

NOTES

FORTRESS (Full-Length Version) by Michael Scanlan

BILLY is nine when he finds out, accidentally, that he's adopted. Feeling betrayed, BILLY retreats into a world of his own, cuts himself off completely from his mother and father and builds his own Fortress of Solitude. His only ally, friend, and sometime enemy, is Kim, who watches BILLY as they both grow through high school, and who is frustrated by BILLY's determination not to need anyone but himself. Now a high school senior, we see BILLY recalling a dream in which he feels helpless in saving Kim from trouble because of the wall he has built around himself.

BILLY

I look up to the stage and I realize that there's a play going on. Some goofy high school play. It's almost funny -- all these kids dressed up like middle-aged adults with white stuff in their hair and these heavy lines drawn on their faces. You can tell the play's supposed to be serious, but these kids all look so ludicrous that I want to laugh. The lights change. There's a single pool of light around this girl who is holding a book. She is very beautiful and very real. It is Kim. The girl is Kim. The play is *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*. She speaks, but I can't understand what she is saying. It's not English, German maybe, or Dutch, I can't tell. But it doesn't matter because I know what's happening. The Nazis know about the attic. The Nazis are coming for them. I hear the distant sound of marching feet. No one else seems to hear it. The marching comes closer. Kim is beautiful, trying to be brave, trying to hold them all together, but the sound of marching is very loud now, overwhelming the voices of the actors, filling the auditorium. I try to scream, I try to warn Kim, but no sound will come from my mouth. The marching is coming from the audience now. The audience is stamping their feet. The actors hear it and stop -- all except Kim who

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SUDDEN THEATRE!

Scanlan

keeps on acting, and the sound is louder and louder and louder and ... it stops. And then the dead people rise from their seats. My father leaves his seat and crosses to them. He smiles. He slowly begins to march in place, the dead people follow him. Led by my father they approach the stage. The other actors run, but Kim walks to the front of the stage to meet the army of dead people. She is angry, she is furious with these people. She yells at them, she tells them to sit down, she tells them to get out, but they keep marching towards her, and I want to scream, I want to run to her, to protect her, but I can't ...

SUDDEN THEATRE!

QUESTIONS ABOUT FORTRESS (Full-Length Version) (Billy's Monologue)

- How does BILLY's dream show his alienation from the world around him?
- How are the other people in BILLY's life seen in his eyes? His father? Kim? School friends?
- What images of the Nazis give us a sense of how BILLY feels when confronted with other people?
- What is stopping BILLY from helping Kim? What is he afraid of?
- How does BILLY see Kim? Is it real? What level does he place her at? What level does he see himself at?