

Nevermore

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Created in collaboration with the Highgate Red Company 2025-26

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BLACK BOX
DRAMA SCHOOL

SYNOPSIS

Genre: Thriller (Fantasy)

At the rundown orphanage Nevermore, life is governed by strict discipline, fading traditions, and the fragile hope that one day the girls might be chosen by a wealthy family and taken away. Unknown to the pupils, the orphanage itself is facing imminent closure unless new investment is secured, a fate that could leave the girls lost to the world beyond its gates.

When a mysterious benefactor arrives offering a rare opportunity to a select few, excitement ripples through the orphanage. As tests are set and names are announced, hope and jealousy collide. Yet beneath the promise of escape, something far more troubling begins to surface.

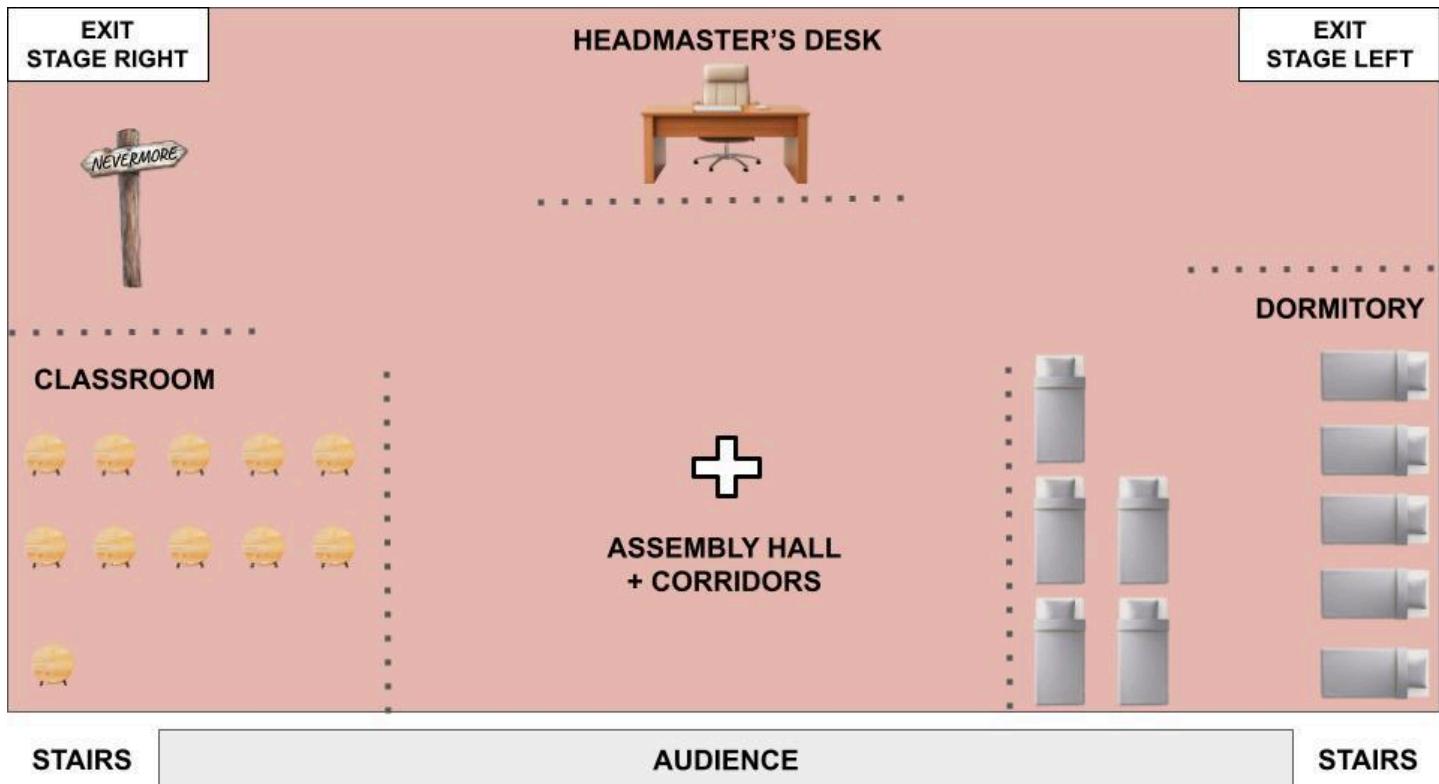
As the story unfolds, long-buried secrets emerge, revealing that Nevermore's history stretches back to World War II, a time when children vanished with alarming regularity. Hidden beneath the orphanage lie tunnels and forgotten spaces, leading the pupils toward a magical and dangerous world they were never meant to discover.

