

## THE ADMINISTRATOR

The setting is the Records Room.

The setting is my head, and the heads of others.

The experience relates to everyone and everything that has happened within and without the records of the Records Room. All that has been archived, and all that still needs to be.

The voice that is listened to is the voice that you believe deserves to be heard the most.

A story that prevents them from being pushed to the sides of their own lives. A listener for a story.

A making sense of something.

A discovery.

A feeling of place.

*Sound of shuffling of papers and filing cabinets (10 seconds)  
then continues behind dialogue, eventually fading out*

Work, worked, working, working hard or hardly working.  
Paper by paper, file by file, compartmentalise, catalogue,  
memorise, record. Into papers, folders, filing cabinets,  
copydexes, indexes, telephone books. Masses of information  
weighing one down. Buried. Shallow depressions in the ground..  
No one could do the amount of things that I'm having to do.

## THE MOTHER

I believe it too... (pause) Not everyone is cut out to be an Administrator you know. Some people would crumble under the responsibility of such information. How are your drawers?

## THE ADMINISTRATOR

Bad

## THE MOTHER

How are your hinges?

## THE ADMINISTRATOR

Bad

THE MOTHER

But you can move?

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Occasionally

*Pause - 5 seconds - sound of footsteps (10 seconds) increasing in speed in background to dialogue, moving across left and right pan, disorienting effect*

Whenever I'm walking around the records room I get the urge to start running. To exaggerate the spring in my step and lift off the earth. To feel the sensation of gliding through the air.

As a child my most common dream was of gliding. A flying of sorts, but in order to do it I would have to move my legs back and forth at a rapid pace. Legs quickly backwards and forwards, over and over again. The quicker I did it the higher I would elevate, for if I stopped I would begin to sink. The sense of height was dizzying. A very particular kind of vertigo.

In the *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, there is a faun called Mr Tumnus who suddenly starts crying during dinner. I remember being too young or innocent as a child to understand why. I felt so confused, so uncertain, because on the surface Mr Tumnus appeared to have no reason to cry. Because I did not know depression or guilt, the feeling of duty versus integrity. I brought this up yesterday at dinnertime, on the subject of work and the enormity of the stress that I am under and I, like Mr Tumnus, could not help but weep.

*Footsteps stop and someone buzzes a buzzer.*

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Hello, Records Room, it's the Administrator speaking.

THE WRITER

Hi, I have an appointment to use the records room

ADMINISTRATOR

Thank you for coming today.  
What have you come to find out?

THE WRITER

I don't know. I suppose that's what I've come to find out.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

You're very welcome to browse. The Records Room shapes what we think we are and therefore what we might become. The rules of the Records Room are fairly self-explanatory. Use the catalogue over there to make a list of the records that you would like to see. You can only view one records at a time. Take a record not being available as reason not to view it. Take your contact lens falling out as a sign to put on your glasses. Take having limited time as a sign to go for a record with fewer pages. There are some power plugs in the corner to use your digital device, if you have one. Take your device restarting to install updates as a sign to go home. In short, take care of yourself.

I have some care but just not enough time. It's how I live my life. Is it not better to spend less time on care and to get lots of things done?

THE MOTHER

Care is the most important thing to spend time on of all

THE ADMINISTRATOR

It's an ongoing battle in my mind.

The records that I keep are a testament to the accomplishments of humans - noteworthy events; births, death, achievements. I care for the records, but often it feels as if this is at my own detriment. As long as I work here in the Records Room, I am held back from making any kind of achievements of my own. A shadow of a person, even my former self.

The MOTHER

There's no rest for the wicked!

The ADMINISTRATOR

No rest for the wicked... There's a record on that somewhere. A voice to be listened to. Filed under 'Family Division of Labour.'

*Sound of a cabinet drawer opening and closing*

Here we go... My gran used the phrase 'No rest for the wicked' to implicate the world by implicating herself.

THE WRITER

A Biblical phrase meaning, 'The wicked shall be tormented.'

THE ADMINISTRATOR

She would say "No rest for the wicked" whilst rising from the settee to do some more housework or cook the evening meal.

The implication was that she must be wicked, or must have done something suitably wicked, since she was never able to rest.

Had she been good - the opposite of wicked - she would be able to sit in her chair with nothing to do and relax. The to do list's existence was proof of her sinfulness. The to do list evidenced her sins. The to do list existed because of a work ethic that existed because of her predecessors, whose daily exertions allowed them to feel content, and the conscience of capitalist society that told her she had to do stuff in order to have a bit of time not doing it.

It was always funny whenever she said it, because we all understood that really the wicked ones were rich people who probably didn't ever have to do any work for themselves.

More records! Another voice in need of a listener.

*Chair rolling. Sound of cabinet drawer rapidly opened then slowly closed*

Here, filed under 'Women waving goodbye to the kitchen sink,' also 'You don't need a degree to read the writing on the wall,' also 'Awakening to the struggle of our lives' et al.

My mother worked in a Library for all of her life, until she was made redundant a few years ago. I remember her sense of bafflement at those on jobseekers allowance being advised to use library computers so that her and fellow library assistants could direct people unfamiliar with using computers in their weekly job search quota. Now half of the library assistants have lost their jobs.

When all the library assistants are jobseekers, library assistants will no longer be needed to help with their job search.

How much of our lives are shaped by words said by people who have long forgotten them?

The Records Room stores these achievements, in case someone comes to look.

#### THE MOTHER

She longs to live in the performative present, instead of the narrative rollout of corporeal decay.

#### THE ADMINISTRATOR

Another voice and more records. Filed under 'The women who work too hard.'

*Papers shuffling, sound of pouring water (watering plant)*

As I take a drink, I give the two plants on my desk a drink in between my swigs. One plant is a Christmas cactus, very frail and under hydrated. The other is a small succulent. Its oldest leaves lie beneath, dying, but new leaves come through in a steady stream. I wonder, do plants take kindly to Vimto? Hopefully the sugar does them good, or at least is better than nothing, since it is weeks since I last had time to to water them.

*Footsteps*

THE MOTHER

Would you like a breakaway bar?

The ADMINISTRATOR

No thank you

The MOTHER

Always depriving yourself.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

I don't have time.

THE MOTHER

You never will have time if you don't make time.

The ADMINISTRATOR

No one could do the amount of things that I'm having to do.

THE MOTHER

So do something for yourself for once.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

I carry three notebooks around with me at all times. One to write in, one to draw in and a third for dates, for administrative work. As a result, my bag is much heavier than it should be.

On the day that I google "How do you write" a new article has just been published entitled " Will Artificial Intelligence Ever Be Able To Write a Great Novel?" The article concludes with the poetic authority of a writer of great novels: "Artificial Intelligence would have the capacity to write a good novel, but not a great one. It lacks the nerve."

#### THE MOTHER

Isn't nerve the sister of risk; risk who in turn is the sister of vulnerability; vulnerability who in turn could be the sister of embarrassment? An old teacher of mine always said that if one was embarrassed about sharing a work we had written or made, maybe there was something interesting there...

#### THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Records Room is overflowing with stories of nerve, risk, vulnerability and embarrassment, but many more stories exist only in memory and thought. Records are vessels in which to store voices, memories and stories. A compartment for everything. Files for pockets, pockets for paper, paper for notes, notes for words, words for letters, letters for language, language for voice, voice for thoughts, thoughts for feelings, feelings for experiences, experiences for memories, memories for a life, a life for stories, a story for a record, a record for an archive, an archive for a play, a play to be listened to, listening together to a journey, our journey through a life.