

Crucible

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EXT. HENDRIK'S HOME - DAY

Early morning mist rises over the battered terraced house that's seen better days.

INT. HENDRIK'S HOME, LOUNGE - DAY

GARY, 50s, strides into the lounge holding a beer where HENDRIK, 16, is sat on sofa, poring over a crumpled print of a painting.

There are ornaments on bookshelves, including a curious bunch of figurines and a bundle of twigs.

Gary sniffs, looks around derisively. Hendrik pretends not to notice, and looks something up in a book.

GARY  
Internet fucked or what?

Gary stands over Hendrik, pays him no attention. Gary picks up the book Hendrik is reading - a thick tome on Alchemy.

GARY (cont'd)  
What you doing reading this cobblers?

Hendrik shakes his head, still not prepared to look up.

Gary drops the book on the floor, and pulls out his smartphone, and taps Hendrik on the head with it three times

GARY (cont'd)  
It's the 21st century, it's all in here you muppet.

Gary laughs, while Hendrik looks nervous, and reaches forward to pick up the book on the floor.

Gary kicks it just out of reach.

HENDRIK  
Please, I just...

Gary reaches down and snatches Hendrik's painting. It's a print of the 17th century Atalanta Fugiens XXI depicting a man inscribing a circle, square and triangle around a couple drawn onto a brick wall.

GARY  
What's this, some juju shit?

HENDRIK  
It's the... er trial of man, it's  
like...

Gary snorts.

GARY  
Oh yeah...

Gary holds on to both ends and threatens to rip it up.

HENDRIK  
NO! Mum gave that to me! Don't you..

Gary smiles, still holding on to the edges, as if to tear.

Hendrik stands. The sound of a BUS vibrates the windows as it drives past outside. The vibrations cause a framed picture of HENDRIK'S MUM to crash onto the floor.

They both turn to see what's happened. Gary laughs.

GARY  
Even she's sick of the sight of you.

Hendrik runs over and picks up the picture. The glass is broken but he puts it back in its place.

Next to it lies three small figurines lying on their sides- a man, woman and child, together with a bundle of sticks. And oddly a salt cellar.

GARY (cont'd)  
No point running to your mummy now  
kid.

Hendrik walks back to Gary who's still got the picture in his hands.

HENDRIK  
Give me that back.

Gary swings back as if about to hit him. Hendrik flinches.

Gary laughs and lets the painting fall to the floor. Hendrik's eyes are glued to the ground.

GARY  
Trial of man eh. A pussy more like.  
Look at you. You know what, when I  
was your age, I was out there.  
Fucking. Fighting. And here you  
are...

Gary pours beer onto the floor, onto the painting.

HENDRIK

NO!

Hendrik scrabbles to recover the painting, desperately dabs the beer away, eyes welling up.

GARY

If she was alive today, she'd be embarrassed.

Hendrik stares at the floor, mutters something inaudible.

GARY (cont'd)

What was that? Huh?

Hendrik gathers his books while Gary towers over him.

Hendrik, clearly upset, runs out the lounge with his things, and smacks his leg on a chair on the way out. Gary laughs and shouts after him.

GARY (cont'd)

SHE'D BE EMBARRASSED!

INT. HENDRIK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hendrik's holding back tears. He holds the beer-stained picture, and stares at it, closely. On a piece of paper he draws the triangle, the square and the circle.

He looks outside at the allotments, distraught.

Then a thought. He scrabbles around underneath his bed and pulls out a large rucksack, sleeping bag and other various camping equipment.

Hendrik stuffs it all into his rucksack, mumbling angrily.

As he does Gary storms in.

GARY

Oi you runt where's the salt gone, I can't ...

Gary sees his rucksack and stops, amazed.

GARY (cont'd)

What? Oh yes. YES! Thank you lord. YES!

Hendrik stands, trying not to confront him. Gary leans in

GARY (cont'd)  
As your legal guardian, it's my  
honour and duty to say go on. Off you  
fuck. Do everyone a favour. You won't  
be missed.

