

Abide With Me

13th

18th

someone asks. You twist carefully on the ladder to see a young man staring up at you, smartly dressed and squinting through a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. Bloody students.

You show him the bucket of mortar.

terrible . Shuddering then, theatrics.

rid of them, sir,

Lunchtime eucharist , and checks his wristwatch.

answers. Y -fingered

hands are, clutching a stack of books as he hurries through First Court to class.

luring you into something. You slide down the ladder with nervous anticipation lodged in the back of your throat like a hook.

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between you and me, they give him the creeps.

flame is already lapping at her knuckles. She leans forwards, pouts her lips as if for a kiss, and blows it out. A torch beam catches her eye from the top of the chapel tower, so she stands and stretches.

Snaking up the tower, the scaffolding is

another. Books on a shelf. We are silent together, listening to the falling song of night-birds in the trees. , too. There it is, I realise, subtle as a pronoun shift; the *I* has become *we*. And what have we become, in the fast-fleeing shadows of the dawn?