Blending dark fantasy with moments of humour, courage, and rebellion, Nevermore follows a group of children who refuse to accept obedience at any cost. As they uncover betrayal, challenge authority, and confront forces determined to shape their futures, the pupils must decide whether they are willing to risk everything to save their friends.

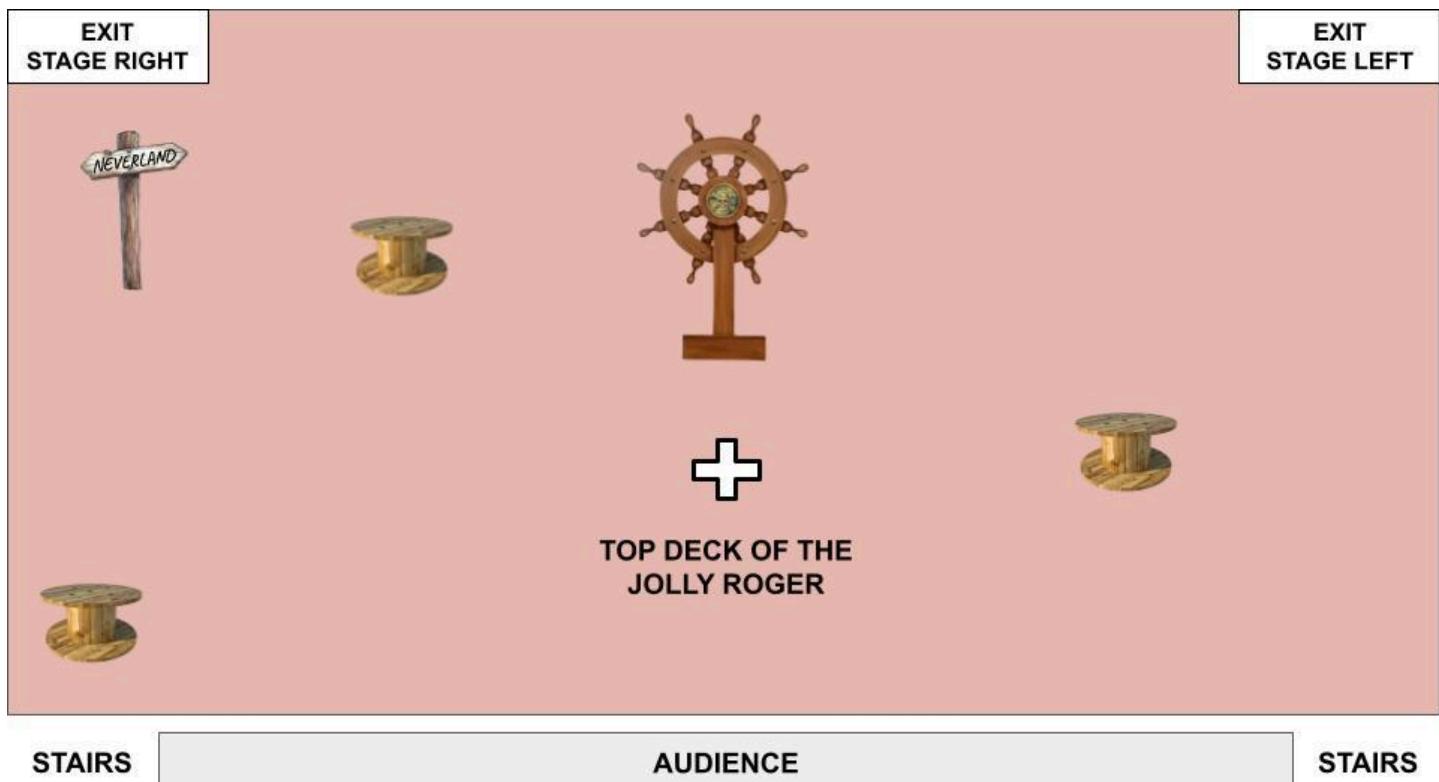
This play was inspired by the role-play sessions with our Highgate Red Company of 2025–26. Using the Role That Dice system, pupils explored an immersive, improvised drama world where their choices shaped the story. Through collaboration, investigation, and roleplay, the pupils created the characters, dialogue, and narrative that formed the ideas for this script.

