

Warren's Choice

By

Simon Colligan

Reg No: 5724

simon@colliganweb.co.uk

EXT. ARCTIC WASTELAND - DAY.

As far as the eye can see, there is white. Harsh, deadly.

Arctic winds sweep and whip up snow casting it carelessly aside.

In the distant, there is a huddle of block buildings forlorn among the wasted backdrop: O.B. PAPA ALPHA.

Papa Alpha is a mish-mash of square and rectangled gray.

Pipes sneak out and curl round; large oil-drums scatter the perimeter of the brick slabs.

There are various strewn paraphernalia.

It is a maze of hardy indistinctness.

INT. COFFEE-BAR - DAY

ALAN WARREN (40) handsome unkempt, and JUDY CURRIE (35) studious brunette.

Both sat on stools by the window, looking out onto the busy street; both cradle cappuccinos.

ALAN

I used to love the marching, going on a protest.

Judy moves some hair from her forehead.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I remember it so well.

JUDY

Back in the day?

ALAN

We hit Mc D's once.

JUDY

Literally or metaphorically?

ALAN

Well this guy, he threw a chair at the window.

JUDY

Some physical expression.

ALAN
Would you believe it - the thing
bounced off.

JUDY
Never...

ALAN
They made the windows, designed
them to prevent that kind of thing.

JUDY
They must have know it was likely
to happen.

ALAN
We want chairs to bounce. Great
design requirement.

Judy laughs.

JUDY
I can't imagine you as a protester,
you're so sensible now.

ALAN
(Mocking)
Are you calling me square?

JUDY
You're a mature research scientist.

ALAN
Well...

JUDY
I can't image you running around
throwing chairs into cheap fast
food joints.

Both laugh.

ALAN
It was a buzz. I can't deny that,
but it was always a buzz based on a
point. We had...

JUDY
A philosophy?

ALAN
Validation I guess you'd call it.

JUDY
And you needed that?

ALAN
Ideals and beliefs with a kick up
the back side.

JUDY
So more than mere philosophy.

ALAN
We got sick to death of all the
sandal wearing veggies,
limp-wristed liberals...

JUDY
It gets deeper.

ALAN
We had to kick all that into
touch...

JUDY
Literally.

ALAN
If we believed in what we said,
then we had to fight for that
belief, and, in the end, fight we
did.

Alan takes a swig of his coffee, and Judy follows up.

JUDY
And, you know, I kind of admire
that.

ALAN
So am I getting some authenticity
here?

JUDY
I admire someone who is willing to
stand up for their point of view.

ALAN
Not their philosophy...

JUDY
More than that really. Someone
who's willing to really defend it
and fight for it. That impresses
me.

They look at each other and smile.

EXT. ARCTIC WASTELAND - NIGHT

A maze of blocks.

One is different. It has light coming from it.

It is O.B. PAPA ALPHA building 32. There is a door, and to the left of the door there is a window.

More than light, there is warmth - an orange glow.

INT. MODERN FLAT - DAY

A cool, minimalist apartment.

CLIVE HENRY (34), lean, tall, dark-haired.

Clive leans his back against a kitchen worktop. He has a beer in his hand, wears jogging bottoms, casual top.

In front of him there is a kitchen work-station.

CLIVE

You see, you just understand it
from a theoretical point of view.

Takes a swig of his beer.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Most people don't have that luxury.

He eases up from leaning to a stand position.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

They have families to feed, they
have to get on with their real
lives.

Moves to the work-station.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

They can't just go on something
they read in a book.

Re-positions a chopping-board.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Sometimes they have the real world
to deal with, and that's hard for
them.

Puts a knife on the board.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
In a lot of ways, you have it easy.
You can afford theory.

Tap-taps the knife like he's chopping some veg.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You can afford that lavishness,
that luxury.

Clive holds the knife point down, handle up.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
That you have a theory is a
opulence.

He spins the blade.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Many the average man can ill-afford
a theory when they are spending
their living hours providing a
living for others they love.

Clive looks up and offers a smile.

