

Isobel

A monologue, deliberately timeless.

(Spelling mistakes are deliberate to reflect the narrator's mentality.)

Ollie – A large, strong man, of any age.

Ollie: They said my jeans were screwed up. But I never screwed up my jeans, mum told me to fold them neatly and put them on the end of my bed. Which I always did. Always. They also said I was too big for my shoes, which I always found strange because Mum would buy shoes for me that were very comfortable. Surely if my feet were too big the shoes would hurt, which they never did. Never. I didn't understand and I don't understand now.

I was taller and stronger than all the other boys at school, which I didn't mind about, not really. Most of the other boys were nice to me and I found myself useful to them. They would get me to climb trees or shake the branches for them to get their ball back. Once I accidentally broke a branch off one of the trees at the corner of the school sports field. By accident. Then I found it a good way of getting footballs back and did it always. It was quicker that way. And sometimes they would ask me to get things off the top shelf or brake windows so the smallest boy could climb through. Most of the time they were very nice to me. Good friends. If we boys did anything naughty the teachers would be really cross and some boys got a cane, but not me. Mum would come and collect me from school and would always cry on the way home. I never got a cane. I asked one of my friends if I could see his and he just laughed.

I left school at fifteen years old. They said there was no need for me to do exams, wasn't much point. So I didn't. Mum talked to some people in the village and soon after I was told to go the farm. I was really useful there, especially during harvest. The other farmhands struggled with the bales but I found them light and easy to throw. Mum told me if I through another bale at a fellow farmhand I wouldn't be able to go to the farm anymore. So I told them to just watch out! When it was our second harvest I met Isobel, the farmer's daughter. She was very pretty with long golden hair which looked like the barley in the fields when the wind blue. She smiled at me the second day she brought out mugs of tea and digestive biscuits. She was very pretty. I smiled back and thanked her politely for the mug of tea and digestive, which I dunked. I wanted to talk with her some more but one of the other farmhands took her away and into the hay barn. We had to move lots more bales and when it was

time to go home I went into the hay barn to get my bike. I used to leave it in there to keep it from the rain. Better that way.

I remember hearing a cat, which I thought was strange because the farmer didn't have a cat. I thought it was strange that a farmer didn't have cats because of the rats. There were many dogs on the farm. It wasn't a cat I heard. I was about to go out of the barn with my bike when Isobel called me very quietly, like whispering. I didn't see her at first. Then I looked up and saw her on the stack of hay bales. She asked me to climb up to her and when I did I sore she was crying. I didn't like seeing her cry, her face wasn't as pretty that way so I held her to my chest like Mum used to do to me, when I was little. She thanked me and said I was kind but she kept crying. So I held her tighter. But she kept crying so I wrapped my arms round her further so that I could feel my own sides. I remember Mum used to hold me like this until I feeled better so I did the same to Isobel. That's when I had that really bad headache on the back of my head. But I never had blood from a headache before. Or since.

They told me I crushed Isobel so hard that I broke bones in her body. They said that her little body was limp, and they were all very angry with me. The farmer was shouting at me really loudly and some of the farmhands had to hold onto him. Then Mum was there and she was crying a lot more than I had seen her do before. But she didn't drive me home that day. I was told to go with the policeman.

I now live in a big place with its own little farm with a few pigs and chickens. They say it's Her Majesties Pleasure that I am here, which is kind of The Queen especially as she's never met me. There are lots of men hear and most of them are nice to me. One of my friends from school is here. He says only for a while. He looks out for me. I'm not sure where he looks out, maybe outside or over the walls. I told him that Isobel comes to visit me each week, but he just laughs at me. I told him that I will marry Isobel one day. When Mum came to visit me I showed her the chickens. We were in the sun and she was happy so I told her that I was going to marry Isobel. But she just suddenly started crying again. I thought she was going to be happy when I told her but she just cried some more. I don't know why. But the pigs needed feeding so I said she should go home.