STAGING DIAGRAMS

ACT ONE - NEVERMORE



ACT TWO - NEVERLAND



SCENE 1: NEVERMORE ORPHANAGE. MORNING.

As the audience enters, the scene is set and the cast are frozen in tableau.

Downstage right: the CLASSROOM.

JUNIORS sit on wooden stools, frozen mid-lesson.

Some pupils have hands raised.

Others looked bored or daydreaming.

One is making fun of a peer.

Another stares out of the window into the distance.

MISS BROOKSON stands downstage, warm and attentive, pointing at the board, a book tucked under one arm, her expression kind and encouraging.

Downstage left: the DORMITORY.

SENIORS lay or sit in their beds, lined in rows.

Some are curled beneath thin blankets, clutching pillows or soft toys.

Others sit upright, half-awake, rubbing their eyes or staring towards a small, unseen window.

One appears to be mid-whisper to a roommate.

Another as though something has just woken them.

Upstage centre: the HEADMISTRESS'S OFFICE

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE and MISS HEATHERS stand in tense conversation, frozen.

GREYMOORE sits at a desk, pen poised above a document, just before signing.

MISS HEATHERS towers above GREYMOORE, her posture rigid and commanding.

Their eyes are locked. The moment is heavy with pressure.

The rest of the STAFF are upstage, in positions frozen that suit their role.

MR CORRIGAN, the caretaker, is mid-sweep, broom paused sweeping the floor.

MR HOLT, the P.E. teacher, stands with a football under one arm.

MISS STEEL, the music teacher, holds a conductor's baton, mid-gesture.

MISS SIGANDON, the science teacher, is examining a small vile, eyes alight with curiosity.

MISS MACKENZIE stands hunched in the background, hands clasped, watching everyone.

The lighting is low and cold.

A single note begins.

Slow. Hollow.

SONG: NEVERMORE

EMMA sings softly from the classroom.

EMMA

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

MIRA sings from the dorms.

MIRA

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

The ENSEMBLE freezes in a new tableau as MOLLY sings, sitting upright in her bed.

MOLLY

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ARIANNA sings, clutching her necklace.

ARIANNA

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

The ENSEMBLE freezes in a new tableau as MISS STEEL sings.

MISS STEEL

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

JESS

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

The ENTIRE CAST now sings one final verse together, followed by a chorus.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

Blackout.

STAFF who are upstage exit, during the blackout.

SCENE 2: NEVERMORE ORPHANAGE. DORMITORY. MORNING.

*The dormitory is dimly lit as thin light filters through high windows.
Some SENIORS lie awake in bed, staring at the ceiling.
Others sit upright on their beds, knees pulled in.
The atmosphere is calm but heavy.*

ELLA

Some nights I dream, and when I dream, I forget where I am.
Then I wake and remember.

LIV

I wake and I am already tired.
Like this place has beaten me before it starts.

AVA

Nevermore feels smaller every year.
Like the walls move in when no one is looking.

SIERRA

Do you ever wonder what the others are doing?
Our friends, the ones who left Nevermore.

MOLLY

Rose wrote me once, she got taken in by a rich family.
Said they had carpets everywhere and a chandelier!

POPPY

Clara joined a travelling circus.
She was always so good at gymnastics.

ISABELLA

Mary was sent to a butcher's shop.
She said the work was hard, but she ate well.

MIRA

I heard one girl went to sea.
All the way to America.

REBECCA

They are the lucky ones.
We are the leftovers. The scraps.

POPPY

Once they leave, they do not stay long in our lives.

AVA

Yep, it's always the same.

They write for about six months, then the letters stop.

ELLIE

Can you blame them?

ELLA

Sometimes I wonder if anyone is coming for us.

LIV

For us?

I do not think anyone is coming to save us!

SIERRA

We are the old stock now.

And Nevermore is all we will ever know.

A long beat of silence.

No movement but lots of eye contact.

The quiet is deliberate and uncomfortable.

MOLLY

I hate this place.

Especially when it is quiet.

POPPY

Nevermore has taught us how to survive, that is something, I guess.

ISABELLA

One day, something will change for us. It has to.

