

TIME'S UP

Written by
Tom Lashley

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. NORTH CORNWALL - DAY

Refracted sunrays cast spotlights on the honey-coloured leaves that pepper the suburban pavement. Half-naked trees loom over long driveways that wind their way to large houses, each a carbon copy of its neighbour.

The neighbourhood is small, containing around fifteen houses in total and with lots of space in between.

One house has a magnolia tree in the front garden - large, blowsy, purple flower buds ready to burst. The house has the same quality; a little over the top. Paintwork a shade too blue. Two carriage-lamps on either side of the front door. Through the bay window, swagged curtains festoon the glass.

This is Dale's house.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' reverberates through the house. The sound system from which it is playing seems too modern for the CD of choice.

We pan around the ostentatiously-decorated living room. Past the over-crowded wall of replica paintings - van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', Rembrandt's 'Saint Bartholomew'. Past the purple grand piano that has clearly never been touched, and the armchair too big for anything human to comfortably sit in.

A wiry-framed boy is sitting on the sofa. This is DALE, 15. Acne and adolescent wear and tear has taken its toll on his skin. He is dressed in cargo shorts and a baggy t-shirt. He looks out of place in the setting.

His eyes are transfixed on the muted television, his ears on the music.

He is watching cartoons, Wile E. Coyote and The Road Runner fight on screen. Wile E. Coyote throws a lightning bolt at The Road Runner, who turns and runs.

The doorbell rings, but it is only just audible above Beethoven's overtures.

Dale stands and edges to the hallway, not taking his eyes off the screen. The lightning bolt is chasing The Road Runner around mountains, through tunnels-

The doorbell rings again.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dale opens the door.

KYNA, 16, is on the doorstep. She is taller than Dale, has unkempt, unwashed hair, and is wearing commando-style trousers, a muddied vest top, and a torn trench coat. A bulging backpack pulls at her shoulders. All she's missing is war paint on her face. She stoops to kiss Dale on his cheek.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyna strides in, looks to the television where the lightning bolt is now attacking Wile E. Coyote.

She turns it off, puts her backpack down and opens it. She hands Dale a large coat and trousers similar to hers. He strips and puts them on.

Kyna rummages through the bag. Metal clunks together as she does so.

Dale has put one of his arms through the wrong sleeve of his coat. Kyna untangles him and straightens it out.

Kyna goes into her bag and pulls out a camera. She snaps a picture of Dale, who looks down at his feet.

INT. KYNA'S CAR - LATER

A beat up, rusting Fiesta. The inside is full of old fast food boxes and drinks bottles that rattle around the floor.

On the windscreen is a large sticker that reads 'The British Association for Shooting and Conservation', and another that says 'Game is for playing'.

Kyna drives, Dale is in the passenger seat. The radio is on.

A current chart pop song comes on, Kyna turns it over to a classical music station.

The car rumbles on to the sounds of Schubert. Every bump feels like the car is going to fall apart.

They stop at a zebra crossing to let a MAN cross. He holds his hand up to say 'thank you', but as he gets to the other side does a double take and stares at Kyna - she is clearly underage. Kyna accelerates off before he has time to say anything.

Dale inhales heavily. Holds it. Exhales. Kyna glances at him, touches his knee. He half-smiles at her, all he can muster.

Dale's breathing quickens. He shuts his eyes, strains, trying to calm his breathing. It doesn't work.

He looks out the window, attempting to hide it from Kyna.

But it is too late, she's noticed.

His breaths are getting shorter.

Kyna reaches to the backseat, sifts through her bag. She passes Dale his inhaler. He sucks on it, throws his head back, and breathes in and out.

Dale winds down the window and throws his inhaler out. He rests his head back and shuts his eyes.

EXT. CAR PARK - LATER

An expansive car park next to a field that stretches for miles. There are many spaces, but Kyna has parked as far back as she can.

Kyna gets out of the car with the backpack and opens the boot. Dale takes his time, as though getting out the car requires all his body strength.

When he gets to the boot, he peers in. He looks to Kyna, back to the contents. A look of dread crosses his face, but he gets rid of it before Kyna notices.