His confidence building.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
It's simple see? The politics of
poverty doesn't often call on the
philosophy of the vegetarian...

He turns to the sink and flicks the tap on, washing his hands.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
..they're too often engrossed with
the realities of living. Of
everyday life. Day to day survival.

Takes a gulp of beer.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
When you have no choice. When
you're forced to choose. When you
stick by what you're saying. Then
you can say that it was something
that you fought for.

Turns his head to look behind him.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Now? it's nothing real. It's just
an easy ideal. An easy choice.

Grabs a towel and turns around.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You never had to suffer for it. You
never suffered for want of
anything. So how can you hold your
ideals so high?

Dries his hands.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
How come they mean so much more to
you than to some wife with a
bread-line husband buying just
whatever she can afford?

Hangs the towel back up.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Do you think she read anything? I
mean really, do you think that
these people read things and then
go, I'll buy this or that based on
what I've read?

Leans on the work-station looking straight ahead.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
They read something.
(pause)
The price. That's all.

Takes another swig of beer.

INT. O.B. PAPA ALPHA BUILDING 32 - NIGHT.

The interior is sparse.

Clive Henry is sat on the floor with his back to a wall.
Under his left arm is LUCY (6) A white TERRIER dog.

Clive is unshaven, disheveled.

His lips are tight.

Clive looks at Lucy, and gives her a smile; a stroke on the
head.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY.

Protesters throng the road. There are actions and colors; sounds and noise all around. People are vocal; some jump up and down.

The crowd has a sense about it, that it has control; is empowered.

People blow whistles and wave banners, as they march forward.

In amongst the throng is Alan and TRACEY DEAL (32) a rustic looking brunette.

As the crowd chants, Tracey and Alan chant in unison. They share one voice with the moving body of people.

ALAN

Meat is murder! Meat is murder!

TRACEY

Meat is murder! Meat is murder!

CROWD

Meat is murder! Meat is murder!

Tracey motions her hand at Alan.

Beyond them they see objects being thrown toward buildings. They rush forward.

The rioting faction numbers only four.

Alan tackles one of them. He rebukes a MAN (20's), grabbing him by the lapel. The man shows no commitment to his cause and limply tries to pull away. His three FRIENDS (20's) look on.

There is inaction. The friends observe the scene in fascination without intervention.

INT. O.B. PAPA ALPHA BUILDING 32 - NIGHT.

Clive is sat with his back to the wall.

On the opposite wall a man is sat facing Clive.

It is Alan.

ALAN
Cute. The puppy.

Clive stares back at Alan.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Clive, I'm not going to die here.

Clive laughs.

CLIVE
You know what this place is like
Alan. You ain't going to live so
long here either.

ALAN
We've got some gas left. We've got
some pans. Lots of pans. I can
cook. I can cook good.

CLIVE
Alan, don't get me wrong or
anything here, but last time I
heard, you were...

Clive struggles for the word.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
...vegetarian? Am I getting this
wrong?

ALAN
Oh, you are right. Last time you
heard.

Alan pulls his right leg up, scratches his ankle.

ALAN (CONT'D)
But now... things are different.

Alan looks down at his ankle.

ALAN (CONT'D)
You know as well as I do that this
is a survival game.

There is a knife holstered to his lower leg.

ALAN (CONT'D)
You knew there was a risk of bad
weather when you let the guys take
that last seats on the plane.

CLIVE

They're going to come back - the weather won't hold out this bad forever - there'll be a break.

ALAN

(Dismissive)

Wake up Clive.

Alan takes the knife out of the holster.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You said that two days ago! We could die. You do understand that don't you? There's a very real chance.

He uses the knife to scratch at his leg.

CLIVE

You're not eating Lucy. Forget it before you entertain it.

ALAN

I just can't figure you. You're a meat-eater. You've spent most of your life chomping away on innocent animals. And suddenly you're facing death, and it's Oh! Can't eat this animal, she's just too cute...

CLIVE

(Surprised)

You can't figure me!

Clive shakes his head.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Here we have a pathological vegan.

