

# THE ENGINE



written by  
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Draft 4  
10/2020 - 04/2021

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ACT I

LONDON. 1996.

INT. PUBLIC POOL | DIVING BOARD - DAY

We open on the wide eyes of THE BOY (13), fearful of everything but a jokester at heart. He would rather be anywhere else in the world but now he finds himself at the tip of an olympic pool's diving board. He wears superhero bathing shorts and a baby blue scarf wrapped around his neck.

His toes grasp at the edge of the board. He looks down at the enormous body of water below.

The drop is significant, especially considering his small a lean body.

He turns to the sidelines of the pool where a group of other BOYS CHATTER, rolled up in their towels and their own blue scarves. This is a dedicated class of the Scouts.

Unlike the Boy, who still looks like he could get free tickets at the museum, the others have entered the daring world of puberty and it shows.

There is however a fully developed man next to them, LEADER JONES (31), fully dressed in uniform with his shirt covered in badges and a wide hat balancing on top of his head.

He watches our BOY, who seems to be the last in the group to venture from the diving board.

LEADER JONES  
(shouting at the boy)  
You don't have to do it, mate!

The Boy looks down at the pool again.

THE BOY  
(to himself)  
Of course you HAVE to do it, for  
your own dignity.

(The Boy loves complicated words.)

He turns to see the other scouts losing interest in this act of bravery.

He takes a deep breath and starts walking backwards to gain momentum.

LEADER JONES  
Oh God.

The Boy sprints up to the edge and we can see the regret growing on his face as it goes from bravery to a loud SCREAM.

He jumps in a sort of eagle motion, with his legs and arms widely spread.

It doesn't take long before he hits the pool with a small SPLASH!

We see him swim up top to catch his breath. *Is he dead?* When he realises he's not dead:

THE BOY

I did it!

He pulls his hair back to compose himself and swims to the edge of the pool.

He says it to the other Boys with pride and excitement-

THE BOY (CONT'D)

I did it!

-but they ignore him. Completely.

They seem to be focused on JOHNNY MACALISTAIR's (12) CD WALKMAN. Johnny is a unusually confident 14 year-old, who every other boy aspires to become.

Leader Jones approaches our Boy to give him a hand out of the pool.

LEADER JONES

You alright there, mate?

THE BOY

Unfortunately.

Leader Jones pulls the Boy out, whose attention seems to rest on the other boys.

LEADER JONES

Okay, let's wrap up, yeah?

**INT. PUBLIC POOL | BENCHES - DAY**

On the sidelines of the pool, the boys form a line on the bleachers. They seem to be dry at this point.

Their heads follow a pacing Leader Jones in front of them, like squirrels looking for nuts.

LEADER JONES

(with momentum)

The Summer holidays!

(MORE)

LEADER JONES (CONT'D)

While the rest of the year is seemingly the same, summer holidays are always different!

THE BOY looks over at his classmates. One of the others, HUGO. (11) rolls his eyes and whispers something to Johnny MacAlistair.

LEADER JONES (CONT'D)

That is why *this* summer I want you to write a report on your experience.

The whole CLASS grunts in annoyance at the task.

JOHNNY MACALISTAIR

Why though?

LEADER JONES

Because Johnny, once you do, you'll be able to earn your Writer's badge.

Complaints of "I don't care about that one" and "Scouts used to be fun" echo around the group.

The Boy lifts his hand to ask a question.

THE BOY

What if we don't have anything to write about?

Attentions turn to him for the first time.

LEADER JONES

There's always something to write about. As long as you tell the truth.

**INT. RECEPTION | PUBLIC POOL - DAY**

On the reception waiting bench, The Boy and the others (now in full scouts uniform) sit like a can of sardines as they wait to be picked up.

The Boy watches the others run off. They wave goodbye to each other as their mothers arrive.

Slowly, one by one they leave.

HUGO

Have a great summer Johnny.

JOHNNY MACALISTAIR

Bye Hugo!

No one waves or hugs THE BOY.

At that moment, The Boy left with the awkward task of keeping Johnny MacAlistair company while they wait for their respective mums. They're the last ones left.

Johnny plays on his GAMEBOY, each of them on the polar ends of the bench.

The Boy notes the GAMEBOY GAME: it's SUPER MARIO jumping up and down trying to hit some bricks with his head.

