

KIOSK!

Draft 1.5 (beta)

For Becca and John

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A fairground sweet kiosk stands surrounded by tacky darkness.

The kiosk is brightly lit, decorated with badly-painted cartoon characters. (Combination of village-fete twee and rough, townie, provincial eighties travelling fair). The sweet compartments are filled to varying depths with vivid-coloured sweets. Some of the compartments are taped shut. Toffee apples, sweet dummies and rock-lollies stand on the counter and hang from the shutters. A candy floss machine sticks out the side. Bags roughly labled "floss" dangle from the awning, but they are further from the light and therefore indistinct.

The lights in the kiosk are bright, flourescent tubes, intensified by stainless steel panelling at the back of the kiosk. A generator is rumbling nearby. There is also an urn, a small sink, some shrivelled polystyrene cups, a bag of pink candyfloss, (add as necessary). A string of multi-coloured outdoor lights run from the kiosk, but are not illuminated. They stretch into the surrounding darkness.

A girl with a screwdriver stands in the booth, working on the other end of the outdoor lights. She is of indiscriminate age, solid, bland and deliberate. She tightens something with the screwdriver, tries the switch.

Nothing.

Footsteps on gravel.

The girl looks warily into the dark.

A man (Silas) arrives in a hurry. He is smart-suited and carrying a briefcase. His feet kick up dust from the ground as he approaches. He hesitates at the kiosk.

The girl (Jane) regards him heavily.

Jane. *(like dropping a rock)* Hello.

Silas. Oh..Hello.

Jane. If you have money you can buy something.

Silas. I have money.

Jane. Are you saving it for the rides? Mostly people are saving it for the rides.

Silas. Well, um..

Jane. That's why the sweets are expensive. I have to make every purchase count. Every customer is very important to me.

Silas. mm..

He makes to leave.

Jane. You are very important to me.

He stops.

Silas. I'll have a quarter of.. uh.. fizzy cola bottles please.

Jane. Popular choice.

She weighs fizzy cola bottles into a bag. Then makes up a second bag of different sweets. She hands both out to Silas.

Silas. What are these?

Jane. Foam shrimps. For your daughter.

Silas. How do you know I have a daughter?

Jane. They all have a daughter.

Silas. She.. uh.. she'll be waiting for me. My wife, too.

Jane. This is a popular meeting place.

Silas. I'm not meeting them here.

He makes to leave.

Jane. Mister..

He does not stop.

Jane. Mister, you have not paid.

He stops.

Silas. Oh, goodness. Goodness, I'm sorry. I had.. I was..

Jane. Frightened?

Silas. What? No. Ha.. *(pause)* of what?

Jane. Never mind.

He holds out the money.

Jane. Put it on the counter.

He does.

Jane looks at it, then sorts out half and slides the rest across the counter towards him.

Silas. What's this?

Jane. The shrimps are gratis.

Silas. Hu?

Jane. Free. Go away.

Silas. Um..

Jane. Go away.

Silas. Alright..

He makes to leave. Hesitates.

Silas. Um.. which way's the Hook-the-Duck..

Jane inclines her head by way of direction.

Silas looks.

Silas. All the lights have gone out.

Jane says nothing.

Silas. All the lights have gone out!

Jane says nothing.

Silas. I don't like it.

Jane. Me either.

Silas. Are you closing early?

Jane. Me? No.

Silas. There must be a problem with the power..

Jane. There is a problem with the power.

Pause.

Jane goes back to fiddling with the lights.

Silas shifts.

Silas. Should I wait here?

Jane says nothing.

Silas. Is it best I wait here..?

Jane says nothing.

Silas. ...until the lights come on?

Jane says nothing.

Silas. Can I wait here?

Jane looks at him.

Jane. Will you be quiet. This is very important.

Silas looks at the string of lights.

Silas. I can help with these..

He moves in and reaches to help.

Jane. Don't you touch them!

Silas flinches back, shocked.

Jane. Don't you dare. I allow you this close. That's close enough.

Silas. You allow me? This is common ground.

Jane. No. This is my ground. My ground and my light. You'll not be in it long.

Silas. When they turn the power back on, I shall leave.

Jane. *(deliberate)* What about your wife and daughter out there in the dark.

Silas says nothing.

Jane. You have forgotten them again.

Silas. How.. how dare you.

Jane. You have forgotten them.

Silas says nothing.

Jane tries the switch again.

Nothing.

She puts the screwdriver down and helps herself to scoop of sweets.

He watches her eat them.

She takes another scoop from a different compartment. She eats, makes a face, and spits the mouthful back into her hand.

Silas looks disgusted.

Jane. Something has laid its eggs in the sour fish.

She puts the spitty mess back in the compartment and wipes her hand on the front of her clothes. Then she takes out a roll of parcel tape and tapes the compartment sealed.

Silas makes to leave. At the edge of the light, he hesitates.

Jane. You've been here long enough.

Silas. Yes.

Jane. If you want to wait here, you have to buy something.

Silas. I don't want to wait here.

He dithers at the edge of the light.

Silas. Allright. I'll have some candy floss.

Using a pole, Jane unhooks a bag from the awning and holds it out.