Gary blocks the doorway. Hendrik looks at him, first time so far, mounts his rucksack, and Gary allows him to push past him.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

The sun sparkles over the North Downs, a luxurious rolling green carpet.

Hendrik looks happier now, checks a map and marches off up the hill.

He climbs over a gate, winds through a forest, past sheep, cows and rural bliss.

EXT. HILLS - DAY (LATER)

Hendrik is sat against a rock, on top of a hill, eating sandwiches.

He closes his eyes and lets his head roll back, stress leaving his face. Dozing.

Suddenly a voice. It's Gary from far away.

GARY  
Runt! Runt! Over here, look.

Hendrik jolts awake, terrified. Even though he's far away, Hendrik looks for his escape. But then he sees - on another hill is IONA, 50s.

Hendrik looks scared, confused, terrified. Blinks several times.

HENDRIK  
(shouting)  
Mum? Mum? MUM!

Iona pulls out a chair from behind a tree, and starts to unwind a hosepipe. Can't see where it's connected.

Slowly, she unfolds the seat and sits. Her shoulders slump. She holds the hosepipe in her hands.

Hendrik shakes his head as his voice gets louder and louder

HENDRIK (cont'd)  
No...no....NO.....NO!

Meanwhile Gary looks on at Iona

GARY  
Yeah go on you stupid cow. Suck it  
up.

Hendrik looks at both of them and starts to jog towards Iona, then breaks into a full pelt sprint. Down the hill, up the other hill.

Iona places the pipe in her mouth and starts breathing in.

Hendrik arrives and launches at the hosepipe, but it's gone. And so has Iona. It's a mirage. Hendrik collapses on the ground. Turns to face Gary, who's gone... but suddenly appears on the hill he just came from.

Gary's laughing like a maniac. Holding his ribs.

Hendrik's scared. He slowly steps backwards... until his foot suddenly drops into a sunken hole, covered by twigs and leaves. It CRACKS.

He SCREAMS in agony, panting to keep the pain at bay.

He looks up again and both hills are empty. Silence. He pulls his leg out the ground.

Wincing, he manages to get it level. His ankle doesn't move.

He pulls his phone out, and there's no signal. He shakes his head in despair and looks at the fading light.

Panicked he looks to the forest and begins to haul himself along the ground into the forest.

INT. FOREST - DAY

The light's nearly faded and Hendrik's exhausted. Now surrounded by trees and protected by canopy, Hendrik collapses in a heap and falls asleep from sheer exhaustion and pain.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

Hendrik wakes shivering. The forest is eerily silent except for the odd disconcerting rustle.

Hendrik rummages for a thermos flask in his backpack. Pulls it out, then hears it again.

He finds his phone torch, flicks it on. And stops in horror.

Surrounding him is a perfect square made from branches that wasn't there before.

Hendrik follows the line with his torch all the way around, then slowly lifts the torch....

The light does little to penetrate the heavy gloom. Nothing there. Torch in hand, Hendrik grabs one of the branches to use as a walking stick. Stands in the middle of the square then steps to one edge when...

BAM! He is slammed backwards into the square. He rubs his chin as a drop of blood oozes from the side of his mouth.

Panicked, he frantically searches with his torch for the cause. But nothing.

Again. He rises up, dragging his leg behind him, holding on to the stick. And once more, tries a different side of the square.

BANG. He's floored, screaming in pain, this time clutching his broken ankle.

This time, he uses a stick to clean sweep the area in front of him. Then tries to step over the branches. And then...

BANG! He is slammed onto his back once more. He HOWLS and clutches his stomach.

Lying there, defeated, he hears crackling behind him.

One of the rows of branches is ALIGHT. Flames lick up the one side of the square. Then the second lights up.