ALAN

Pathological?

CLIVE

You write articles in magazines about it.

ALAN

Did.

CLIVE

Go on marches protesting against murdering animals...

ALAN
...against excess.

CLIVE
...and then you come across your
first test, and it's like okay,
lets eat puppy.

Alan uses the knife as a pointer towards Clive.

ALAN
My veganism was a philosophy...

CLIVE
It was a luxury.

ALAN
...grounded in and among a world
that had ample food, yet rejected
healthy good eating and instead...

Alan looks for the words.

ALAN (CONT'D)
...consumed tons of animal flesh in
the guise of junk food. That was
not about survival. This is.

CLIVE
And so it's goodbye to the
philosophy, because hunger's
knocking?

ALAN
Clive, don't you get it? This is do
or die.

CLIVE
I get it okay. It's about your
survival. That's why the rules
suddenly all change...

ALAN
Rules? What rules are you talking
about?

CLIVE
...suddenly you're hungry, and it's
fine now that things are going to
die, because you have to fill your
belly.

ALAN

It's called living. Empty bellies,
is just another word for dying.

CLIVE

Because before, you had your fill,
and you never went without, so you
could sustain your point of view.

ALAN

I could sustain staying alive. It's
different.

CLIVE

Your attitude, you call it your
philosophy, and all because, let's
not get hung up on etiquette here,
you got a full belly.

Alan laughs mockingly at Clive.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

And now it ain't so full, now you
got a little hunger it's all like
goodbye to that, and lets eat what
is... is mine.

Both men share a moment of quiet. Each with their own
thoughts.

ALAN

I never concurred with suffering
for any animal in an age of excess.
That was my basis. It was all about
what was needed and when...

CLIVE

...and then why didn't you ever say
that? Why didn't you ever, at any
time mention it?

Alan looks for the words.

ALAN

It was always there.

He looks down for a moment.

ALAN (CONT'D)

It was always implied. In
everything I did. Everything I
wrote.

CLIVE

And what comes after Lucy - what if they still don't come back? What if there is no rescue party?

ALAN

There's the best part of three days food on that little thing.

Alan looks at Lucy with a glint of a smile on his face.

ALAN (CONT'D)

If we go for starvation rations, that little mutt will get us through the best part of a week.

Alan looks toward Clive.

ALAN (CONT'D)

That gives us and them an extra week to get back to us. It's a week that right now we just don't have.

Alan jabs at the floor with the knife.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You got a better idea on how you're going to buy us a week?

Clive strokes Lucy's head.

CLIVE

You'll take her over my dead body.

Alan taps his head against the wall, his face a picture of frustration.

ALAN

So now. That's the choice you're giving me then?

Alan looks towards Clive.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Are you seriously bringing it down to you or me?

CLIVE

I'm not bring it down to anything.

ALAN

I have to go through you to get to doggy?

CLIVE

You make your own choices.

ALAN

Do you know what you are saying?
You're actually suggesting that, to
save your pooch, at least one of us
has to die in here?

CLIVE

You're beginning to lose...
direction... focus... moral
bearings...

ALAN

You set out your stall. Now I have
to take my choice.

CLIVE

So meat really is murder then?

Clive laughs to himself.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

When you used to chant it, I kind
of guessed that you were condemning
it, not promoting it.

EXT. O.B. PAPA ALPHA BUILDING 32 - NIGHT

The wind still howls outside.

A man passes, and heads for the door of the building. He is
TED BROWL (52) a rotund, graying male, wearing a deep red
jacket, hunched against the wind.

Two other men follow. DANNY WILLIAMS (28) and PHIL HEARD
(32) both are carrying flashlights, and like Ted, have their
own red jackets.

Browl stops at the entrance, and BANGS firmly on the door
with the outside of his fist.

TED

Anybody in there?

He turns to his colleagues, and speaks to them.

He motions, gestures, then tries turning the handle of the
door.

He swings the door open.

They all look inside and remain still.

Lucy appears in the door-frame.

FADE OUT:

THE END