And maybe we'll end up out there, beyond these high walls.

ELLIE

Or maybe nothing changes.

And this is it for us.

MISS HEATHERS enters suddenly.

She says nothing as she stands in the doorway, an intimidating figure.

At once, the SENIORS scramble to their feet as the room snaps into order.

Each pupil stands rigidly at the end of their bed, eyes forward, hands by their sides.

MISS HEATHERS moves slowly down the line, inspecting them one by one.

She leans in close to a pupil. Waits and then moves on.

Her silence is deliberate. Suffocating.

MISS HEATHERS

The Headmistress has summoned you to the Assembly Hall.

There will be an important announcement made this morning.

She pauses, letting the words settle.

MISS HEATHERS

Make your beds.

Then report to the Assembly Hall immediately.

She exits without another glance.

Silence as the SENIORS exchange brief looks. No one speaks.

Quickly they gather their sheets and pillows and then exit following MISS HEATHERS.

The room is left bare.

Lights fade.

SCENE 3: JUNIORS' CLASSROOM. INT. MORNING.

Morning light spills across the classroom

MISS BROOKSON stands at the front of the room, reading from a worn copy of 'Treasure Island'. The JUNIORS lean forward, completely absorbed.

MISS BROOKSON

"I remember it as if it were yesterday; the sudden fall of the breeze, the heat, and the silence, broken only by the rippling of the water against the bows. The island was thickly wooded. From the beach, a gentle slope rose up to the rocks standing out strangely from the green. All was wild and overgrown. I had soon begun to enjoy the adventure..."

She closes the book gently.

MISS BROOKSON

Now, how do you think Jim Hawkins felt when he first saw Treasure Island?

EMMA

Excited.

Like something amazing was about to happen.

CHARLOTTE

I think he was very brave.

Even though he was scared.

LEO

He was probably confused at first.

The island was all new to him.

VALENTINA

I think he must have liked it straight away.

Imagine, he's never seen anything like that before!

ARIANNA

I think Jim Hawkins would have felt free.

Like no one could tell him what to do!

JESS

I wish I could see an island like that.

Just once.

SILVIA

It must've been so quiet, out there in the wild all alone...
I think Jim twusted the island.

ANNIE

I would not like being on that island.
It would feel like someone or something was watching me.

MISS BROOKSON

Well done girls, great answers.
Now does anyone have any questions?

CATTIE

Miss, do you think it was a calm quiet?
Or the kind of quiet that makes you nervous?

MISS BROOKSON

Definitely the calm kind of quiet.

CASSY

Miss, does Jim Hawkins survive in the end?

MISS BROOKSON

Well girls, we will just have to wait and see, won't we.

The JUNIORS groan and beg.

MISS MACKENZIE

Good morning everybody!

MISS BROOKSON

Good morning Miss Mackenzie!
Girls?

JUNIORS

Good morning Miss Mackenzie!

MISS BROOKSON notices **MISS MACKENZIE** who is standing in the doorway.
MISS MACKENZIE enters without announcing herself.

MISS MACKENZIE

Treasure Island, a fantastic choice Miss Brookson.

(She steps further into the room.)

I think Jim was a very naughty boy for wandering so far from home.

Maybe a wolf with big sharp teeth got him in the woods.

Or maybe something far worse.

MISS BROOKSON

That's enough, Miss Mackenzie!

(reassuring to pupils)

Girls, I'm sure nothing like that happens to Jim Hawkins. (Iris)

MISS MACKENZIE

The headmistress has summoned everyone.

Staff and pupils.

To the Assembly Hall.

MISS BROOKSON

We'll be right along.

MISS MACKENZIE

Do not take too long, girls.

(A pause. A thin smile.)

You would not want to upset the Headmistress.

MISS BROOKSON

Let's hurry along now girls!

MISS MACKENZIE turns and glides out.

A moment of silence.

The JUNIORS stand and lift their stools in unison, taking them as they leave.

They file out, following the same path MISS MACKENZIE took.

The classroom is left empty.

Lights fade.

SCENE 4: ASSEMBLY HALL. INT. MORNING.

MR CORRIGAN stands downstage left, polishing something that does not need polishing.
MR HOLT and **MISS SIGANDON** sit on the edge of centre stage, looking outward.
MISS STEEL sits on a stool, downstage right, reading through sheet music.

