

**THE DRONE BIRDS**

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - DAY

A bird's eye flight over the island of our story...

...from a rocky shore where fishing boats rock with the tide,  
to a short main street lined by weathered storefronts...

...to outcrops of modest cottages here and there. Insular,  
windswept and quaint, like a Christmas sweater.

Over an old two story hospital. A Virgin Mary statue out  
front pleads for a coat of paint.

A NURSE rushes towards the entrance, grabbing her sweater  
around her against a chill.

SEAGULLS gathered on the hospital lawn rise up in unison at  
her passing.

They settle again, restless, shifting about.

We hover over them, accompanied by a buzzing sound, as they  
hop and caw, screech and waddle into an undulating, but  
unmistakable form, only seen from our vantage point...

A pentagram.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Hazardous. But, an awfully good place to launch.

GRANDPA (O.S)

I wish I was one, so I could fly  
over certain people and take a shit  
on their heads.

MACY, (16). She's reticent. Her stab at taking a stand: a  
pink breast cancer awareness wool cap pulled over a bad,  
short haircut.

She wears viewgoggles, toggles a control box for a hobby  
drone.

GRANDPA (O.S) (CONT'D)

Those pompous fools on this island  
who say this is cruelty to my birds  
for one.

GRANDPA ,(80), thin, beard, stands behind her, watching the  
sky.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)  
Just let them lose their ability to  
walk.

He squints up at the sky. Something is descending.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)  
If I could give them the chance to  
walk again, they'd be begging at  
this old kook's door in a jiffy.

MACY  
Gunther's ready for his landing.

Above, a LARGE HOBBY DRONE buzzes into view.

Underneath the drone's carriage, a leather harness and gopro  
camera.

Snuggled securely inside the attached harness, a SEAGULL.

Other RESCUE BIRDS, a Duck, Crow, more GULLS squawk  
impatiently from their cages in a rusty pick up truck nearby.

GRANDPA  
Let him have one more spin. He  
hasn't had his equal time.

Macy toggles the control box, the drone with avian passenger  
rises for more assisted flying.

MACY  
Grandpa. We saw something.

GOGGLE VIEW:

We sail along dark, craggy cliffs, tufts of grass buffeted by  
the wind.

*Dipping now down towards the sea.*

*A view of beak. Shimmering flash of a small fish in the  
water. A splash.*

MACY (O.S) (CONT'D)  
He almost got it!

*The drone rises again, the sea, and our stomachs drop.*

MACY (O.S) (CONT'D)  
At the hospital on the lawn.

*A sudden glimpse of something at the corner of our view,  
below on the jumble of shore rocks.*

MACY (CONT'D)

What's that?

*A turn of the drone. A steep dip towards the rocks.*

*Something large breaks into view. Is that a familiar shirt?*

*The drone hovers, then teeters sharply, almost losing its edge on gravity.*

*There! A BODY!*

Macy rips off the goggles, runs towards the cliff edge, looks down,

A plaintive scream.

Grandpa has fallen without her noticing!

His body far below, broken. Still.

Macy turns. Frozen with shock.

A FIGURE in a coat and hat runs off to disappear behind a house, without a word.

EXT. ON THE SEA - DAY

An air of disquiet. Oars move through leaden water with a strained tug.

Two figures share a weathered rowboat.

SHERIFF IRENE HARDROY, (61). Some might call her homely but not to her face. Her heft of weight gives them pause. Her face, stern, betrays her kind heart, but comes in handy when a drunk islander tries to push her patience.

Crusty, OLD MAN CULLEN, (80), at the oars, looks up to the top of the cliff.

Macy stands there, her stare as hardened as a lighthouse.

IN THE BOAT

Hardroy rolls up her sleeves. Cullen stores the oars.

SHERIFF HARDROY

My mother told me do something every day that scares you.

The rowboat's wood side bumps against rocks with unease.

CULLEN

Jesus to hell. The rocks have done  
a number on him.

Hardroy closes her eyes, takes a breath, preparing herself  
for the task.

Grandpa's body.

Water sloshes up against his shirt. Blood on flannel plaid  
mixes with foamy sea.

His face half crushed exposes the white of skull, the blue of  
compromised veins.

His beard is tangled with a plastic grocery bag.

Hardroy leans out, grabs hold of the body, struggles with the  
soggy lifeless weight.

With some assist from Cullen, the body is retrieved.

Thump. It lands in the boat.

Clack, clack, clack,

a large CRAB objects to being distracted from its potential  
meal.

Hardroy, without a flinch, grabs the crab off the body,  
tosses it overboard.

She carefully covers the dead with a sheet.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Let's get him home, now.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

The rowboat makes it way past the cliffs towards a secure  
landing spot.

Macy follows along with it above, her eyes never leaving it.

INT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - DAY

The upside down face of REVEREND. LEILA BEEVANS, (50).

REV. BEEVANS  
I hate Saturday funerals.

Beevans moves upright from an inversion table for back pain relief where she's been suspended upside down.

An ASSISTANT, (50), enters with a minister's robe, helps slip it on over the reverend's bony shoulders.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
Everyone comes in smelling like waffles.

ASSISTANT  
The old man and his terrorizing those birds like that. A duck that never flew in the first place.

The Reverend checks herself in a mirror. Buttoning up her vestments with care.

REV. BEEVANS  
He meant well. The duck must have had some connection with the experience, some sense this was in its DNA, long past.

ASSISTANT  
Why would God make birds that didn't fly?

The Reverend applies lipstick in the mirror.

REV. BEEVANS  
All birds at one time had the ability to fly. But, some of them found themselves habitating particular islands somewhere.

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - DAY

Over that hospital again.

The Seagulls gathered on the lawn.

A plain sedan car quickly pulls up near the entrance.

REV. BEEVANS (V.O)

Eventually, nature designed these birds to save energy. Use it for more important things. There was no longer any need to fly. On their island, there were no predators.

Two PARENTS rush out of the car. The father grabs a LITTLE BOY from the back seat.

The GULLS rise at their passing as the parents rush him to the door.

Even at this height, we can see that something's dreadfully wrong.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Seagulls spiral around a peeling steeple soaking in the rain. TOWNSFOLK dribble in under glistening umbrellas.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A small congregation mumble before a plain coffin.

Old man Cullen replaces a candle by the coffin that has melted down.

Reverend Beevans notes an empty place in the front pews.

REV. BEEVANS

We start without her. I suppose.  
Let us pray.

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - YARD - DAY

An old weather-beaten house and barn.

Macy, her hair and black dress plastered down with rain, dons the goggles as she toggles the drone's control pad.

A bicycle lies in mud beside her.

MACY

Come on.

GOGGLE VIEW:

*The drone drops to the rocky shore below, a hook attached to the underside swings into view.*

Macy toggles the control with impatience.

MACY (CONT'D)

Come on. Grab it. You can do it.

GOGGLE VIEW:

*The drone hovers and adjusts over something on the rocks.*

MACY (O.S) (CONT'D)

There, there, there, there, there.

Yes.

*The hook snares something dark and fuzzy and quickly lifts.*

Macy slides her goggles off, exhales with relief.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Reverend Beevans before the coffin.

REV. BEEVANS

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet, not one of them will fall to the ground outside your father's care...

The church doors suddenly open, all heads turn.

Macy steps down the aisle, panting with breath, soaked to the skin.

The congregation hushed on each side.

The Reverend steps aside as Macy slows, approaches the coffin.

She places a WOOLEN CAP on the coffin, her brow beaded with rain, grief in her eyes.

