waters of the Black Ocean are able to flow freely, travelling up sheer surfaces like creeping damp. Otherwise, it is normal water. It has no strength, and cannot grasp. With time, it can create mudslides. It can flow ahead of you, uphill, and then flow back down to wash you away. In sunlight, it can do none of these things.

The repeated, forced use of the Voor's Head Device has paired the teenagers with the Black Ocean. It wants to take them all into itself, and any trying to remove one from this place will rouse it to jealous anger. Lynceus, Admetus and Castor will try to aid the Black Ocean. It does not recognise them, and will destroy them as it would anyone else.

Ransoming Baas

The family will pay up to three million. They prefer to not involve police, due to the dubious legality of ongoing investments. They will, in any case, hire a semi-legal paramilitary group to find and destroy the kidnappers.