THE BOY

You know why Toad from Super Mario couldn't build a swimming pool in his house?

There's a beat of silence.

THE BOY (CONT'D)

Because he didn't have mush-room.

The Boy looks at Johnny expectantly, who removes his headphones:

JOHNNY MACALISTAIR

Did you say something?

Beat.

THE BOY

No.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Johnny! Let's go!

Johnny stands up putting away his gameboy. Before he leaves he stares at The Boy and reaches out with his hand.

*Are they about to handshake?* As he gets closer and closer expectations grow but- Johnny is not reaching for The Boy's hand, he's reaching for a RED CAP on the bench.

Once he takes it, Johnny MacAlistair simply runs off, without even saying goodbye.

THE BOY

(to himself)

Have a good summer. You too.

#### **INT. FORD FIESTA - DAY**

It's raining heavily outside. MUM (38), has to squint in order to see through the rain.

The Boy is on the passenger seat, even if he's not tall enough to do so. He holds a PAGER in his hands.

THE BOY  
I'm calling it neglect.

MUM  
It's a summer away from me. Take  
it.

THE BOY  
It'll be a void of nothingness.

MUM  
Well, barely.

THE BOY  
Mum, please! I'll get a job.

MUM  
You're 13.

The Boy blows raspberry as he looks at the PAGER in his  
hands.

MUM (CONT'D)  
Shit.

Maria tries to shift her gear but her sleeve gets stuck and  
the engine dies.

She turns the key again and the engine sparks alive.

THE BOY  
I jumped off the second tallest  
platform.

MUM  
(distracted with getting  
the car back up)  
No way!

THE BOY  
Nobody saw me.

MUM  
I'm sure Leader Jones did.

THE BOY  
I'm sure he didn't.

Beat.

MUM  
Hey you don't need to be upset,  
it's just your grandma's.

THE BOY  
Who I have zero contact with...

MUM

Well, you used to love Dungeness  
when you were a baby.

THE BOY

You're thinking of your other  
child.

MUM

No, I'm thinking of you.

Mum lets the engine die again.

Someone HONKS behind them.

MUM (CONT'D)

Shit! Okay, okay I get it.

Beat, Mum stops. She takes her eyes off the road for a second  
to look at him.

MUM (CONT'D)

Look hun, I know going to your  
grandma's wasn't your ideal plan  
for the summer, it wasn't mine  
either, but it's important that I  
take this job, okay? For us. It's  
only a few weeks anyway and I'd  
rather you stay with her than some  
stranger.

THE BOY

What about dad?

MUM

You want to go to India?

The Boy shakes his head. *He really doesn't.*

MUM (CONT'D)

(cutting him off)

I could also just take you to  
summer school?

The Boy gives her a look: *No. Way.*

Mum reaches out to him and gives him a sloppy kiss causing  
her to almost swerve past another car.

The Boy rests his head on the window and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

DUNGENESS, KENT. 1996.

**INT. FIAT TEMPRA - DAY**

The Boy's eyes open suddenly when his head bumps the window of the passenger seat.

TOM  
Ooop, sorry about that, little mate.

The Boy rubs his eyes, he turns to:

TOM (23), the driver, dresses like a fisherman and acts like he's still undergoing puberty - but with a license and government permission to chug a pint.

Outside, the green grass gets drier as Tom drives.

The Boy watches as the heat builds in the distance creating waves and distorting the scenery.

They're arriving in DUNGENESS, Kent, England aka The European Desert.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Welcome to Dungeness.

THE BOY  
Looks dry.

TOM  
(chuckling)  
That it does.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY**

The FIAT TEMPRA stops in front of a small gate, which leads to a small path, which leads to a small house.

The house has been painted black and feels like the only one for miles. It's attached to a GARAGE and there's plenty of driveway space. Yet, Tom has parked on the road outside on the fence (which isn't doing much given the wide plains that surround it).

Tom leaves the car and rushes to get a suitcase from the boot.

The Boy is slower to make his exit, taking in the place around him.

Tom plops a suitcase in front of him.

TOM  
Your destination is up ahead.

He indicates the path to the rustic house, where a walkway of cactuses and dry weeds lead to way to the open front door.



Reluctantly, The Boy follows Tom down the path.