MACY

He never goes out in public without his favorite cap.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

A rustic outdoor cafe near the waterfront.

Sheriff Hardroy, in her uniform, sits among a few other PATRONS.

She nurses a paper cup of coffee and her cellphone.

She looks up, notices Macy is standing there, before her, holding a paper cup.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I've spent over half my life  
without a cellphone. But, I've  
forgotten what I stared out when I  
didn't have this to stare at.

Macy looks about, uncomfortable.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Did you...did you remember  
something else about what happened  
with your grandpa?

Macy looks down.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Come on. Have a seat. Deputy Tack  
will take forever to decide on a  
donut.

Macy sits down, puts her paper cup down, then grabs it.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Can I get something for you to go  
with that?

MACY

The hot chocolate's fine.

She takes a sip off her cup.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I hear you're going to live with  
your aunt out of state.

Macy nods, takes a sip off her cup.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
So. Anything else you want me to know?

Macy takes another sip. Ponders.

MACY  
You didn't find anything new about my Grandpa?

SHERIFF HARDROY  
As it looks, we'll be sticking to what I've already told you. That neighbor didn't see anyone push him if that's what you're asking.

MACY  
You think he just lost his balance.

Macy takes a sip, puts her cup down.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
When you get old you find the world isn't as solid as you thought. Sometimes you find that earlier.

Hardroy's deputy, DEPUTY TACK, (28), tall and lanky, walks towards them with his coffee cup and a bag of donuts.

Macy gets up, leaving her cup on the table.

MACY  
I have to go.

Macy rushes off to Hardroy's look.

A gust of wind blows Macy's paper cup over. Hardroy rights it, notes the inside.

DEPUTY TACK  
That was the bird rescuer's granddaughter. She still thinking someone pushed the old man?

He gets settled in his chair.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Back in my academy days. There was a little coffee shop across the street where we'd all hang out. Met my husband there for the first time. He invited himself to sit at my table, with a coffee. Got me to open up, about things in my life.  
(MORE)

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

He kept sipping at his cup, until a gust of wind blew it off the table. He had that "found out" expression. Seems he didn't want the conversation to end, thought sipping at his empty cup would keep me talking, keep me with him, he had a thing for me right off the bat. I can't but notice the deceptions.

She looks off to where Macy rushed off to.

DEPUTY TACK

Well, he kept you talking.

SHERIFF HARDROY

That he did. I have a feeling she wanted to tell me something.

DEPUTY TACK

I got you the jelly you like.

Hardroy takes a donut.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Let's go over the report again. See if there's something we've missed.

DEPUTY TACK

On the grandpa?

SHERIFF HARDROY

Yes.

She takes a bite into a donut.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Her phone rings. She answers.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Okay. We'll be right there.

(to the Deputy)

The Sanders' boy has been attacked. His father says he isn't talking. In shock. Let's get to the hospital. We'll finish these in the car.

INT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - DAY

Soft classical music on a radio. The Reverend Beevan's Assistant places a book on a shelf, grabs a used tea cup from a table as she tidies up the place.

She looks over at the inversion table, ponders. Laughs to herself.

ASSISTANT

The reverend can be a back breaker.

She sets the teacup down, glances out a window. Boss is gone.

Hell, why not?

She positions herself with some struggle on the table, and with a whoop!, she flips upside down.

Her whoop turns into a laugh.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Holy cow. I feel the blood pooling already.

She takes a breath, closes her eyes.

She bathes in the soothing duet of violin and piano via the radio.

The sound of rustling. She opens her eyes. Quickly tries to get vertical again.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

I was just trying it out. Did you forget something, again?

No answer. She relents to upside down again, closes her eyes. Relax, now.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

And bats do this all day, think of it.

WHAP! WHAP!

lightning flash jabs to her eyelids from some sharp instrument of attack.

At once she screams.

Eyelid flesh impaled within eyeballs.

A bit of flesh yields as she tries to open them, but not quite enough.

The damage renders her blind as bats.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Oh, my god.

She pushes at the inversion table bar with a moan to lift herself upright.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Oh, my god. Oh, my god.

She stumbles away from the table, blood smears her cheeks.

BAM! She runs into a table, a lamp there falls, shatters against the floor.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Oh!

She stumbles towards a fireplace, fumbles around for something, grabs an iron poker.

The rustling sound again.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Is that someone there? What?

More rustling.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Don't come near me!

She feels about on a mantelpiece.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Where is it?

She feels around for a cellphone there.

A swift poke of something to her hand.

She lifts a bloody hand up.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
No!

She swings the fireplace poker in front of her as she makes her way blindly towards a door.

She finds a lock, pulls it, opens the door with a scream, and rushes outside.

EXT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - DAY

The Assistant stumbles on a step, tumbles to the ground, losing the poker. She pushes herself up.

ASSISTANT

Samson!

She rushes out over an open, grassy yard...

...stumbles over a large metal dog bowl.

She grabs at a large wood doghouse, reaching out to find its occupant.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Samson! Where are you?

She stumbles away, trips and falls over a rope that's taunt a few inches above the ground.

She grabs the rope, crawling along with it. It starts to rise at an angle.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Samson!

She pushes herself up from the ground, following the rope, leaving bloody prints along the way.

The rope rises even more at an angle. Her voice filled with defeat.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Help me! Someone!

She continues to follow the rope, a tree branch comes into view.

Finally up to a tree trunk. She feels about the trunk, her bloody face recoils at a scrape against the bark.

The rope is looped around a branch.

Feeling to the end of the rope, expecting the worse.

It hangs loose, cut. The rope end frayed.

She hears rustling in the grass.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Someone there?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Little Boy leans to the side of his hospital bed, playing with a wood paddleball, punching it up and down, up and down.

Sheriff Hardroy stands there with his distraught parents.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
My mother was an advocate for  
paddleballs. Hit it where it hurts.

She gives the boy a smile, he meets eyes with her for a second, then continues to play.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
He's still not talking?

FATHER  
We found him laying outside. He was petrified. You could see he was choking. His mouth was stuffed with something. We don't let him have that and he wouldn't eat it on his own.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
What's that?

FATHER  
White bread. His mouth was stuffed with it.

Sheriff Hardroy looks to the boy.

EXT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - YARD - DAY

The Assistant stumbles away from the tree, still blinded.

ASSISTANT  
Who's there? Leave me alone!

She suddenly sprints off at full speed, panicked.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Help!

WHACK!

An exposed screw in a metal clothesline post impales her forehead.

She pulls herself off the screw with a painful wail. Blood pools around the gash.

She flounders, weak, spent.

She grabs a clothesline among many lines hung with linen.

One arm slings over the line for support, her face buries into a sun bleached sheet.

Her heart gives way, with a sudden gasp for air, a bloody hand to chest. Complexion wanes to pale.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD - DAY - SOMETIME LATER

A FEMALE NEIGHBOR with bluetooth earpiece, carries a laundry basket to the clothesline.

NEIGHBOR (OVER BLUETOOTH)  
They're having his funeral today. I noticed a few. He was something, he was. His flying circus of birds.

She un-pins bed sheets, tosses them into her basket.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)  
No one on the island she can call family now, I suppose. Quiet girl. Never heard of any trouble. But, that haircut of hers. I think her grandpa cut it using a jello mold.

She pulls a bed sheet down, freezes.

The assistant's face painted out in blood on the exposed sheet.

The neighbor steps back with a gasp, drops her basket at the sight of the Assistant's body.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD - DAY - SOMETIME LATER

The sheet with the Assistant's blood-drawn face print flutters in the wind.