MR HOLT

All I am saying is, we do not get called to assembly without reason.
Something is coming, and I think it's something bad.

MISS STEEL

It does feel sudden.

MISS SIGANDON

And that usually means money.

MR CORRIGAN

Nevermore is not what it used to be.
It has been running thin for years.

MR HOLT

I have seen it before.
If there are to be cuts, it will be us first to go!

MISS STEEL

As if it is optional.

The arts and sports are never appreciated. (Clio)

MR CORRIGAN

People do not give like they used to.
Not to places like this.

MISS SIGANDON

Orphans are not fashionable.
Not anymore.

MISS STEEL

I remember a time when benefactors would be falling over backwards to help.
Now they barely answer letters.

In some ways, the less girls we have here at Nevermore, the easier the job gets. (Matilda)

MISS SIGANDON

Perhaps Greymoore has finally had enough?
Or maybe she's been forced to go?

MR CORRIGAN

The Headmistress has held this place together for two decades.
Let's give her a bit more credit.

MR HOLT

Well, if it is redundancies, I ain't going quietly!

MISS STEEL

Nor me.

MR CORRIGAN

Whatever it is, Nevermore is changing.

*They fall silent as distant footsteps echo down the hall.
They stand and move into their assembly positions.*

The rest of the STAFF and PUPILS enter in complete silence, filing into place.

The PUPILS get into their ASSEMBLY FORMATION.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE is the last to enter.

*She moves downstage right, scanning the hall as if taking stock of what remains.
She turns to face outward, a measured pause before she speaks.*

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

These great halls of Nevermore have many stories to tell.
Did you know, before the war, this building housed orphaned boys.
Lost boys, searching for purpose in uncertain times.
When the war came, the world changed.
And Nevermore changed with it.
Under my leadership, these walls were given new life - a renaissance, of sorts.
We became a school for girls.
A place of care, discipline, and opportunity.
But it is no secret that time has not been kind to this building.
Nor to institutions like ours.
We have tried, tirelessly, to bring this school into a new age of education.
To ensure its survival.
And now, an opportunity has been presented to us.
An exciting one.

A murmur of excitement mixed with visible relief among the pupils and staff.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE raises her hand and silence once more.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

A benefactor has travelled a great distance to be with us today.

From the Netherlands.

Baroness Van de Kooh seeks to recruit talented, young individuals, to serve aboard her vessel.

She comes offering possibilities.

Purpose.

A future beyond these walls.

As your Headmistress, I have chosen to accept the offer.

So, without further ado, it is my honour to introduce her.

The Baroness Van de Kooh.

BARONESS VAN DE KOOH enters from the staircase stage left, flanked by **MR SMEE**

Elegant. Controlled. Observant.

She pauses, surveying the pupils, then the hall itself.

The PUPILS straighten instinctively.

Some whisper with excitement. Others stare in awe.

The STAFF exchange cautious looks, tension beneath their composure.

BARONESS VAN DE KOOH moves downstage centre and begins.

BARONESS VAN DE KOOH

Good morning, children.

It is a pleasure to be here.

My mother once visited these halls.

Sadly, she, along with my father, passed away a decade ago in a tragic accident.

I became an orphan.

(Long pause, as the pupils exchange glances.)

My parents left me their fortune and something far more important.

You see, my mother was a philanthropist.

She was building a theme park.

It would be a place of wonder for orphaned children.

But she died mid-project.

However, she left the blueprints to the theme park.

So I have travelled the seven continents, searching for gifted young people, like yourselves.

That search has led me to Nevermore.

(Another pause, more glances.)

BARONESS VAN DE KOOH

Over the coming days, I will observe you.
How you learn.
How you behave.
And some of you *may* be invited to sail back with me to the Netherlands.
And together, we will complete my mother's project.
A theme park and a zoo.
Built in her honour.
For children like you.

A loud flurry of excitement and applause ripples through the ENSEMBLE.

The sound fills the hall as the BARONESS VAN DE KOOH stands, composed and dignified, receiving it without bowing. Her eyes move slowly across the pupils, measuring, weighing.

She steps aside to rejoin MR SMEE, who leans in.

MR SMEE

Fantastic speech, Baroness.

MR SMEE adds an exaggerated wink.

A fraction too obvious.

The BARONESS gives him a sharp glance and MR SMEE straightens at once.