**INT. FRONT DOOR | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Tom knocks on the open door and steps inside the house followed by The Boy.

TOM  
We're here, miss!

The Boy struggles to get his carry-on past the door step. When he does, the suitcase falls with a loud THUMP.

THE BOY  
Shit.

MIA (O.C.)  
(in a portuguese accent)  
Never swear in the same language as  
the other people in the room.

The boys turn to see MIA (55), looks like an old and slightly chubbier Ellen Ripley with a dash of Sarah Connor. She walks towards them from one of the rooms, hands behind her back.

TOM  
Hiya, Miss.

MIA  
How are you Tom?

TOM  
Good. Sorry we're late, station was  
busy.

Tom kisses Mia's cheek and then she gives him a handful of bank notes, which he chugs in his pocket.

MIA  
I'll keep it off your record.

TOM  
Thank you, Miss.

Tom shifts in his step looking expectantly to Mia as if waiting for her to say something else.

MIA  
Payment is good, yeah?

TOM  
Yeah, yeah. I uh- heard Angel's  
staying with you?

MIA  
That's right.

TOM  
 (turning in his step)  
 Um, okay, tell her I came by?

Mia nods.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Okay, see you around, little mate.  
 You too Miss.  
 (He stops before he  
 leaves)  
 Oh and uh... tell her also that I'm  
 taking my GCSEs, so she might want  
 to reach me at the library or the  
 computers at Britannia.

Tom makes sure to pet The Boy's hair before he leaves.

Mia and her grandson stare at each other for a few moments.

MIA  
 Welcome.

The Boy waits for her to give him something more.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Your room is down the hall.

The Boy tries to hurriedly carry his heavy suitcase down the hallway disappearing into one of the rooms.

**INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Boy organises his comic books by number on the bedside table.

He puts away his clothes neatly folded, a mixture of khaki trousers, checkered shirts and superhero t-shirts. He changes his shirt for a T-SHIRT which has the name MIGUEL stitched on the label.

The bedroom isn't very big, but in it there's only a bed, two bedside tables and a chest of drawers, which is populated by three small Ferrari replicas.

Inside one of the drawers he finds a small NOTEBOOK which has a few written in pages with childish drawings inside. Next to it, a 93 Camaro HOT WHEELS toy.

He picks up THE CAMARO and turns it around to reveal yet another label with a name: "Miguel".

**INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY (LATER)**

The Boy lies on the bed racing Mario across the screen of his GAMEBOY.

He plays for a few seconds but then he looks down as his stomach RUMBLES.

**INT. HALLWAY | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Boy crosses the main hallway.

We see flashes of the other rooms in the house filled with paraphernalia that should belong in the 60s and 70s. It's almost like if a lodge met a 1970s beach house, but dusty.

He goes down a few steps until he reaches a door labelled GARAGE. *Who labels their house?* We can hear MUSIC coming from inside.

He's about to open it when- MIA COMES UP BEHIND HIM, shutting the door with her hand before he can peak inside.

The Boy and Mia stare at each other for a moment and then-

THE BOY  
I'm hungry.

Beat.

MIA  
Good. Get your coat.

**INT. BRITANNIA INN PUB - EVENING**

Mia and The Boy sit at one of the tall tables inside the BRITANNIA INN.

It's half full with drunk MEN and their DATES. There's a line of Apple Computers in the corner, where a CLIENT browses the new and exciting Internet.

The Boy fidgets in his seat, he's too short to touch the floor.

MIA  
How's school? Going well?

THE BOY  
Sometimes it does, other times, not so much.

MIA  
Why not so much?

The Boy shrugs taking a sip of his apple juice.

There's a moment of awkward silence.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Wanna hear a joke?

THE BOY

Sure.

MIA

This guy looked down one day and noticed his willie was blue.

The Boy chokes on his apple juice at the mention of the word "willie".

MIA (CONT'D)

So, he went to the doctors. Do you know what they said?

THE BOY

(Still coughing up)  
What?

MIA

Trying drying your jeans before you wear them.

Mia looks at him expectantly with a smile on her face.

The Boy chuckles, causing both of them to laugh together.

MIA (CONT'D)

Good one, yeah?

The Boy nods, cleaning the dripping from his apple juice with the back of his hand.