Hendrik takes off a bracelet of bound paracord, and starts to unravel it at high speed. He loops it around a small rock at his feet and throws it so it loops over a branch of a tree outside the square. Using a very long branch he reaches out the square and hooks the roped rock back.

The third side lights up. He repeats the process twice.

The fourth side lights. He then pulls on the cord and uses it as a swing and swings out the square onto the forest floor.

The fourth side lights up, leaving a burning square with his belongings in the middle left to burn.

Still breathing fast, he limps into the forest until he can take no more, and slumps against a tree, clearly suffering.

EXT. FOREST PATHS - NIGHT

Hendrik limps through the forest. One turn, then the next, using a headlamp to light the way and a stick to prop himself up.

Several turns later, he arrives... at exactly the same burning square.

HENDRIK

No. No way. No.

He limps faster now, past the square into the trees.

One turn. Another. Brushing past undergrowth off the path.

Forging through as fast as he can limp. And out into a clearing and....

Same burning square. Hendrik puts his head in his hands in despair. And then... he stops.

Hendrik picks up his stick uses it to move the burning sticks out the way so that he can get back into the square.

He opens his arms and lets out a guttural SCREAM.

And then, suddenly, a WHOOMP sound.

From nowhere, the fire is out. In it's place is salt. Like road salt, that's smothered the fire all around him.

The odd whisp of smoke remains.

Hendrik puts a finger into the substance and licks it. Wrinkles his nose.

Hendrik pulls out a sleeping bag and makes his home in the middle of the square. He begins to sob, exhausted.



EXT. FOREST - DAY

The early morning sun streams in through the trees as Hendrik stirs. His eyes flicker open. Nothing around him but trees, leaves and dirt.

No signs of the branches.

His breath quickens again, but he looks down puzzled. He reaches for his foot. It's fine. Unbelieving, he scrambles to his feet and shakes off his leg. No problems.

Startled, he looks around. Nothing unusual.

Slowly, surely, he pulls his things together. He's trembling, scared, unsure. Bag packed, he takes one last look and starts to run.

EXT. FOREST PATHS - DAY

Hendrik runs to a fork in a path. Sunlight lights just the one, and a small squirrel runs alongside. He takes the lit path.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

Hendrik's house nestles at the foot of the hills as Hendrik scrambles through the morning sun, lighting up the valley as the mist rises.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Tentatively, Hendrik opens the front door with his keys. Slowly. Slowly.

Noone there.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Hendrik heaves a huge sigh of relief, but then from behind him a voice whispers...

GARY

Cunt

Hendrik nearly jumps out his skin

GARY (cont'd)  
I might have known. I might have  
fucking known. You didn't even have  
the balls to run away. Did you? DID  
YOU? HEY?

Gary is pushing him now, and pushes him against the side of adjoining garage door.

Hendrik falls back against the door. It opens as he clatters into the garage.

INT. / EXT. GARAGE / HALL - DAY

Hendrik's sprawled on the floor as Gary looms at the doorway. Hendrik gets to his feet, avoiding a BMW and general bric-a-brac.

GARY  
You couldn't even do that right could  
you? So why don't you spend a bit of  
time here reliving the past hey?  
Alright? Good.

Gary slams the door shut. Hendrik hears it lock.

Gary uses a remote and the engine starts. Hendrik, panicked, tries to open the doors. Locked. Sees there's no key in the ignition.

The engine throbs, the fumes gradually filling the space.

Hendrik runs to the door he just came from. Definitely locked. Tries to barge it with his shoulders. No movement.

He runs over to the garage door. Old school metal shutter - also locked. He tries to lever it but nothing.

He looks around at the car. Looking for an object to smash the windows. He picks up a can of something, and is about to launch into it.

Outside, Gary is listening, smiling.

GARY (cont'd)  
And before you think about breaking  
the windows, the ignition is hard-  
wired under the bonnet. The bonnet  
release is disabled because unlike  
you, I'm no muppet. So settle down,  
take a pew, while I read you a little  
story.