The BARONESS makes a small, precise gesture toward the exit and they exit together.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE moves forward, reclaiming the space centrestage.

Her presence quiets the room immediately.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

We have heard the opportunity placed before us.

A pause. She lets the weight of the word opportunity settle.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

You will now take on breakfast.
Use the time wisely.
Think carefully about what lies ahead.
And approach the days to come as you always have.
(a glance across to all of them)
With confidence.

ALL

Confidence!

MISS MACKENZIE enters, carrying a large metal pot and ladle.

MISS MACKENZIE

Right then, girls.

Step right up.

Get your slop.

She peers into the pot, stirs slowly.

MISS MACKENZIE

I made it fresh this morning.

It's extra sloppy!

She lets out a strange, wheezing laugh that goes on a beat too long.

A collective groan from the pupils as they reluctantly line up.

Bowls of slop are handed out to the pupils by staff.

As the line forms centrestage, GREYMOORE's attention locks onto one figure.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

Isabella.

A word, if I may?

ISABELLA hesitates, then obeys.

She stands centre stage, bowl in hand.

The pupils continue lining up, watching them but trying not to stare.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

You are the oldest here.

This week is not just important for you.

(pause)

So let me be very clear what the stakes are.

If you are not chosen, you will leave Nevermore.

No more chances.

No more shelter.

A quiet, cruel beat.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

Do not waste this opportunity girl.

GREYMOORE turns away without waiting for a response.

MISS MACKENZIE trundles her pot off and the rest of the **STAFF** exit too.

MISS BROOKSON lingers, clearly conflicted.

MISS BROOKSON

(softly)

Izzy, I believe in you.

You must believe in yourself and show them who you are.

MISS BROOKSON places a warm hand on her shoulder and then exits.

Silence.

SCENE 5 – PLAYGROUND. MOMENTS LATER.

A long silence lingers.

The pupils settle into the space slowly.

No one rushes.

Some sit on the cold stone floor, others rest against the walls.

Wooden bowls in their hands or on their knees.

Some lift the bowls, sip cautiously, then stop.

Others do not eat it at all.

Several stare outward, lost in their own thoughts.

ISABELLA remains downstage centre, alone.

Her bowl sits untouched.

The weight of the moment is visible.

Eyes drift toward ISABELLA, then away.

No one speaks.

Eventually, POPPY, LIV, and AVA quietly break from the group and move beside ISABELLA.

Close, but not crowding.

AVA

Don't let Greymoore get inside your head.

POPPY

You know, it's not about you.

LIV

Greymoore doesn't want to fail and she needs someone to blame.

ISABELLA

(quiet, to herself, then aloud)

She hates me.

But I have potential.

And I am not wasting it.

Not anymore.

Not if it's my last chance.

A beat.

LIV

If it is your last chance.
It's a chance to prove her wrong.

ISABELLA *nods, though her doubt still lingers.*
The silence settles again.

EMMA

This looks like vomit.

CHARLOTTE

Probably is.

EMMA

I'm not eating this.

CHARLOTTE

Eat a little, Emma.
You won't do well in the trials on an empty stomach.

LEO

So this Baroness, she owns a whole ship?

VALENTINA

That means she's rich.
Which means, no more slop!

LEO

If it is a ship, does that mean we leave London?
Like properly leave?

VALENTINA

I cannot wait to get out of here.
And wave goodbye to the other side of these walls!

ANNIE

She said she will observe how we behave.

CATTIE

So all we have to do is behave like saints.

CASSY

(playful mocking)

Yes of course ma'am.

SOPHIA

(bows to courtesy)

Whatever you need ma'am.

SILVIA

What's a vessel?

JESS

It's a big ship.

Like in the stories.

CASSY

Does that mean we get to eat fish?

Because I would really like to try fish.

POPPY

I would like to eat anything but this.

Why is it so grey!

ELLA

This is all so exciting!

Imagine we do get chosen to go to the Netherlands.

Where even is that?

LIV

It's in Europe, I think.

SIERRA

Why here?

Why Nevermore?

Of all the orphanages, she chooses this dump!

ISABELLA

Precisely, it's because Nevermore is a dump.

And more importantly, Greymoore is desperate.

That is why.

AVA

She knows we will do anything to leave.

And, Greymoore will do anything to make some money to keep this place open.

ANNIE

(soft, trying to sound confident)

Well, maybe she chose us because we are special.

