

MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

GRADE 11/4

WELL I'M A-TALKIN' BOUT THE MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

AND DID YOU SEE ME JUMP YOUR GARDEN WALL

AND IF YOU EVER CATCH THE MIDNIGHT RAMBLER

STEAL YOUR MISTRESS FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE

GO EASY WITH YOUR COLD FANGED ANGER

I'LL STICK MY KNIFE RIGHT DOWN YOUR THROAT BABY, AND IT HURTS

VICTORIA COULD HEAR THE SONG DANCE ALONG THE NARROW ALLEYWAY, ALMOST IN TUNE WITH THE CLICK OF HER HEELS AS SHE APPROACHED THE JAZZ CLUB, WHICH RESORTED TO ROCK 'N ROLL WHEN THEY WERE NOT BUSY OR CLOSED.

SHE ENTERED THE CLUB, IGNORED THE STARES AND HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE BAR, SLAMMING A FILE DOWN ON THE COUNTER. "WE NEED TO TALK."

PHARMACEUTICAL CEO, TIM HAWKINS, FOUND DEAD IN A HOTEL NEAR MIRAGE JAZZ CLUB ON SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER.

VICTORIA SIGHED, READING OVER THE ARTICLE. THE PUBLIC WAS A PROBLEM OF ITS OWN, ALWAYS STICKING ITS NOSE WHERE IT DID NOT BELONG. SHE TURNED ON THE RADIO, BODY RELAXING A BIT AS THE CHORUS TO CHERRY RED BLUES PICKED UP.

JUST THEN THE SHRILL OF THE PHONE DROWNED OUT THE ONLY PEACE AND QUIET SHE HAD HAD IN MONTHS. WITH A SIGH SHE PICKED UP THE PHONE AND A WOMAN'S VOICE IMMEDIATELY ANSWERED. "HELLO? IS THE LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT? I AM LOOKING FOR VICTORIA WELLS", THE WOMAN'S HONEYED VOICE SEEPED THROUGH. "THIS IS HER", VICTORIA SIGHED, TRYING TO SOUND AS KIND AS POSSIBLE. "OH GOODIE! I HAVE SOME INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HELP WITH THE MURDER, TIM HAWKINS'S MURDER", THIS IMMEDIATELY MADE VICTORIA SIT UP STRAIGHT. "GO ON", SHE SAID, THAT FAMILIAR EXCITEMENT OF A CASE TUGGING AT HER NAVAL AS THE WOMAN RAMBLED ON.

VICTORIA GLANCED AT THE CLOCK. IT WAS ALMOST MIDNIGHT.

VICTORIA HAD GOTTEN A GREAT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION FROM THE WOMAN. ACCORDING TO HER, THE MAIN SUSPECT, EMMA LEWIS HAD A SISTER, NAMELY AVA LEWIS. THE WOMAN APPARENTLY KNEW THE TWO SISTERS ALONG WITH TIM, AND HIS WIFE. TIM HAD MARRIED TWO YEARS BACK, WHILST KEEPING UP WITH BOTH AVA AND EMMA, WHICH HE CLAIMED TO BE HIS MISTRESSES. AVA HAD A MENTAL BREAK AND WAS SENT TO A MENTAL INSTITUTE NEAR THE IRISH COAST. NO CONTACT WAS MADE WITH HER FROM THEN ON.

VICTORIA HAD MADE HER WAY TO THE COFFEE MACHINE, GETTING READY TO INTERROGATE EMMA, WHEN A WOMAN WITH A BRIGHT, RED LIP AND TIGHT CURLS ENTERED. "I HAVE INFORMATION". SHE SOUNDED EXACTLY LIKE THE WOMAN OVER THE PHONE, BUT NOT WANTING TO JUMP THE GUN, VICTORIA HEARD HER OUT, AS EMMA AND THE REST OF THE AUTHORITIES WERE ALREADY RUNNING LATE FOR THE INTERROGATION. THE WOMAN SAT DOWN ACROSS FROM HER AND STARTED, LETTING OUT A DRAMATIC SIGH. "I THINK THAT EMMA DID IT. SHE HAD REASON, CLAIMING THAT SHE WANTED TIM ALL TO HERSELF", THE WOMAN HUFFED AND VICTORIA HAD TO ADMIT THAT SHE WAS VERY SCEPTICAL. TIME SLOWLY WASTED BY AS THE TIGHT CURLED WOMAN KEPT ON RAMBLING ON ABOUT EMMA, NOT EVEN HINTING THAT SHE KNEW HER IN THE FIRST PLACE.