Silas reaches for it. The contents are thick and brown and heavy. Jane tips the pole and dumps the disgusting bag in his hands before he can pull away.

Silas. What is this?!

Jane. Spoiled.

Silas. *(makes a noise of disgust)*.

Jane. The machine doesn't work any more.

Silas. But.. but you have a fresh bag on the counter.

Jane. You can't have that.

Silas. Why ever not?

Jane. You can't have that.

Silas steps forward.

Jane. Is that what you've come for? Get away!

Silas does not stop.

Jane. Get away!

Silas advances, suddenly different. He grabs the bag.

Silas. *(wrong-voiced)* You are a very rude, obnoxious little girl and I will not be spoken to that way.

He holds the bag.

Jane. No..

He opens the bag, and reaches in hungrily. He wolfs down some candy floss. He digs deeper. He freezes.

He changes again.

He looks down at the bag. He pulls something out of the bag. It is covered in weak strings of candy floss. It is a human hand.

He stares at it.

He stares at Jane.

Jane. *(asking, not threatening)* Please give it back.

He stares at the hand again.

Silas. I know this ring..

Jane. You've taken everything else..

Silas. This is my wife's ring.

Jane. Please..

Silas. This is my wife's hand.

Jane. Please don't take my mum..

They look at each-other.

Silas is flickery.

Silas. (open) Jane..? Janey..?

Jane. No..

Silas. Janey..

Jane. Not this again..

Silas. What's happened to you...?

Silas begins to move towards the kiosk again.

Jane. I know it's not you.

Silas. You've gotten.. old.. Janey..

Jane. Stop it.

Silas. (like losing blood) You've gotten.. old.. Janey.

Silas is moving oddly.

Jane. I don't want to see..

Silas. (in an awful voice) Janey.. you've gotten old.

The lights flicker as Silas draws closer. He is moving in a horrid way now.

Silas. (empty) You've gotten old and you can't keep those lights lit forever. Not on your own. You are the teeth of the world and we are the rot. The rot will always win. You will be hollowed out and taken. As your mother. As your father..

The lights in the booth flicker slightly

Jane. ..someone will come for me.

The lights brighten.

Silas. No one will come for you.

The lights flicker and dim

Jane. ..someone will come for me..

The lights brighten, but not as far.

Silas. No one will come for you.

Silas is very close now. Close enough for his reflection to be seen in a stainless steel panel at the back of the kiosk. It is not the face of the man at all, but of a horrible thing. (this is a trick, by the way - tilt the panel and have a horrible face held up out of sight).

Silas. *W e ' v e g o t e v e r y b o d y e l s e.*

One light explodes with a shower of sparks.

Jane hauls herself out of her terror, grabs the screwdriver and rams it into the monster/Silas, which rears back howling and comes to a pause shaking, still with its back to us.

Blood drips from it onto the gravel. At first it steams, then it is just normal blood.

The shaking becomes less monstrous, more like a human in pain.

Silas. *(human, hurt, confused) Janey..*

Jane. Oh balls.

Silas staggers. Reaches for the screwdriver. Pulls it out. Sinks a bit.

Silas. Um..

Jane looks at him.

Silas. I've got.. Janey.. I've got.. oh.

He looks at the screwdriver and falls down.

Jane starts forward despite herself.

Jane. Dad...

Silas. I'm.. I'm not your dad, Janey.. *(He makes a pain sound)*

Jane. Dad..

Silas. *(weakly)* I'm not your dad. You know that.

Jane opens the door on the side of the kiosk.

Jane. I'm sorry..

Silas. *(trying to be frightening so she won't come out into the dark)* Don't you come out here girl you stay in there you close that door..

Jane scrambles over to where he is lying.

Jane. Dad..

Silas. No..

She touches his hand.

Jane. You hang on, Dad. They're on their way.

Silas. No.

He is failing. She tries to prop him up. It's a panicky mess.

Jane. They're coming. It's going to work out alright..

Silas. No.

He is dying. Messily, painfully. She is holding onto him, trying to stop the blood. She grips his hand tightly.

Jane. They're coming now. They're on their way. *(desperately and embarrassingly mimicking the noise of an ambulance .Hmm.. Not sure how to write that, just say it how you want.)* wee-nah, wee-nah, wee-nah.. Can you hear them. *(staring wildly into the dark, snotty-nosed like a child)* Wee-nah, wee-nah, wee-nah...

Silas calms a little, and grips her hand back.

Jane. wee-nah, wee-nah, wee-nah

Faintly, the blue lights in the string of outdoor lights begin to pulse.

Jane. wee-nah, wee-nah, wee-nah..

They brighten.

Jane and Silas hold onto each-other.

Silas is breathing easier now. The bleeding has stopped.

Silas. *Janey, what did you do..?*

Slowly, the other coloured lights begin to come on.

Jane takes a blue-checked jay cloth out of her pocket and helps Silas press it over the wound.

Jane helps Silas to his feet. He can barely stand, but he supports himself while Jane carefully picks up the mother's hand and watches as she picks a couple of bits of grit from it.

They help each other back into the sweet kiosk.

She makes him a cup of tea (powdered milk or maybe a maxpax) from the urn with practiced speed.

They sit together in the kiosk, looking at each-other, and out into the dark.

THE END.