Two muddy Sheriff department sedans are parked in a driveway.  
The click and clatter of their engines cooling down.

INT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - DAY

Reverend Beevans wipes away tears, despondent on a chair.

REV. BEEVANS

I must have left it open. She must  
have been terrified.

Sheriff Hardroy pulls open and shut a blind against an open  
window.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Noticed or been solicited by any  
strangers by the house?

REV. BEEVANS

Frank Holsum's nephew. He did some  
painting for me.

SHERIFF HARDROY

He's not a stranger.

REV. BEEVANS

He was supposed to come by today to  
pick up a fifty dollar bill I left  
for him. It's not where I left it.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Anything else missing?

REV. BEEVANS

I keep a jewelry box on my dresser  
but nothing's taken I can see.  
These kids and drugs. Why would he  
hurt her?

A door opens. The Neighbor enters with a large DOG.

NEIGHBOR

Found the poor thing hiding in my  
garage.

Beevans brightens at the sight of her dog, opens her arms.

REV. BEEVANS

Samson!

Hardroy blocks the dog's path to her.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Seems he may have had contact with  
someone by the looks of his rope.  
We'll need to check his coat.

She takes the leash from the Neighbor, hands it to Deputy  
Tack, who's been taking pictures.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Reverend. Do you have a picture of  
your assistant?

REV. BEEVANS

Yes. There on the mantel. Her with  
all of us at the Blessing of the  
Animals. Oh, lord, I feel unsafe  
here now. What should I do?

Sheriff Hardroy spots the photograph.

*Townsfolk with their animals as they are lined up to be  
blessed by the Reverend.*

*The assistant with Samson on a leash.*

Hardroy notices a small crucifix displayed next to the  
photograph on the mantel.

It's been turned upside down. She turns it right side up,  
then grabs the photograph.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

Samson's been acting anxious  
lately. Something's been out there  
spooking him. Could they have been  
hovering around here somewhere,  
waiting? I need a drink. I'm lost  
without her. She was always here to  
calm me down.

The Reverend goes to a shelf and takes a wine bottle, pours  
herself a glass.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

I'd offer you some, but you're on  
duty.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Never touch the stuff.

REV. BEEVANS

Well. I'm not celebrating. This is terrible. You'll find out who's done this and quick, won't you? I'll have to find a place until you do. I can't stay here.

EXT. REVEREND BEEVANS HOME - YARD - DAY

Sheriff Hardroy, cellphone to ear stands by her car.

She looks over to the rope tangling over the tree branch, the bloody sheet on the clothesline.

She watches as Deputy Tack leads the dog towards his car.

A piece of paper is tossed by the wind over the dog's head.

The dog spooks, tries to wrench itself away from the leash. Hardroy notes this with interest.

SHERIFF HARDROY (OVER PHONE)

This is Sheriff Hardroy, can I speak to your grandfather?

She notices the Deputy leading the dog into the front seat of his car. She calls...

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

He goes in the back!

DEPUTY TACK

Is he a suspect, now?!

SHERIFF HARDROY

Standard procedure. Man or beast!

The Deputy nods, leads the dog into the back seat.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOME - MACY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Macy packs some clothes into a large canvas bag.

After her clothes are in, she carefully positions the drone on top of them, wraps some clothes around it for protection.

A CASEWORKER appears at the doorway.

CASEWORKER

Your aunt says she may be a little late picking you up at the airport.

MACY

She probably needs to stop for a bottle.

CASEWORKER

What's that?

MACY

Nothing. Is it all right if I say goodbye to grandpa's birds? They're just out in the barn.

CASEWORKER

Be quick. We're on the next ferry out.

INT. BARN - DAY

Macy slides open a barn door, enters, carrying a dish.

A corraled area with water and feed house a half dozen rescue birds.

The birds react with excited calls, jumping up around her as best they are able.

She grabs a stool and sits, starts feeding them little fish and seed morsels from a plate.

One gull perches alone on a overturned bucket. This is CLEO.

MACY

Cleo? You're not coming over to say goodbye?

Cleo tosses her head, lets out a guttural burp.

MACY (CONT'D)

Well, I'm glad to see you , too.

Macy reaches in a pocket, pulls out a bag of Skittles candy.

MACY (CONT'D)

Skittles. But, only a few. Ready to color your tongue every color of the rainbow?

Cleo drops from the bucket, ambles over.

Macy feeds her a skittle.

She caresses the gull's head, plants a kiss on its head.

MACY (CONT'D)

It's better maybe I leave here,  
before they find out.

Macy on her stool at the center of a bird feast. She drowns in thought, her hand to her stomach.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Hardroy approaches a freshly dug grave, places some flowers down on it.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You've got a good view of the  
Captain, there.

Hardroy's eyes moves to a high jutting bastion of dark rock by the sea, they locally call "The Captain".

Hardroy turns again to the disturbed ground. Her mind lost in a world of thought.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I remember you rescued that baby  
bird off the roof of the old  
firehouse. Your balance was as good  
as my nose for trouble.

INT. GRANDPA'S BARN - DAY

Macy feeds Cleo another Skittle. The others brawl over some morsel.

MACY

Hey. Stop fighting. All you've got  
is each other now.

A Gull and Duck squabble over a fish.

MACY (CONT'D)

Guys don't fight, there's plenty.  
Henry stop pushing Daisy's head  
like that. You force her head under  
her wing, she'll conk out.

CULLEN (O.S.)

She won't conk out. He'll have  
broken her neck.

Macy is startled at the voice, turns to see old man Cullen there.

CULLEN (CONT'D)

The conservancy has sent me over  
for the birds. I'll need a hand  
with the cages.

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOME - DRIVE - DAY

The Caseworker loads Macy's bag in the trunk and closes it,  
gets in her car.

Macy walks towards the car and stops. She looks over at  
Cullen closing the hatch on his pick up.

Birds call from the cages with an almost mournful cry.

CASEWORKER

Macy. It's time we get going.

Macy suddenly takes off a sweater, rushes over to the truck,  
speaks with Cullen without meeting his eyes.

MACY

Daisy needs to be covered. Even a  
hint of sun and she's up trying to  
reach it and might get hurt in the  
way. And Ralph likes his feathers  
smoothed by hand twice a day or he  
gets kind of antsy.

CASEWORKER (O.S)

Macy!

Macy drapes her sweater over one cage.

CULLEN

You take care of yourself, young  
lady.

(MORE)

CULLEN (CONT'D)

These birds will do just fine.

Cleo squawks in her cage. Macy reaches out to touch the cage.

MACY

Cleo, you be the mama I never had.

Macy rushes off to the Caseworker's car, looking back one more time at the birds she's leaving behind.

She gets in the Caseworker's car and they pull off.

INT. CASEWORKER'S CAR IN MOTION - DAY

CASEWORKER

What's that big thing you got in that bag of yours that poked me?

MACY

A drone. Grandpa gave it to me. Taught me how to fly it.

Macy stares at the side mirror, her world quickly fading behind her.

CASEWORKER

A drone? What are you spying on people with it?

MACY

No. But people don't seem to notice it. They hardly look up.

CASEWORKER

Wind's picking up. Hope the water over's not too rough. A drone, huh? Well, that's odd for a girl to tinker with, isn't it?

Macy lowers her chin, turns to the window.

INT. HOLSUM HOME - DAY

Sheriff Hardroy follows a MR. HOLSUM through the house to a back bedroom.

HOLSUM

Come on through, Irene. He's been in bed since he got stung painting Old lady Murdoch's eaves. That was yesterday around one, I believe.

They enter a bedroom.

