

Cantrips - Opening Scene

written by

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INT. JHSO SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

ORSON(42) sits across from TAD(30) playing poker in the security room. An array of cameras behind them display four children in rooms adorned only with a bed.

ORSON  
Raise you ten.

Tad looks at his hand. His uncertainty painted on his face.

Tad taps his feet on the ground, fidgeting intensely.

TAD  
Shit, I'm out.

Orson slides his poker hand onto the table revealing that he was bluffing.

Tad grunts in frustration, tossing his cards about the table.

ORSON  
You've gotta keep a cool composure.  
Like it don't mean anything if you  
win or lose. Once you learn to  
bluff, you can spot the bluff.

TAD  
Easy for you to say. I'm not about  
to bet my son's lunch money on a  
pair of threes.

Orson shrugs, returning cards to the deck.

ORSON  
Sometimes you have to take risks.

TAD  
Oh yeah? Izzat how you ended up a  
security guard?

ORSON  
Hah! You got teeth, kid. Hit a run  
of bad luck, so here I am- trying  
to build back up.

TAD  
Well, it's an easy gig, at least.  
They ran you through orientation  
already, right?

Orson has finished gathering the cards and starts shuffling.

ORSON

Yeah. Didn't seem like there was much to it.

Tad leans back in his chair and puts his feet up on the edge of the table.

TAD

There's not. Play cards. Take a nap. Do rounds every couple hours. The pay is good and the kids're already in bed by the time we get here. Basically free money.

Orson glances at the cameras. He pauses.

ORSON

Well, not all of 'em.

One camera shows a child in the front of her room, banging on her door frantically.

TAD

Huh, that's new.

Orson gets up and heads to the door.

TAD (CONT'D)

Hey, what're you doin'?

ORSON

I'm just gonna see if the kid's hurt or somethin.

TAD

That's not our job. They've got a nurse that checks in on them every night.

Orson steps back in and looks through camera feeds of the hallways off to the side of the main monitors.

ORSON

Yeah, you see him anywhere? I sure don't. Besides, no one else is lookin out for 'em, y'know?

Tad sighs.

TAD

Alright, just hurry up. I'm feelin a win streak coming.

Orson strolls out into the hall.

INT. JHSO HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Orson paces through the hallway, arriving at an elevator.

Orson slots a key into the elevator's panel. It opens.

Orson gets into the elevator and the doors close.

INT. JHSO HALLWAY 2 - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open in an identical hallway with slightly shakier lighting.

Orson paces down the hall and arrives at another locked door.

Orson looks up at the placard above the door. Orson taps the walkie-talkie on his shoulder

ORSON  
This one, right?

TAD(V.O.)  
Hold on. Yeah, that's it.

Orson rifles through a ring of keys, trying one and failing to unlock the door. He grumbles a bit.

Orson fiddles for another few seconds, unlocking the door. He opens it and walks through, leaving it ajar.

INT. JHSO CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Orson walks down the cell block hallway, examining the doors. They're large, steel doors fit for a prison.

ORSON  
Seems like a bit much...

A pounding metal sound grows closer. Orson gets to the door and looks it up and down.

Next to the door is a blackboard placard with a name written cleanly in chalk: "LILIAN"

Orson grabs a sliding peephole knob just above waist level, pulling it to the side and bending down to look in.

ORSON (CONT'D)  
Hey- everything okay in there?

LILY  
(faking illness)  
Help! I'm really sick- I'm gonna -  
urp- I need to see the nurse!

Orson looks around with uncertainty.

ORSON  
Okay, I gotcha- yer alright.

Orson starts fumbling with the door's outer latches.

Orson's eye catches on the three latches- one of a cold metal, one of wood, and one of a dense plastic.

After a beat, Orson has the latches undone. He heaves the door open.

Orson looks at LILY (14) for the first time. She hasn't eaten much lately. Pale and hunched but defiant.

Lily's eyes are sharp as knives.

INT. JHSO SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tad looks at a list of personnel names and phone numbers for the building. Under the heading "MEDICAL," he sees a number.

Tad picks up the phone at the security room console and punches it in, reclining back in his chair, feet up.

TAD  
The hell is he doing, making us do  
his job...

INT. JHSO MEDICAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Behind a desk sits the JHSO NURSE. The phone on his desk rings.

The JHSO Nurse is slumped in his chair. His eyes are glazed over, dead or catatonic. His ears leaking now-dry blood.

The phone rings another time.

INT. JHSO CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Lily walks next to Orson, making fake straining noises.

Lily's eyes dart toward the name placard next to each cell.

"RONALD"- the name is crossed out.

"SUSAN"- the name is crossed out.

"FELIX"

Lily stops and puts her hands on the door, bending down and making retching sounds.

Orson stops to put a hand on her back.

ORSON  
Hey, you okay?

Lily stealthily opens the sliding latch as she pretends to grapple with her fake illness.

Lily takes a deep breath.

LILY  
(coldly)  
Yeah. Just fine.

Lily's hand has grabbed ahold of another hand sticking through the sliding peephole.

ORSON  
Wha--

A thunderous, resonant boom fills the hallway.

Orson falls to his knees and covers his ears.

Orson shakily pushes back up onto one foot. Lily breathes heavily behind him. Lily closes her eyes in concentration.

Another thundering boom. Several lights shatter in the ceiling.

Orson slumps to the ground, face-down. Blood pooling from his ears, his eyes vacant.

INT. JHSO SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tad hangs up the phone with irritation. He looks at the list of phone numbers and sees "RESEARCH - IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES"

Tad sighs and picks up the phone, punching in the number.

Before it can start ringing, Tad glances at the monitors and sees half of them blacked out.

In the hallway monitors to the side, only two are receiving signal. One shows a few doors and an empty hall. The other shows Orson laying face down in a pool of blood.

Tad gapes at the image for a beat. The phone slips out of his hand as he gets up and sprints for the door.

The phone dangles, almost touching the ground.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
What is it? ... Hello?!

A beat. Dialtone.

INT. JHSO CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Lily leans against the cell door. She's incredibly pale and is breathing laboriously.

Lily lets go of the hand hanging out the sliding peephole.

Lily struggles to grab hold of the latches on the door above her. She unlatches the first and falls to her knees.

FELIX (V.O.)  
Lily? Lily! LILY!!

FELIX (16) bangs on the door with each word.

Felix starts hyperventilating. Lily coughs

LILY  
I'm okay! It's okay Felix, shh shh  
shh shh!

Lily struggles back to her feet and unlatches the remaining two locks in between labored breaths.

The door swings open and Lily sees Felix, upright in the fetal position looking helpless and terrified.

Felix's eyes regain focus when he sees Lily. He wipes away tears as Lily gingerly reaches a hand toward him.

INT. JHSO HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator opens and Tad runs toward the cell block. His gun is drawn at his side.

INT. JHSO CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Lily's hand undoes another wooden latch.

INT. JHSO HALLWAY 3 - CONTINUOUS

DR. HALSEY (60s) walks quickly down another hallway.

INT. JHSO CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Lily's hand undoes a third wooden latch.

INT. JHSO HALLWAY 3 - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Halsey spots the cell block hallway intersection and sees the lighting has gone dark and flickery.

DR. HALSEY  
Shit shit shit shit shit...

Dr. Halsey quickens her pace, rounding the corner.

The hallway contains four open cells, Orson laying down in a small pool of blood, and Tad at the other end of the hallway.

The lights are all broken or flickering. A water fountain is pulled halfway off a wall, spilling water into the hallway.

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