REBECCA laughs once, cold and moves to ANNIE.

ELLIE is glued to one side and MIRA hovers on the other.

REBECCA

Listen carefully.

You are not special.

ANNIE

I am!

Miss Broksson told me so!

REBECCA

Silly girl, she says that to all the Juniors.

ARIANNA

(quietly, touching her necklace)

Well, I've got my lucky charm.

So I am going to be fine?

ELLIE

Who gave that to you?

ARIANNA

My mum.

An awkward beat.

ELLIE

Your Mum didn't give that to you.

Because, you don't have one.

MIRA

That necklace probably came from lost property.

ARIANNA's hand drops from the necklace.

REBECCA now stands to address the whole group.

REBECCA

Listen up everyone, I am not staying here.
If I am stuck in Nevermore, there will be trouble - for all of you.
So I will be getting on that ship.

ELLIE

Same.
And if anyone thinks they can take our place, you'd better think again.

A small hush spreads.

Some girls lower their eyes.

SILVIA

I do not like how she said that.
That's not kind!

CATTIE

It doesn't matter what she says.
We can outperform them.

CASSY

Then that is all we need to do.

A beat.

ISABELLA shifts closer to her.

MIRA and ELLIE follow.

ISABELLA

Say that again.

MIRA

Go on.

AVA stands. Calm. Firm. Unshaken.

AVA

Everyone has waited for this opportunity.
Everyone deserves a fair shot.

REBECCA moves closer to intimidate her.

AVA

Yes, we're competing against each other.
But, everyone deserves a fair shot.

REBECCA

You want a fair shot?

(pause)

I will give you a fair shot.

REBECCA steps forward and slaps AVA hard across the face.

The sound cracks through the space.

AVA reels back a step, falling to her knee, stunned.

Her hand rises to her cheek.

A sharp intake of breath from the group.

Fear holds them in place.

AVA looks up at REBECCA and steadies herself, refusing to cry.

REBECCA stands over her, smiling.

AVA stands to meet.

AVA

You do not scare me.

You only embarrass yourself.

MISS HEATHERS enters with MISS SIGANDON.

The playground snaps into stillness.

MISS HEATHERS

What is happening here?

Silence.

MISS SIGANDON

Ava, you're bleeding?

Who did this?

Silence.

MISS HEATHERS

Tell me!

Silence.

MISS HEATHERS

Fine.

Then you will all be responsible.

Clean this mess up and get to your classrooms.

MISS HEATHERS turns. **MISS SIGANDON** follows, disappointed but controlled. They exit.
A breath releases across the playground.

ISABELLA, MIRA and ELLIE exit first.

ELLA

(to Ava, offering a hand)

Up.

We do not stay down here.

AVA

(taking it)

Thank you.

And I meant what I said.

This week, everyone deserves a fair shot.

A shift ripples through the group.

Excitement stirs again, quieter but stronger.

The girls exchange looks, a shared, unspoken agreement.

A distant bell rings.

The pupils collect their wooden bowls and move off together, exiting the space.

SCENE 6 – MONTAGE. VARIOUS CLASSROOMS.

The PUPILS are in their ASSEMBLY FORMATION.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE steps forward to centre stage.

HEADMISTRESS GREYMOORE

Approach the trials of this week, as you always have.

With discipline.

With determination.

And above all, with - confidence.

ALL

Confidence!

The 'NEVERMORE MOTIF' begins to play as the space transforms into a continuous montage, underscored by the music.

GREYMOORE, VAN DE KOOH, and MR SMEE observe throughout from the staircase downstage right, unmoving, watchful.

PE LESSON

MR HOLT strides forward. **The PUPILS** snap into formation, feet together, eyes front.

MR HOLT

Knees high.

Get them up! (Arianna)

The PUPILS begin running on the spot, knees lifting sharply.

MR HOLT walks the line, watching closely.

MR HOLT

Higher - this is not a stroll in the park!

He waits and observes.

MR HOLT

Do not slow down.

MR HOLT stops and gives his next command.

MR HOLT

Star jumps.

The PUPILS explode into star jumps, arms and legs wide.

MR HOLT walks up and down the line, observing them closely.

MR HOLT

Proper technique.

Full extension!

He waits and observes.

MR HOLT

Did I say stop?!

We don't have all day! (Ester)

They continue, even though most are clearly tired.

MR HOLT raises a hand. The movement stops.