HOLSUM'S NEPHEW, (17), lies in bed, his face completely covered in monstrous swells from several bee stings.

HOLSUM'S NEPHEW

Hello, Sheriff. You're welcome to this mugshot.

HOLSUM

Kid wouldn't go anywhere looking like that. Snaps a picture of his face for the girls like every five seconds on those snap things they share on their phones. He thinks he's god's gift to them girls.

Hardroy takes a quick look around the room. She goes over to the bed, checks his nails.

HOLSUM (CONT'D)

Back in our day, we never had such things.

SHERIFF HARDROY

We had the reflection on Giff's pond, the glass storefronts all downtown. That mirror over your mom's dresser, if I recall had seen enough of your acne to paint it by memory.

HOLSUM

You were never a beauty, Irene. I say that as a friend.

Hardroy seems satisfied there's nothing in the room or about the boy that might be of interest to her.

SHERIFF HARDROY

That you are.

HOLSUM'S NEPHEW

I haven't forgotten, Sheriff. You have some painting for me to do. I'll get to it. Promise.

SHERIFF HARDROY

And you promise to stop biting your  
nails?

EXT. HOLSUM HOME - DAY

Sheriff Hardroy sits in her car. She checks herself in the  
rearview mirror.

She notices Old Man Cullen passing by in his truck with the  
cages.

He gives her a friendly wave.

Sheriff picks up her radio.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Habersmith's granddaughter. Is she  
still on the island?

FEMALE VOICE (OVER RADIO)

Heard she's leaving this afternoon.  
I'd check the next ferry if you're  
meaning to speak with her.

Sheriff checks her watch.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Thank you. Take my lunch out of the  
fridge for me, will you? Looks like  
I'll be late.

She hits the gas and drives off.

EXT. FERRY LANDING - DAY

The Caseworker's car drives up onto a vehicle ferry. Seagulls  
swirl around the dock.

INT. CASEWORKER'S CAR - DAY

The Caseworker and Macy sit in uncomfortable silence.

The Caseworker stares out the windshield. Two KIDS in the car  
ahead of them make faces out the back window.

## CASEWORKER

Growing up, I couldn't wait to get the hell off this island. Go to some big city somewhere. The same streets, the same faces. The same school building that always smells like beef gravy. Anywhere had more promise. But, freedom to go anywhere isn't always such a good thing, you know? Sometimes, finding a home is all that matters in the end.

She looks over to Macy who stares out her window as other cars load in.

## CASEWORKER (CONT'D)

Finding a home with people who care for you. You'll find that again. Chin up? Right?

Macy looks over to her quickly, as though to say, did I hear you right?, then stares out her window again.

## EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Sheriff's car makes it's way down to the landing. Cars are still pulling in.

## EXT. FERRY LANDING - DAY

The last cars in, the ferry workers start disconnecting the ropes and pulling up the planks. Go time.

## INT. CASEWORKER'S CAR - DAY

Macy suddenly grabs her stomach.

## MACY

I feel sick.

She quickly opens the door, jumps out, winds through cars to find the railing.

She leans over it and vomits.

EXT. FERRY LANDING - DAY

The Sheriff's car pulls up, she gets out, motions to a worker to let her aboard.

He lowers a plank for her, assists her across, taking her hand.

FERRY WORKER

How you doing, Sheriff? I know it's nowhere near as important as what's happened to the Reverend's assistant. But, I still have that problem with the kids getting into my shed.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I told you, combination locks are easy pickings. Get yourself something with some heft.

Hardroy struggles up the plank.

FERRY WORKER

You did tell them there's nothing in there they want?

SHERIFF HARDROY

Privacy. When you're young and someone tells you they love you. It's more alluring than gold.

She gets on board, catches her breath.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I'm looking for Habersmith's granddaughter.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Hardroy walks through cars looking into them searching for Macy.

She sees the Caseworker alone in her car but doesn't recognize her. Her search continues.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Macy on her way back to the Caseworker's car notices Hardroy searching. She quickly ducks behind a truck.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Hardroy continues looking through vehicle windows, noting the occupants within. Where's the girl?

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Macy hidden behind the truck. Suddenly a hand grabs her, startling her.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Macy. Is there some reason you're  
hiding from me?

EXT. FERRY - A BIT LATER - DAY

The Caseworker stands beside her car with Hardroy.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
I'll need her bag out of the trunk.

The Caseworker opens the trunk, retrieves Macy's bag with some annoyance.

CASEWORKER  
Wasted trip this has been.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
That hasn't been determined yet.

CASEWORKER  
What?

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Until you've made it across.

Hardroy carries Macy's bag off.

The Caseworker stares after her, shakes her head and gets in her car.

EXT. FERRY LANDING - DAY

Hardroy brings Macy's bag to her car, puts it in the front seat and gets in.

INT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S CAR

Macy sits quietly in the backseat, her head down.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Still wondering why you were hiding  
from me. Do you want to say  
something about that?

Macy remains quiet. Hardroy starts the car.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
We'll start with the premise that  
someone wanted to see your Grandpa  
gone. Who might that be?

Macy looks up. Their eyes meet in the rearview.

INT. SHERIFF DEPARTMENT OFFICE - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Macy sits alone at a table. She opens a video on her cellphone and watches.

*VIDEO: Her Grandpa in a barn speaks to the camera.*

GRANDPA  
*It's not like we belted in the  
birds and jettisoned the rascals  
into the sky like that. We slowly  
acclimate them in elevated slings.*

*He shows off one of the slings.*

GRANDPA (CONT'D)  
*Comfortable with the slings, we  
then move them to pulleys. A zip  
line for birds. Helluva fun. Ask  
them. Okay, so birds can't talk.*  
(MORE)

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

*But be around something for a long enough time and you develop a language with each other.*

*He shows off a pulley ride that extends from one side of the barn to the other.*

GRANDPA (CONT'D)

*We noticed the birds were eating better with all this assisted flying. More active, less aggressive with each other. My lovely granddaughter. Well, you can't see her behind that cellphone. She wants to be a Vet when she finishes school, help disabled critters find some joy in mobility again. Yes, you can't see her, but take my word for it. She's a lovely one, inside and out, My Macy... Now, I got through that without one cuss word like you told me to. Shit, I could be a reporter, could'nt I?*

Macy closes the video with a lump in her throat and a smile.

Sheriff Hardroy enters the room, takes a chair opposite Macy with a notepad and recorder.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Sorry, I made you wait. Did you have your lunch?

Macy nods.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

We have our routine around here. Best to stick to it. I suspect even a girl of your age has her own? That's part of what I'd like to discuss with you.

Macy remains quiet.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Your aunt has given me permission to ask you some questions. I'm not here to scare you or anything. Something's happened on the island. Well...and if there's any connection to your grandpa, what you say could be of help.

(she turns on the recorder)

(MORE)

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Macy. You own a drone, is that correct.

Macy nods, yes.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I need you to speak.

MACY

Yes.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Is it in your possession today?

MACY

Yes.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Were you flying it sometime during the last couple weeks anywhere near around Old Kebler Road?

MACY

It's not that big of an island. Not too many ways to get here and about. I could have, I guess.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Have you seen Reverend Beevan's dog, Samson, before?

MACY

I don't know. At the Blessing of the Animals? I think it was there, with all the other ones.

SHERIFF HARDROY

So, not during any of your recent flights around the island? Spooking it, by mistake, with that drone of yours?

MACY

No.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You capture videos of your flights around, do you?

MACY

Yes. Me and Grandpa did some with the birds on YouTube if that's what you mean.

SHERIFF HARDROY

None of your own flights around the island. Or beyond? Do you go beyond?

