

## Late for School

My name is Olive O'Connor. I wasn't born into an opulent family; my father was an oiler, my mother an oven cleaner. Both used to do as much overtime as they could manage, so that offset their low wages. My origins were I became an ordinary opportunist offender when my parents were taken out by the onslaught of opiate drugs one cold October evening. It wasn't optional they wanted to use them; it had been decided by the authorities when they found out that they had a thirst for knowledge of the occult sciences. It didn't keep them under control and the dosage kept being raised.

I came late to school; as an orphan I understood from an oracle that I would be taken away. So I ran away and hid in an orifice in an oak tree trunk for over a year. I lived on anything I could beg, borrow or steal. I would often watch an owl taking out a small mammal. There were occasions when I became somewhat otiose and one time I left a trail that was followed; I found myself ousted from the hole I occupied. The outcome being I was taken, I had been outwitted.

The gates opened to me at an outstanding school, (the opinion of OFSTED) and promptly closed behind me. It occupied a large amount of ground on the outskirts of Oxford. The building was old and ostentatious and it had an obelisk in the driveway. I was taken to an oversized office, with ornamentation orderly surrounding the walls. It felt overbearing not to be outside. My body started to oscillate as the oxygen left me; while I tried to override everything that was orated towards me.

The number 18953/47 was given to me to keep for the duration of my stay and I was put into a dormitory occupied by five other girls. The 1812 Overture was playing through the large speakers in the ceiling. Nobody liked it here but the dorm was our oasis. Before bedtime we were given a mug of Ovaltine. For breakfast we had oats and orange juice. If anyone didn't eat the oats one would have a tube down ones oesophagus with the oats channelled in.

On my first full day I had an operation to remove my ovaries to curtail any reproduction.

It wasn't an option not to stay at the school; it was an obligation. We had to keep to the ordinances the Omnipotent Ruler made up. I never wanted to be obedient, more like obstinate and obstreperous. We were ostracized from the rest of society, treated more like outcasts. The objective of the school was to carry out experiments on us. The governmental oligarchy thought this a grand idea. I certainly wasn't an optimist; I could never see us returning to the outside world.

I was put into the Initial letter O group. This is where I met Ophelia Osgood and we became best of friends. The lessons were all based around the letter O; the objective was for us to only use words beginning with the letter O. The plan being the twenty-six classes only learnt about words beginning with the Initial letter of the given name of the pupils of that class. If we didn't use the allocated amount of O words Mr Oswald had been given the onerous task of teaching us, he would be outraged. On occasions we could only use octosyllables.

I found out later that DNA from the best pupils was taken and mixed together to originate a being with a greater brain power than ours. Obviously mine was never taken.

Mr Oswald suffered from obesity and an odour problem, for this he was sent to our school to teach us the 'object lesson of overeating'. He was an odious, obnoxious oaf of a man, often found to be ogling the younger offenders. They were oblivious to his obvious overt observations.

Ophelia outshone all the rest of us with her words. Not to be outdone, I was outspoken and overbearing, I was not outclassed. I kept my mind occluded. I do remember learning about opera, oceans, optical illusions, ornithology, obtuse angles and ocelots. I think my way of learning these was more akin to osmosis. We were allowed to make our own essential objects and to paint them, but only using ochre oil paint.

Occasionally an official would come into our class and all heads had to be inclined in an obeisance of deep homage even 'Osgood the Outsized Oggler' had to obey.

We grew organic vegetables. My obligation was to look after the onions that were oval in outline.

Oddments could be found in the allotment. Precious stones had become obsolete, they could be found all over the allotment. Today I obtained an opal. It was obscure why, but we were not allowed to own anything ourselves. I hid the opal in my overalls during at night, during the day, inside the gazunder. The orderly never cleaned them and her overseer never checked whether she had. No-one ever found it.

Ophelia's onerous obligation was to look after the oxen. She loved being outside, as did I. In everything else we were total opposites.

They did not break me, I was obstinate and I tried to obstruct and put obstacles in their way whenever I could. I was opposed to their ideals; my sentences often wouldn't all have any O words in, I was quite obdurate.

Today is a good day. I have been allowed to leave the school, it's my birthday. I have become an octogenarian; I was obliterated. My obituary stated I was obsolete and outdated and had outlived my usefulness.

Ophelia wrote an ode to me called 'Olivia's Ordeal'. It was the only original thing I had ever been given since I came here.