JUST THEN, THE WOMAN'S VOICE WAS INTERRUPTED BY A CALL. RELIEVED, VICTORIA TOOK IT. "VICTORIA, ABOUT EMMA, SHE WAS FOUND DEAD THIS MORNING BEFORE HER HEARING. THEY RULED IT OFF AS A SUICIDE EVEN THOUGH THERE IS EVIDENCE OF MURDER". STUNNED, VICTORIA TURNED, SEEKING OUT THE WOMAN SHE WAS LISTENING TO, BUT ONLY FOUND AN EMPTY COUCH AND LIPSTICK STAINED MUG IN HER ABSENCE. WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?

VICTORIA CALMED HERSELF, TAKING A DEEP BREATH IN. "ANY INFORMATION ON TIM'S DEATH?", SHE ASKED, WITH WHICH THE MAN IMMEDIATELY REPLIED, "YES, HE WAS POISONED. FROM WHAT WE GATHERED, A DIFFERENT WOMAN HAD COME UP FROM BEHIND TIM, SHE RAMBLED ON ABOUT SOMETHING AND OFFERED HIM A CIGAR. IT WAS LACED, A SLOW POISON, THAT IS WHY HE HAD ONLY DIED IN HIS SLEEP THAT NIGHT, RIGHT BEFORE MIDNIGHT, WITH EMMA WHO ISN'T OUR CRIMINAL. SOMEONE ELSE IS." JUST THEN, IT FELT AS IF IT ALL CLICKED INTO PLACE.

VICTORIA GRABBED HER KEYS, STUMBLING AS SHE PULLED HER COAT ON. SHE RUSHED OUT, SEARCHING FOR THE WOMAN. FINALLY, SHE SPOTTED HER, ABOUT TO GET INTO A CAB. "WAIT! WHO ARE YOU?", VICTORIA CALLED OUT. THE WOMAN SIMPLY GOT IN, ROLLED DOWN THE WINDOW AND ANSWERED, "AVA."

WEEKS PASSED BY AND VICTORIA WAS SLEEP DEPRIVED, AND IN SEARCH OF THE WOMAN, AVA, SHE HAD CALLED HERSELF. SHE THEN MADE ONE FINAL CALL. "RENEWAL COASTAL INSTITUTION, HOW MAY I HELP?", A WOMAN'S SMOKE DAMAGED VOICE RUNG THROUGH. "VICTORIA, DETECTIVE FROM LONDON POLICE DEPARTMENT. CAN YOU TELL ME IF YOU HAVE A PATIENT BY THE NAME OF AVA LEWIS?", VICTORIA ASKED, CHEWING HER BOTTOM LIP. "AVA? OH YES, BUT SHE WAS RELEASED, LET'S SEE...FOUR WEEKS AGO", THE WOMAN ANSWERED. FOUR WEEKS AGO...

VICTORIA PUT THE PHONE DOWN. SHE FELT AS THOUGH A DOUBLE DECKER BUS HAD HIT HER STRAIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES. TIM HAWKINS WAS KILLED NO LESS THAN FOUR WEEKS AGO, THE SAME TIME AROUND WHEN THIS MIDNIGHT RAMBLER OF A WOMAN, AVA LEWIS WAS RELEASED.

GRADE 11/4:

BLOEM, NOELLE

BOKVELDT, RACHEL

BOTHA, KEESHA

BOTHA, LETLOTLO

CALDER, CAMERON

DAMOYI, ZOLISWA

DU PLESSIS, MISCHA

GANI, ZAYYAAN

HASSIM, LAAIQAH

HOWARD, JAMY-LEIGH

JONES, LIZA

LOUW, KIERAN

MALEPE, GOMOLEMO

MANAMELA, WHANECIA

MOLAPO, BOIPELO

MOSELLA, OLERATO

MOSS, ROZALYNNE

MOTARA, KHADIJAH

MOTSHOANE, KGOSI

NDHLOVU, NKOKA

RAMOHANOE, KEA

SALE, LUCA

SEIPHEHLO, GOMOLEMO

SOOLIMAN, HASSAANAH

SOUTER, WILLIAM

STAPELBERG, ANGELIQUE

XHUMA, NOSIPHO