MACY

There's a limit on how far the signal goes.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I should have known that.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Do you remember the day at the cliff, you said you saw someone running off once you took your goggles off?

MACY

Yes.

SHERIFF HARDROY

We made the finding that it had been a neighbor who was approaching, saw him fall and ran back to phone for help. You felt otherwise. That that person held some responsibility for what happened to your grandpa. You feel I haven't listened to you about all this, do you? Is that why you were hiding from me on the ferry? I haven't listened?

Macy inhales. Something she contains can't be spoken.

MACY

Someone killed him. I think that's what happened.

SHERIFF HARDROY

If you could speak up. This doesn't pick up so well. Do you blame anyone in particular, anyone on the island, for what happened to your grandpa?

MACY

I don't know.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Did your grandfather know Reverend Beevan's assistant? Mary Switzer?

MACY  
I don't know.

Hardroy turns off the recorder.

Hardroy looks out at darkening clouds shading the window.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Your aunt says, it might be better  
for you to stay here if you're  
needed in some investigation.

Macy shakes her head, like, big surprise.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
I've arranged for you to stay in a  
foster home until things get sorted  
out.

Macy's eyes widen. She doesn't like the idea.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
It won't be for long. Can you do  
that for me? For your grandpa?

Raindrops hit the window with a plink, plink, plink

Drops ease down the glass to collect at the sill.

MACY (O.S)  
I hope they've given them good  
shelter.

Macy stares at the window.

MACY (CONT'D)  
Just because they're birds, don't  
mean they can fly.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - LATER

The ring of a telephone. Murmured conversation.

A hulking FOSTER DAD is introduced to Macy.

She grabs her bag off a chair and follows the man.

She stops, places the bag down, opens it, checks.

Yes. Her drone is still there.

She looks up, meets eyes with Hardroy who stands down the hallway.

She closes the bag.

The Deputy approaches Hardroy and stands with her.

DEPUTY TACK

The reverend's dog. Some dried material found on its fur. Sending to the lab for testing.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Get whatever videos of her flights off her phone and get it back to her, will you?

Hardroy watches as the Foster Dad leads Macy out the door.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Being tough is very different than being numb. My mother used to say that.

DEPUTY TACK

Would have liked to meet that mother of yours.

SHERIFF HARDROY

She would have told you to fix your tie more often. It reminds you not to slouch.

The Deputy adjusts his tie and his posture rights itself.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - EVENING

The Foster Dad and Macy exit his car and head towards the front door of a modest two story house set back from the road.

A security light illuminates automatically as they approach the door.

INT. FOSTER HOME - EVENING

Macy follows the Foster Dad down a dimly lite hallway.

They pass a room illuminated by a TV.

The silhouette of a TEEN BOY there lounging on a sofa.

FOSTER DAD

Get your feet off the coffee table.

Macy and the Foster Dad make their way up a dark, narrow stairwell. Their footsteps on wood echo through the house.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

Your room is up here. It's not much but it's warm and there's some books and magazines of sorts.

INT. FOSTER HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

The two enter a sparsely furnished room.

Macy notices a stack of car magazines.

FOSTER DAD

You've got a bathroom there. Towel and I suppose all you'll need. If not, we'll see to it tomorrow.

Macy places her bag on the bed.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

We'll go over the house rules in the morning. Are you hungry?

Macy shakes her head, no.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

All right, then.

The Foster dad at the door, ready to close it.

Macy notes a window. The shutters are locked secure with an inside padlock.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

Goodnight, then.

The door is closed.

The click of a lock on the other side makes her shutter.

Macy lands on the bed, digesting her situation like a poor meal.

INT. FOSTER HOME - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Macy is sound asleep, hugging her pillow.

All at once, a hand crushes her mouth.

She awakes with a muffled scream. The weight of a male body crushes her.

A hand reaches, caresses her pale bare thigh. She grabs at it but can't reach it.

From out of nowhere, the Foster Dad's hand grips the Teenage Boy on top of Macy by the scruff of his neck.

He literally lifts him up and tosses him across the room.

The Foster Dad picks the boy up from the floor and drags him out.

Macy stumbles out of bed, collecting herself, when she spots it.

A KEY RING on the floor.

She retrieves the ring, clutching it to her chest as she approaches the window.

She searches through the keys to find one that might match the padlock on the locked window.

She tries one. Doesn't fit.

The sound of footsteps on stairs. The Foster Dad is returning.

She tries another, no luck. Then another.

More footsteps, closer. One more key. This one has to do it.

Yes!

She opens the padlock but leaves it loose, throws the key ring to the floor, quickly jumps into bed, just as

The Foster Dad re-enters the room.

He grabs the key ring off the floor with an angry huff, closes the door and locks it.

Macy slips out of bed, slips on some clothes and her shoes.

She loosens the padlock and opens the shutters, pulls open the window.

INT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Sheriff, in a house dress, sits quietly at a table, finishing off some cookies in a modest kitchen with leftover Formica and chrome from the sixties.

HUSBAND (O.S)

You coming to bed?

SHERIFF HARDROY

You ever hear of the Reverend having any back problems?

Her HUSBAND, (62) rolls in. The thin, gray haired gentleman is confined to a WHEELCHAIR.

HUSBAND

No. I'm apt to discuss matters of the soul with her. Corporal matters I leave for my dear wife.

He rolls over to her, leans in to plant a kiss on her cheek.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

David called, said he's coming over for your retirement party. Bringing his new girlfriend.

SHERIFF HARDROY

He didn't mention a girlfriend last time I spoke with him. Did he mention her to you?

HUSBAND

I recall some mention of a girl he was seeing that reminded him of his mother.

SHERIFF HARDROY

How's that?

HUSBAND

She asks too many questions.

SHERIFF HARDROY

This attack on the Reverend's assistant. It's baffling in its cruelty.

HUSBAND

Never heard you say that about anything. Does this mean your retirement party is considered on hold?

SHERIFF HARDROY

You mean Korean barbecue in the city? Seeing our son on a regular basis? Falling asleep to police scanners. You know. The good life? Like, hardly.

HUSBAND

You forgot what really draws you away from this breathtaking spot on the globe...handicapped ramps.

SHERIFF HARDROY

No.

HUSBAND

We don't have to move for me, Irene. Doctor says I'm coming along fine. I get around just fine, now.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Let's not argue this again.

HUSBAND

Okay. Actually, the Reverend did mention something. She said I was fortunate sore knees was out of the question for me. I guess the Reverend is on her knees a great deal these days?

SHERIFF HARDROY

I'm getting this odd image in my head. Just stop it right there.

The two share a laugh.

HUSBAND

The car could use a wash. You want to take it in tomorrow?

SHERIFF HARDROY

It's just sitting in the driveway, how dirty could it have gotten?

HUSBAND

Birds have been crapping all over it.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I'll get it washed and we'll stick it in the garage until you get out of that chair.

HUSBAND

I loved the pasta.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I'm sorry. I can't even eat my own cooking tonight.

HUSBAND

Tomorrow, then. Leftovers don't know they're leftovers.

She gets up, wheels him off to their bedroom.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - ROOF - NIGHT

Macy climbs out the window out onto the roof. But, she's not out there to escape.

She dons her view goggles, powers up the drone control.

The drone lifts off from the roof.

GOGGLE POV:

*The drone takes flight over the island, past orbs of light between darkness...*

*...towards the outskirts and a patch of forest and glade.*

*The drone lowers and hovers near a sign.*

*"Lockett Island Nature Conservancy"*

EXT. FOSTER HOME - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Macy bites her lip under the goggles.