BERTIE (O.C.)

Mia!

An old man, BERTIE (60s), looks like a Sons of Anarchy Santa Claus, pulls a tall stool and joins them at their table.

MIA

Bertie, how are you?

BERTIE

Wondering when I'd see you again?

MIA

Ahh, well you know, retirement keeps me busy.

BERTIE

If that's what you wanna call it. And who's this?

MIA

This is Carlos.

The Boy looks at her with a slight frown.

Tom extends him his hand.

BERTIE

Hi Carlos.

Beat.

The Boy looks at Bertie's hand for a second before:

THE BOY

(looking at Mia)

It's Charlie.

MIA

(to Bertie)

His mother has this thing about  
*assimilation*.

BERTIE

And do you speak Portuguese too,  
Charlie?

Beat. The Boy stares at the two of them.

THE BOY

Well I uh... No. But I can  
understand some of it.

A WAITRESS approaches and lets down two Burgers: one for Mia,  
another for the Boy.

The waitress leaves.

BERTIE

So, I'm putting together this  
little event-

MIA

Oh no.

BERTIE

No, no, no. Look. It's just an  
amicable thing, you can come and  
just watch if you want.

Beat. Mia sighs.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

Charlie here would love it, yeah?!

Unsure of what he means The Boy simply shrugs.

MIA

I'll think about it.

BERTIE

Well, that's better than nothing.  
And look, I could bring in your  
girl too. Let her out for a bit.

Bertie winks at Mia, then he gives The Boy a heavy pat on the back.

BERTIE (CONT'D)  
I'll leave you to it now.

MIA  
Goodbye Bertie.

BERTIE  
I'll call you with the details.

As Bertie leaves, Mia takes the Ketchup bottle.

MIA  
You want?

The Boy nods reluctantly.

**INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM | MIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The Boy plays on his GAMEBOY, the rest of the room is dark except for the light coming from the screen.

He squirms trying to get his X-WING to shoot up the Empire's TIE FIGHTER.

But the PEWING SOUNDS are interrupted by A LOUD CLUNK.

The Boy stands on his bed to peak through the window where he has full view of Mia's backyard.

The yard is more of a private beach than anything else, with direct view of the ocean.

Mia is carrying some bin bags out, she puts them down on the sand and lights up a cigarette.

The Boy watches her from above like a bird watcher.

With her free hand Mia does a swish motion like she's whooshing away a fly. At first nothing happens but then-

- THE BIN BAG next to her starts floating OFF THE GROUND AND it begins to slowly hover towards THE WILLIE BINS a few meters away...

The Boy sits back down, rubbing his eyes. It can't be.

He stands again on his bed to make sure of what he saw:

Mia is there in her backyard "beach" smoking. The BIN BAGS that used to be at her feet, are now inside the big bins. She couldn't have made the trip in such a short amount of time... *could she?*

Mia turns her head up and LOOKS DIRECTLY at The Boy.

He quickly turns back down and clicks his light off. It's been a long day.

**INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM | MIA'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING**

The Boy's eyes open suddenly from a deep sleep.

**INT. HALLWAY | MIA'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING (CONTINUOUS)**

He opens his bedroom door. CREAK. *How loud can a door be?*

He slips between the door and the frame, trying to avoid any unnecessary noises by tiptoeing his way to the toilet.

The Boy reaches for the toilet door (which has been labelled as "Toilet") in dead silence, except THE DOOR OPENS TOWARDS HIM INSTEAD.

The Boy looks up at the GIRL (19). She looks... comforting, soft, her hair is in a bun and she's wrapped around a short towel. The steam from the bathroom and the early sun just frame her perfectly. She has a gold necklace with the word ANGEL on it.

ANGEL  
Hiya!

THE BOY  
Hello.

Angel smiles.

ANGEL  
Mirror might be a bit foggy.

The Boy watches her walk away for a moment... and then he remembers: Toilet!

He runs inside before it's too late.

**INT. KITCHEN | MIA'S HOUSE - DAY**

The Boy sits on the kitchen counter, holding on to the landline telephone receiver.

MUM (O.S.)  
Has she said more than two words to you?

THE BOY  
Technically, yes. She took me to the pub.

MUM (O.S.)  
Okay, wow, the pub.