

ADMISSION FOR ONE

FADE IN:

White screen with black text: 1937

FADE TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK OF "HAVEN OF HOPE" ORPHANAGE - DAY

A pair of worn-looking loafers walk down the sidewalk until they reach a set of steps in front of the entrance to the orphanage.

The sounds of CHILDREN at play are heard as forty-one-year-old ZANE LYNDON walks up the steps, then passes through the glass-paned doors into a foyer.

INT. FOYER OF "HAVEN OF HOPE" ORPHANAGE - SAME TIME

To the left of the entrance sits ADELA NORBERT, aged fifty or so years, in a matronly wool cardigan behind a heavy wooden desk. She smiles warmly at Zane who is now walking up to her.

He reads the "Mrs. Adela Norbert, Asst. Director" plaque on the desk. He notices that she isn't wearing a wedding ring.

ZANE

I'd like to register here, please.

She smiles brighter.

ADELA

Why certainly, uh, Mister?

ZANE

Lyndon. Zane Lyndon.

ADELA

Very well, Mr. Lyndon. Please, follow me and we can take care of this for you straight away.

Adela picks up a wooden clipboard with a fountain pen and leads Zane towards an informal area of chairs and sofas where they sit.

SITTING ON THE SOFA, Adela quickly fills out the top half of the form as Zane sits patiently next to her. He grins like a shy child while wringing his wrists.

ADELA

Now, we require that all necessary information be written down and filed for our records.

ZANE

Fine, fine.

ADELA

Wonderful. I have a few basic questions I need to ask you, then I can bring you on a tour of the facility so you can meet some of the children while we continue to fill out the profile information.

ZANE

Okay.

ADELA

Current job?

He looks confused for a moment, but it passes.

ZANE

Construction worker.

Adela writes on the form.

ADELA

Sounds like good steady work.

ZANE

Yes, it is.

They both smile at his good fortune.

ADELA

Are you married?

He looks at his shoes.

ZANE

Not yet, but I'm hoping to be one day soon.

Zane gazes out of the window, lost in thought so he doesn't hear the next thing that Adela tells him.

ADELA

Well, these things take time, but the state department tends to look down on those who don't have marriage prospects by a certain age. However, I like you, so on good faith I'm going to put "engaged" down.

Adela writes "engaged" under the marital status line on her form as Zane turns his attention back to her.

ADELA [CONT]

Do you live in the area?

ZANE

At the moment, yes.

ADELA

But you plan to move in the near future?

ZANE

Yes, to a larger place.

Zane looks around the room as Adela smiles and writes on another line.

ZANE [CONT]

By the way, how many boys are there to a room here?

ADELA

Well, we'll get to that on the tour later, but since you asked-- There are one hundred, sixty-four boys on the four floors under the roof of the west wing. However,

there are only eight boys per
dormer room.

ZANE

And how many girls?

ADELA

There are the same number per dormer
on the three floors of the east wing,
but there are only one hundred,
twenty-eight girls.

ZANE

They must have a lot of fun with
that many other kids to play with.

ADELA

Most of the time, they do.

They both smile.

ADELA [CONT]

Shall we continue?

ZANE

Yes, please do.

ADELA

Very well then. Do you have any
relatives in the area? A parent
perhaps?

ZANE

Unfortunately, no. My mother passed
away when I was nineteen and my
father passed away just nearly a
week ago.

ADELA

I'm sorry to hear that. It's very
tough to lose a parent at any age,
isn't it?

ZANE

Yes, it is. It certainly is. Have
you lost a parent yourself?

ADELA

No, thankfully not. But I did lose my husband many years ago in an accident. We were unable to have any children of our own before I lost him. But my parents were a wonderful comfort to me during the hardship of losing him. And they still are a great source of comfort now. But this isn't what you want to be hearing right now, is it?

ZANE

Comfort and security are what my folks were best at.

Zane's hands shake slightly until he sits on them to still them.

ADELA

Well, let's move on to some more items of query here.

ZANE

Please.

ADELA

Sex?

ZANE

Male.

She puts her pen down and places her hand on his lower arm.

ADELA

We have lots of wonderful boys here. A few rambunctious ones, but that only proves that old adage of snakes and snails and puppy-dog tails, doesn't it?

Zane grins widely.

ZANE

I don't mind the rowdiness.

ADELA

Good. That's nice to hear. So refreshing today to hear that someone

doesn't mind a child acting like a child. There are so few joys in life, and children should be one of them, rather than be considered a nuisance, don't you think?

ZANE

Oh, I do--whole-heartedly. No family is complete without children, and no child is complete without parents.

Adela smiles at his sentiment as he looks at his shoes again in a forlorn manner.

ADELA

Very well, let's continue onto the next section then, shall we?

She adjusts herself in the chair as Zane raises his head again.

ADELA [CONT]

Any particular hobbies?

ZANE

Well, let's see. How about baseball, swimming, hiking, drawing, and reading?

Adela smiles at him again.

ADELA

We stress the joy of reading very much around here. Helps the children grow and learn at the same time.

ZANE

You should never stop growing or learning.

ADELA

So true. Now, how about we take that tour I promised while we finish up the profile work?

ZANE

I'd like that very much.

They both rise to their feet.

ZANE [CONT]

Actually, I was wondering how long I'd have to wait.

ADELA

Well, the adoption process does take at least a few months because of the background checks, not that you'll have to worry about any of that, I'm sure. After that part, the only thing that's really left is to see if the misses approves as well, and then you'll have exactly what you came here for.

ZANE

Wonderful. So, when do I meet them?

ADELA

Some of the children should be around during the tour for you to meet then...

ZANE

That would be fun. But when do I meet them?

Adela adopts a puzzled expression.

ADELA

Forgive me, I didn't realize that you wanted more than one...

ZANE

Don't they usually come in pairs? When do I meet my new parents?

ADELA

I beg your pardon.

ZANE

That is what orphanages do, isn't it? They give parentless kids new parents, right?

ADELA

Well, yes, they do, but--

ZANE

Well, I used to be someone's kid before both my parents died. Now that they're gone, I want to be part of another family.

Adela looks at him with compassion.

ADELA

Mr. Lyndon, we find parents for wards of the state and in order to be a ward of the state, you must be under the age of eighteen years old, or be deemed incompetent to govern yourself by a court of law.

ZANE

Govern myself? Hmm. Maybe it might just be easier to hire a governess, I suppose. I mean, they are trained to be teachers as well as something of a mother-figure too. After all, just because I'm forty-one, it doesn't mean I'm through learning or done with needing the kind of care and support my mother, then my father, used to give me. Does it?

ADELA

No, it certainly doesn't.

ZANE

Well, thank you very much, Mrs. Norbert. If you're quite sure that I can't register to be adopted here, then I think it would be best if I be on my way. It's just such a shame that adults can't seek new parents once they've lost their original ones.

He turns away from her as she stares at him in silent pity.

ADELA

I'll hope for the best for you, Mr. Lyndon.

He looks back at her. She smiles weakly at him, as he smiles weakly in return before walking back through the

foyer. He opens the door to exit and the sounds of CHILDREN at play fill the foyer.

FADE OUT