Hendrik puts the can down, shaking his head.

Gary opens a up a diary with teenage doodlings. He clears his throat and puts on a loud effeminate voice to be heard over the engine.

GARY (cont'd)

Ahem.

1st January. New year but life looks the same. Gary tried to hit me again...

(normal voice)

I didn't try kid, I connected. Point of pride, only a small thing, but anyway...

(effeminate voice)

blah, blah blah, weight is so much...  
 blah blah love my mum ... heavy  
 darkness ... oh jeez this is proper  
 TRIPE kid.

Gary slams the book shut and continues talking through the door.

Hendrik slumps against the side of the garage in despair.

GARY (cont'd)

What a lemon. I mean seriously. Tell you what, I'll help you out. Look on your right. I left it for old times sake.

On Hendrik's left is a hosepipe reel.

GARY (cont'd)

Pop the pipe in the exhaust and the other end in your mouth, and we can all crack on with our day a bit faster hey? Do that right hey?

Gary listens for a reply. Nothing.

GARY (cont'd)

Don't be an embarrassment, your mum managed it just fine.

Hendrik face turns to rage. Gary laughs, and opens the front door.

EXT. HOUSE/INT. GARAGE - DAY

Gary revels in the sunlight, enjoying every ray. The sound of the engine ticks over in the background.

Henrik smashes the metal shutter, face in rage. Breathes. Composes. Determination.

Hendrik tries the fuel cap. It opens.

He pulls out the hosepipe, and holds it in his hands. Find a pair of scissors and cuts a 2 metre length.

He unscrews the fuel cap. He puts one end into the car, and holds the other.

He sucks on one end and quickly puts it into the fuel can as fuel trickles into the can.

It empties and the car stutters and the engine whines and dies.

Hendrik pulls the pipe out the can and pours the petrol all over the car, leaves the can on the roof and stands by the garage door, and armed with a carjack.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Gary frowns at the silence. Puts his ear to the garage door. Silence.

Gary rummages for his keys and finds a garage lock.

He looks around - noone - and opens the garage door.

As the shutter rises, Hendrik swings the car jack into Gary's stomach, sending him flying backwards. Hendrik pushes up the shutter, seeing Gary sprawled on the floor, then retreats to the bonnet.

Gary gets to his feet, full of rage, then rushes him as Hendrik pulls out a lighter, pointing to the fuel can on the roof of the car.

HENDRIK

Leave

Gary stops in his tracks. Looks him up and down

GARY

You what?

HENDRIK  
This isn't your house. You're not my  
dad. So leave.

GARY  
You've properly lost it runt.

Hendrik smiles

GARY (cont'd)  
You crazy little fuck. Give me that.

HENDRIK  
Either you leave for good. Or both of  
us go up, right here, right now.

GARY  
GIVE ME THAT!

Hendrik mouths at him 'fuck you'.

GARY (cont'd)  
You finished have you? You reckon  
this is it do you?

Gary stares at Hendrik as Hendrik confidently rolls the  
lighter wheel in his fingers, shaking his head.

HENDRIK  
I haven't finished.

Reluctantly Gary gets back in his car, shaking his head.

He makes a slitting motion across his throat at Hendrik as  
he starts the car and reverses out.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Hendrik walks in and takes the the beer-stained picture out  
his back pocket and stares at it. He puts it down, looking  
around.

Frowning, he makes his way to the bookshelf. Three  
figurines - a man, a woman and a boy - are arranged in a  
perfect triangle.

Around the triangle, is a square made of the now unbundled  
twigs.

Around the triangle is a perfect circle of salt.

Hendrik is amazed. He touches it and tastes it, wrinkling his nose.

Above the three symbols, a framed photo of his mum Iona looks on.

Hendrik looks out the window, confident. Eyes bright.

HENDRIK  
I'm just getting started.

A look of triumph with a hint of malice spreads across Hendrik's face.