MACY

Now, where have they put you guys?

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - NATURE CONSERVANCY - NIGHT

GOGGLE POV:

*The drone hovers above a pathway.*

*A STAFF MEMBER walks by, going about his nightly round of checks.*

EXT. FOSTER HOME - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Macy bites her lip under the goggles.

MACY

Find a place to hide.

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - NATURE CONSERVANCY - NIGHT

The Staff Member walks across a small wooden bridge.

Below the bridge, the drone hovers out of sight.

Once he's gone, the drone moves out and up.

MACY (O.S)

Okay, birds. Where are you?

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - NATURE CONSERVANCY - NIGHT

The drone enters and lands in an enclosed area of hay stacks and faux rock structures.

The camera swivels around. No birds in sight.

A flashlight beam.

The drone quickly lifts, glides over to land behind a rock and hide.

The camera swivels

GOGGLE VIEW:

*A flashlight beam. The Staff Member shines a flashlight around, then leaves.*

The drone moves to a faux rock structure, gently taps against it, making a knock. Knock Knock.

This seems to alert the birds. There's a sudden chorus of squawks and excited caws.

One bird excitedly rushes towards the drone as it lowers to the ground.

Another bird makes its appearance with a squawk.

Cleo, the gull pulls at the harness.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Macy breaks a smile under the goggles.

MACY  
Look who's here.

EXT. NATURE CONSERVANCY - NIGHT

GOGGLE POV:

*Her grandpa's rescue birds gather around the drone. A happy family.*

EXT. FOSTER HOME - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Macy settles back on the roof under her goggles.

Moving below Macy on the roof, a window is open to view below.

Their voices inaudible, the Foster Dad argues with the Teen Boy.

In a rage, he slaps the boy against the head, sends him crashing against a wall.

EXT. LOCKETT ISLAND - DAY

The sun's faint glow coats a balmy sea.

CULLEN (OVER LAP)  
Stop with your fussing.

INT. CULLEN'S HOME - MORNING

Cullen fiddles up some coffee on an old stove.

A CAT purrs at a dusty window.

CULLEN  
I'll be out in a jiffy with your  
breakfast. Let me get my fix,  
first, you hound.

EXT. CULLEN'S HOME - MORNING

A large patio area hanging with a variety of wind chimes, all tinkling with expectation.

A weathered barn meets one end.

The old man shuffles out with an opened can of cat food.

CULLEN  
Now, where have you taken off to?

He finally notices his cat there.

It licks at a large drop of blood on the ground.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
Don't lick on that, you fool.

He notes drops of blood form a line all the way to the opening to the barn.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
The hell? You hurt?

He picks up the cat, checks it. Nothing off about it.

He puts the cat down and heads towards the barn.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
You murder something in there,  
again?

INT. CULLEN'S BARN - MORNING

The old man squints as his eyes adjust to the darkness.

He sees a large colorful mass of something across from him, steps towards it.

WHAAAAP! a heavy pulley swings down from on high, clobbers him in the back of the head.

He stumbles forward into a twisted mass of tattered PLASTIC BAGS, FISH LINE with FISHING HOOKS of various sizes.

This tangled "net" sucks him in, grabs at his flesh with the hooks as he moves forward.

CULLEN  
Who the hell?

He notes a slab of fish on the floor.

Several hooks are attached to it and lead to the fishing lines he's twisted in.

Flies buzz around the fish that's leaking a stream of bloody fluid.

A familiar meow.

His cat saunters in, sniffs at the fish.

The cat finds it appealing, starts to pull at it with its teeth, which in turn pulls the line taunter.

Every line tightens within this trap, wrecking pain on the old man.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
Shoo! Get out of here. Go!

The cat pulls at the fish again, attempts to drag it off.

The line grows taunter. Cullen gasps with the pain.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
Stop it! Get out, you!

He winces as he moves one hook pierced arm to another and pulls a larger hook from his wrist.

Blood spurts from the vein.

CULLEN (CONT'D)  
Hell!

He pulls another and another hook out, wincing with the procedure.

A large hook in his neck is pulled tighter against his jugular vein.

He tries to reach it but can't.

His eyes glow at the entrance to the barn where sunlight seeps in. A painless world out there beckons with relief.

Hooks ring his head like a crown of thorns.

Blood trickles across his brow.

CULLEN (CONT'D)

Okay. Old man. You have to make a run for it, I guess.

He takes a labored breath.

CULLEN (CONT'D)

In three... One...  
two...  
three.

Go!

He moves forward with a guttural yell as remaining hooks he can't dislodge rip into his skin.

The one at his jugular digs in with a vengeance.

He surrenders, moves back. Breath and blood come in spurts.

The sound of something falling to the floor.

He turns, looks surprised at what he sees there.

CULLEN (CONT'D)

What are you doing in here?

WHAAAP!

Another pulley swings down from behind, whacking him in the back of the head.

The Old Man drops to his knees.

A hook slices open his eyebrow from the fall.

Life leaves the old man on his knees.

(Overlap) THUMP THUMP THUMP

INT. FOSTER HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Macy quickly slips into bed at the sound of knocking at her door.

The door opens. The Foster Dad leans in.

FOSTER DAD  
Breakfast, downstairs in ten  
minutes.

Macy nods.

INT. FOSTER HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Silence you could cut with a knife at the table.

The Foster Dad butters some toast.

The Teen Boy swirls excessive ketchup into his scrambled eggs.

The Foster dad quickly grabs the ketchup away from him.

Macy takes continued sips at a glass of orange juice just to avoid having to talk.

FOSTER DAD  
You're entitled to press charges if  
you see fit. He's sorry for what  
he's done and will discuss the  
matter with his therapist.

The Foster Dad bites into his toast.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)  
He's to do the dishes too, among  
other chores around here.

MACY  
I don't even know his name.

FOSTER DAD  
What's that?

MACY  
His name.

TEEN BOY

Bryan, with a y.

FOSTER DAD

(to the Teen Boy)

You'll speak when I say you can speak.

MACY

Can I be excused?

FOSTER DAD

You haven't even touched your breakfast.

MACY

I won't...I won't press charges.

FOSTER DAD

Well, then... You're excused. Go.

Macy gets up, pushes her chair in, takes the stairs up to her room.

Her footsteps echo in the house as the Foster Dad stares daggers at the boy over his coffee cup.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Hardroy stands at the cliff looking out to sea where Grandpa fell to his death. Maybe too close to the edge for comfort.

She takes some construction goggles that have the lenses taped over and slips them on.

MACY (V.O)

I had the goggles on so I didn't see anything around me. Don't remember hearing anything, but the birds. When I took the goggles off, I saw that person running up towards the road.

A hand suddenly grips Hardroy's shoulder. She startles, slips the goggles off.

It's the Deputy.

DEPUTY TACK

It's old man Cullen. His sister found him dead.

INT. CULLEN'S BARN - DAY

The flash of a camera against the old man's body, kneeled within that tangle of fishing line and hooks, twisted, shredded, plastic bags.

Sheriff Hardroy watches, Cullen's cat in her arms. She pets it absentmindedly and then lets it scamper off.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I have some wire cutters in my car.

DEPUTY TACK

Oh. You don't have to do it. Have you been in the house?

INT. CULLEN'S HOME - DAY

The door is open. Sheriff Hardroy enters with the Deputy.

She spots Cullen's SISTER (60) at a table, wiping away tears.

SISTER

Hardroy and Tack. Lockett Island's dynamic crime fighting duo. You gonna find out who did this awful thing to my brother?