MR HOLT

On your backs!

Sit-ups.

The PUPILS drop where they stand and begin sit-ups.

MR HOLT crouches beside one pupil.

MR HOLT

Quality over speed.

MR HOLT stands and straightens up.

A beat, before MR HOLT grins.

MR HOLT

The Plank.

The PUPILS groan as they move into plank.

MR HOLT stands, arms folded, watching.

MR HOLT

Straight backs.

Clench your butt cheeks!

Time stretches. Some pupils shake. Some drop.

MR HOLT

Hold.

This is where discipline shows.

He waits and observes in silence.

The music carries us onward.

MR HOLT

Girls, take a breather.

It's time for your Science lesson. (Matilda)

SCIENCE LESSON

MISS SIGANDON enters, clapping her hands with excitement.

MR HOLT exits.

Three experiment stations are created:

One downstage right.

One centre stage.

One downstage left.

MISS SIGANDON moves between them, animated and alert.

At the first station (downstage right), pupils carefully pour liquid from one beaker into another. The mixture fizzes and bubbles.

MISS SIGANDON

Careful with the mixtures.

Precision matters.

PUPILS

Yes Miss Sigandon! (Maria)

She corrects a pupil's grip, steadying the pour.

MISS SIGANDON moves to the centre station.

Pupils build tall towers using blocks or stacked objects.

They test balance and structure, watching towers wobble, collapse, or stand.

MISS SIGANDON

The key is balance! (Hannah D)

Build something that lasts.

Higher, not faster.

PUPILS

Yes Miss Sigandon! (Maria)

MISS SIGANDON knocks down the experiment with a light touch and the pupils react.

They rebuild, placing each block with care.

MISS SIGANDON crosses to the final station (downstage left).

Pupils experiment with motion and force, propelling objects across a surface at different speeds. An object rolls towards MISS SIGANDON's foot and she stops it.

MISS SIGANDON

An object in motion stays in motion.

Until something stops it.

MISS SIGANDON raises an eyebrow.

MISS SIGANDON

Control the force.

Observe the outcome.

PUPILS

Yes Miss Sigandon! (Maria)

The pupils gather their experiment boxes, which are collected by stage-hands.

MISS HEATHERS and MISS MACKENZIE appear on the staircase, downstage right.

Their eyes fix on the pupils.

MISS MACKENZIE smiles faintly and MISS HEATHERS nods.

They turn back to watch.

The music carries the montage onward.

OBEDIENCE LESSON

MISS HEATHERS steps onto the stage from the staircase.

MISS SIGANDON exits.

Three lines of PUPILS form instantly upstage, facing downstage.

Each pupil at the front of a line places a book on her head and begins to walk slowly downstage toward the audience.

When a book falls, the pupil stops, retrieves it, and hands it to the next pupil in the queue.

That pupil places the book on her head and the cycle repeats.

Throughout, MISS HEATHERS patrols the space, watching closely, correcting posture, applying pressure.

MISS HEATHERS

Eyes forward.

Do not look down.

MISS HEATHERS

If the book falls,

You fail.

MISS HEATHERS

Slow steps.

Steady minds.

MISS HEATHERS

Posture first.

Correction follows.

MISS HEATHERS

Balance shows discipline.

Discipline shows worth.

Groups take turns crossing the stage.

Some books fall. Some remain perfectly balanced.

MUSIC LESSON

MISS STEEL steps into the space as the instrumental music fades.
The PUPILS return to grid positions and sit on their knees, facing forward.

MISS STEEL

Sit up **straight!** (Sasha)

Breathe together.

Listen to one another.

And be brave! (Sasha)

MISS STEEL sings an opening solo of the NEVERMORE anthem.

MISS STEEL (SINGING)

Nevermore, nevermore,

We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,

We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,

Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

The anthem continues as EMMA sings a solo line.

EMMA

Nevermore, nevermore,

We'll be nevermore.

MIRA

Nevermore, nevermore,

We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,

Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

MOLLY

Nevermore, nevermore,

We'll be nevermore.

ARIANNA

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

VALENTINA

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

JESS

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

The ENTIRE CAST now sings one final time together.

MISS STEEL conducts as the harmony builds.

ALL

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,
We'll be nevermore.

Nevermore, nevermore,
Nevermore, we'll be nevermore.

A beat as the song resolves and the montage ends.