Kyna pulls out large, thick chains, followed by industrial-sized padlocks. She hands them to Dale, who almost buckles under the weight.

From the boot, Kyna takes out a small box. It is a brand new 'Go Pro' - a small video camera to attach to one's head.

She smiles at Dale. He ignores her.

Kyna opens the box and straps the 'Go Pro' around Dale's forehead. She turns it on. She gets out another 'Go Pro' and puts it on.

Dale and Kyna look back into the boot. She reaches in with both hands.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Kyna strides ahead of Dale across the field next to the car park, both have their coats done up. Kyna keeps having to hoist her backpack up.

Kyna looks back to Dale, and then forwards. Dale follows her gaze.

They are heading, inexorably, towards a school.

EXT. SCHOOL. CAFETERIA - LATER

Outside a set of double doors. Paint has crumbled off, the beginnings of rust are visible around the edges of windows. Dale has a set of chains draped around his shoulders like a scarf. He looks around. Deserted.

Dale peers through the window. Inside is a cafeteria that is currently empty. In the kitchen at the back steam is rising, as there is cooking in progress.

Dale takes the chains from his shoulders and wraps them round the door handles. He crops it a few times so it is tight. He pulls the door and it hardly budes. He takes a padlock out of his pocket and clamps it shut through the chains.

EXT. SCHOOL. BACK DOORS - SAME

Another set of doors. Kyna wraps her chains around the door handles without hesitation. She padlocks them and smiles.

EXT. SCHOOL. ENTRANCE - LATER

Both Dale and Kyna are now sat at a small wooden picnic table. The furniture you only ever see in schools. It is by the school's main entrance, the only door they have not locked shut.

Dale is shivering, but it is not cold. Kyna puts her hands over his. She tries to look into his eyes but his gaze is fixed on the table.

A ladybird lands in front of him. Its red and black spots appear sharp against the dull brown of the table.

Dale takes his hands from Kyna's and puts his finger in front of the ladybird.

It turns away, looking for an escape route. Dale uses another finger to block its path. And another.

Eventually it crawls onto his finger. He lifts his finger close to his eye, as if he were trying to count the exact number of spots on its back.

The ladybird crawls up, down, and around his finger. He holds out another, and another, and lets it crawl all over his hand.

He places his finger slowly, carefully, next to the table surface. The ladybird crawls off.

Kyna squashes the ladybird with her thumb.

Finally, Dale looks into her eyes.

Kyna grabs Dale's wrist and looks at his watch. It is 12:29pm.

She stands and reaches into her backpack.

She pulls out a Glock pistol. And with it, a book. She places the gun on the table, the book over it, and pushes it over to Dale.

He stares at the book - a Maths workbook. He opens the cover and sees handwritten: Dale Meadows. Year 8. Class 8A.

Dale flicks to different pages, all of which are covered in green ticks and comments such as 'Great work', 'Well done', and a sticker that reads 'You're a star!'.

Kyna shuts the book.

The lunch bell sounds from inside the school.

Kyna takes off her coat to reveal a hunting rifle strapped to her back. She swings it round, ready.

The lunch bell stops. School children's excitable clamour becomes audible.

Dale does not move.

Kyna throws the book to one side. She tries to push the pistol into Dale's hands. They stay clamped shut. As clamped as the school's doors.

KYNA

Take it.

Kyna stands back, staring at Dale.

Dale continues to look at the table, not moving an inch.

She SHOOTS Dale in the head with the pistol.

For a split second, it seems as though Kyna is going to shed a tear. But she closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, composing herself.

Kyna opens her eyes and makes her way to the entrance.

She opens the doors and enters.

They swing closed, the chains rattle as she wraps the door handles and padlocks from the inside.

Her footsteps fade as she walks away, into the school.

FADE OUT.

Writer's biography:

Tom Lashley is a scriptwriter, with the goal to write for the screen. Since starting his Master's degree, however, he has enjoyed exploring creative ideas through stage and radio plays, as well as advancing his screenwriting. Now, he does not want to limit himself to just one medium, and will aim to utilise all media for his future writing.