DEPUTY TACK

I'll be outside.

He leaves them.

SISTER

I told him over and again he's too old to be living alone like this. He had that heart attack that almost took him last year. The devil's come back to bite him again.

She breaks down.

SISTER (CONT'D)

Have you seen it?

SHERIFF HARDROY

What's that?

SISTER

His bedroom. God have mercy on us.

She points down a hall.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Don't touch anything you haven't  
already.

SISTER

I left it on, so you'd see it.

INT. CULLEN'S HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Hardroy steps through the dark, narrow straits of two narrow  
hallways

A buzzing sound grows louder as she nears the room.

INT. CULLEN'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

The pillows on a large bed have been ripped up.

The feathers inside them, released to swirl around the room,  
blown about by an old electric fan that buzzes loudly in the  
corner.

Hardroy steps through this swirling feather cloud to a table.

A bible. A page stays open with the sticky weight of  
splotches of blood.

Hardroy notices a verse that seems to be outlined in blood.  
She reads aloud.

SHERIFF HARDROY

*'They put him in a cage with hooks  
And brought him to the king of  
Babylon; They brought him in  
hunting nets So that his voice  
would be heard no more On the  
mountains of Israel'*

Near the bible, an open window.

Hardroy leans out the window, studying the ground outside.

EXT. CULLEN'S HOME - DAY

Hardroy's head out the window as she searches the ground below.

Deputy Tack loiters nearby, exhales a large cloud of vapor from a vapor cigarette.

Hardroy notices him there.

He turns at her voice, deer in the headlights.

SHERIFF HARDROY

If we have to start locking our doors and closing our windows, we will have lost something specially dear on this island. Why are you doing that out here on the job, by the way?

DEPUTY TACK

I didn't think you'd stick your head out the window and notice me here.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Good excuse.

She motions to him.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Step carefully over here. Yes, right there. What is that on the ground there. Is that more blood?

INT. FOSTER HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

A knock at the door. The Foster Dad enters.

Macy is in bed, reads a veterinarian textbook.

FOSTER DAD

You'll have to come downstairs. I'm having him clean up your room.

The Teen Boy follows in with a mop and pail, cleaning supplies.

Macy gets out of bed, glances at the window, hoping no one checks that she's disengaged the lock.

The Teen Boy gives her a quick, cold glance as he heads to the bathroom.

Macy follows the Foster Dad out of the room.

The Teen Boy looks about the bathroom, notices something on the floor.

He picks it up, grins with the find.

A fifty-dollar bill.

TEEN BOY

Bonus.

EXT. CULLEN'S HOME - DAY

Sheriff Hardroy walks to her car with cellphone to ear.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I'm sending over some blood samples with some other things. I need some men at the ferry. I want I.D's from everyone leaving taken down. Also, can you call Reverend Beevans and arrange a visit with her sometime this afternoon?

The Sister comes out of the house.

SISTER

I'll take care of it myself if you don't!

SHERIFF HARDROY

Go home to your animals. Everything will be okay.

INT. FOSTER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Macy on a sofa watches TV with the sound down.

The Foster Dad is at a desk on his laptop.

A sound of knocking from upstairs.

Macy looks up at the ceiling with some concern as the Teen Boy is up there cleaning up her room.

The Foster Dad's phone rings. Digests some news with alarm.

FOSTER DAD

That old man? You're kidding?

Macy looks over with concern.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

Christ Jesus.

Macy hears another sound from the second floor.

She gets up, moves up the stairs, looking back to see the Foster Dad is distracted on the phone.

INT. MACY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Macy enters. Sounds of the Teen Boy scrubbing something in the bathroom.

She pokes her head in. He looks up from cleaning the tub.

TEEN BOY

What?

MACY

Why does he lock me in every night?

TEEN BOY

Just a guess. Because you're a girl. He can't know what all you'll get into, you know?

He looks her up and down.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)

You better go back downstairs. I might just rape you up here.

Macy steps back.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)

I was kidding. I'm sorry. What I did. I was just playing. There was this other girl here once.

MACY

I'm not her.

TEEN BOY

Yeah. I see that.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST INN - DINING ROOM - DAY

A PROPRIETOR brings a pot of tea in a tea cozy to Reverend Beevans and Hardroy's table in this quaint corner of the world.

PROPRIETOR

Sheriff. Word has gotten around. One of my guests wants to leave, thinks some mass murderer is on the loose on the island. Is there?

SHERIFF HARDROY

Keep your porch light on, your doors and windows shut. That's all I can tell you, now.

The Proprietor spills a bit of tea, wipes it up and takes her leave.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

(to the Reverend)

This place was built in the early 1800's. Do you know a Vice President once stayed here?

REV. BEEVANS

I suppose you only ask that of newcomers? I heard about a supreme court judge. I suppose, in my one year here, I haven't gotten to the Executive branch just yet.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Hannibal Hamlin. Served with Lincoln.

REV. BEEVANS  
 History, notwithstanding, I'd like  
 to be able to return home, soon.  
 Return to normal.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
 As would we all. Maybe you could  
 help.

Hardroy hands her a sheet of paper.

The Reverend reads the verse on it.

REV. BEEVANS  
 Ezekiel 19.9.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
 That's impressive. Your memory.

REV. BEEVANS  
 Always had an affinity to that  
 book, written by a priest in exile.  
 So, this brings you here for tea  
 and...

She fingers a piece of bread from a basket.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
 ...scones, I think.

Hardroy motions to a bowl of butter.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
 I like this here fluffy butter. I  
 left my butter out on the counter  
 last night. The mice didn't even  
 touch it.

REV. BEEVANS  
 How fortunate.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
 Beyond the author, does that bible  
 verse have any personal meaning to  
 you?

REV. BEEVANS  
 No.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
 As you may have heard, old man  
 Cullen was found deceased this  
 morning.

(MORE)

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

It appears someone who could be connected felt that verse needed revelation.

Beevans reads the verse again.

REV. BEEVANS

You think this is the same one who attacked my assistant?

SHERIFF HARDROY

Do you know of any connection between Cullen and her?

REV. BEEVANS

They were fixtures at the services. He helped with the candles, she with the flowers. He could play the organ if our organist was out ill. But, his hands trembled. You'd know all this if you were a church goer, Sheriff.

SHERIFF HARDROY

He was an army medic. His hands were never the same after that.

Hardroy pulls out the picture of the assistant at the Blessing of the Animals.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I asked you for a picture of your assistant. You gave me this. I'll need to keep it for the time being. But, I've got a question about it.

She points to something in the picture.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Do you know her?

REV. BEEVANS

That's the granddaughter of the man who rescues birds. I just performed his funeral.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Have you had contact with her recently?

REV. BEEVANS

She came to the funeral and then left quickly. Haven't seen her since.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Do you remember what she had in her cage, there?

REV. BEEVANS

Birds, I assume. Her grandpa and his silly bird charity.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Your assistant brought your dog, Samson?

She nods.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I don't see Old Man Cullen in the picture, but I might imagine he brought his cat? Oscar, a tabby.

REV. BEEVANS

There were several cats. I don't remember specific ones, Sheriff. Oscar isn't that memorable of a name, cat or otherwise. Yes, loads of cats on this island. I'm surprised you have mice.

Beevans offers her the bread basket.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

Sheriff? Scones and fluffy butter. Please.

The Sheriff notices something on the Reverend's hand.

A fresh scar.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I noticed at the house you cut yourself there.

INT. FOSTER HOME - MACY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Macy sits agitated on the bed.

Muffled voices raised from downstairs.

Macy approaches the door, puts her ear to it, trying to hear what is being said.

The voice now amplified of the Teen Boy.

TEEN BOY

No!

Then silence.

Macy starts to breath heavily, sensing something is very wrong downstairs.

She goes to the window, opens it, looks out.

The door opens behind her, startles her.

The Teen Boy enters.

He's sweating, his eyes wide with fear or fiery.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)

We're going. Get your stuff.

MACY

What?

TEEN BOY

We're getting out of here. Come on.  
Get your stuff.

Suddenly disoriented and vulnerable, Macy stuffs her bag and follows him out of the room.

INT. FOSTER HOME - STAIRS - NIGHT

Macy follows the Teen Boy down.

TEEN BOY

We can leave now. We have to.

MACY

Where is he?

INT. FOSTER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Macy follows him past a lamp that's been knocked to the floor.

TEEN BOY

If we can't make the ferry, we'll  
steal a boat.

MACY

What?

Macy notes the room has been trashed. She hears a moan.

She looks to a corner. The Foster Dad slumped on the floor, his back to the wall.

Blood leaks into cracks on the floor.

His eyes meet hers, beg in pain.

FOSTER DAD

Pull it out.

Macy steps forward, horrified as the Foster Dad moves his arm.

A knife handle sticks out of his abdomen. The blade somewhere festers deep in an organ.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

Please... Pull it out for me.

Macy steps forward, trembling.

MACY

I...

FOSTER DAD

That's right.

She takes hold of the knife handle. Her hand trembles.

FOSTER DAD (CONT'D)

You can do it.

Suddenly, the Teen Boy behind her, pulls her away, her hand quickly slips off the knife handle.

TEEN BOY

Are you coming? Let's get out of here!

EXT. FOSTER HOME - YARD - NIGHT

The Teen Boy has Macy by the arm, leads her to the passenger side and pushes her in.

He gets behind the wheel, slams the door shut.

TEEN BOY

Let's go!

INT. FOSTER DAD'S CAR - NIGHT

Macy notices a bottle of whiskey between them as the Teen Boy starts the car.

MACY

Where are you taking me?

TEEN BOY

Where do you want to go?

He holds up the fifty dollar bill he found in her bathroom.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)

Gas money if we make the ferry  
without being caught.

INT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hardroy on a sofa has fallen asleep there.

Her Husband rolls himself in. She wakes up at his presence.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I thought you'd gone to bed early.

HUSBAND

Just sitting out on the dock  
pondering the universe.

SHERIFF HARDROY

I fell asleep here. I was looking  
at this picture.

She holds the picture of the Blessing of the animals.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

The Reverend in this picture has a  
large bandage on her hand. Any  
idea?

HUSBAND

She mentioned it in a sermon. Tied it in with some message about planting a seed and not knowing what the harvest will be. Some gardening mishap.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Gardening mishap? Yes. That's what she told me.

Hardroy focuses in on Macy holding a cage in the Blessing of the Animals picture.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I'm going to take a little ride. You going to be okay?

HUSBAND

The universe is under control out there. I'll stay up and watch some TV to supply some doubt.

EXT. NATURE CONSERVANCY - NIGHT

The Teen Boy reluctantly helps Macy put cages into the car.

TEEN BOY

Why do you want to take these things?

MACY

They're family.

TEEN BOY

Don't you know? They carry parasites.

INT. CHURCH MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

A bible study GROUP in a circle.

Reverend Beevans leads the group in discussion. One member reads a passage from the bible.

## MEMBER

"And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them."

A door opens. Sheriff Hardroy stands there, looking in the Reverend's direction.

The Reverend notices with concern, then turns to her group.

## REV. BEEVANS

Unfortunately, we'll need to stop there on the dispossessed.

The Reverend glances at Hardroy again.

## REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

Lloyd, will you lead us in prayer?

## INT. CHURCH - WORSHIP AREA - NIGHT

The Sheriff sits alone in a pew facing the altar.

She puts disorganized hymnals right side up in their slots.

The Reverend enters, takes a pew one ahead of the Sheriff and turns to her side to chat.

## SHERIFF HARDROY

Columbus. He knew he was close to land when he noticed the gulls never ventured more than twenty some miles from land wherever he sailed. Did you know that gulls can drink salt water? My mother always had me gargling salt water. I imagined I was a gull to get through it. But, they can swallow it. I couldn't.

Hardroy motions to the Reverend's hand.

## SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

I was bitten by a parrot once. A domestic dispute. Don't ask.

The Reverend turns from her, faces the front to the altar, seeking refuge in its images.

This comment has touched a nerve.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

The Foster Dad's NEIGHBOR leads the Deputy to the door.

The security light illuminates.

FOSTER DAD'S NEIGHBOR

I heard a bunch of yelling. I saw them drive off. It was the boy and some girl. I think she's a new one here. I kept calling, he hasn't answered. I know something's wrong about this, this late of an hour.

INT. CHURCH - WORSHIP AREA - NIGHT

Hardroy and the Reverend still seated in the pews.

The Reverend continues to have her back to Hardroy.

The rafters above shudder with a gust of wind outside.

SHERIFF HARDROY

The yearly Blessing of the Animals.  
Something you find enjoyment in,  
Reverend?

REV. BEEVANS

"The righteous care for the needs  
of their animals, but the kindest  
acts of the wicked are cruel."  
Proverbs 12:10

SHERIFF HARDROY

Old man Cullen helped out with the  
bandaging, did he? That was some  
bite?

The Reverend, exhales, reluctant to continue.

REV. BEEVANS

I continued with the blessings. It was a matter of working through the pain.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You were upset, though. And your assistant, as you said to me at the house, always there to calm you down?

REV. BEEVANS

We really should close up shop, here. It's getting late.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Yes. The evening wind's picking up. These old rafters have a way of making one feel unease that they'll suddenly come crashing down on our heads, don't they?

REV. BEEVANS

So, you have been to church?

The reverend finally turns back to her.

Hardroy gives her a smile.

SHERIFF HARDROY

One Christmas pageant. I played the Ox.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - NIGHT

Macy stands at the edge among the bird cages.

She looks out to the dark void of sea and sky.

The Teen Boy stands alongside her.

He keeps looking back nervously at the car and the road.

TEEN BOY

Just leave them here. Let's go.  
I'm not leaving them alone.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)

I'm going to take your fifty. I'll try to make the ferry in the morning, or I'll steal a boat somewhere. You should come with me, really.

MACY

I didn't leave it there.

TEEN BOY

What?

MACY

That money. It's isn't mine.

TEEN BOY

They'll find you here if you stay.

Macy pokes her finger in one of the cages.

MACY

I'm staying here with them tonight. Just go.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The Reverend locks up the front door.

Hardroy makes her way to her car.

Hardroy stops, turns, has something to add.

SHERIFF HARDROY

We've had some dog bite cases over the years. One particularly, the Hollis girl got mauled, lost a finger, her father in a rage shot the dog, nailed it to the dog owners front door...always thought, what an ugly word, but godawful powerful, isn't it? How it sometimes overcomes a person to do things they normally wouldn't?

REVEREND BEEVANS

What word is that, Sheriff?

SHERIFF HARDROY

Wrath.

INT. FOSTER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Deputy and Neighbor enter.

The Deputy motions for the neighbor to hold back.

He carefully steps over and past things strewn on the floor.

Then he sees it...

The Foster Dad's bloody corpse.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - NIGHT

The Sheriff starts the car. Her cellphone rings. She takes the call.

INT. POLICE LAB / SHERIFF'S CAR - NIGHT

A LAB CLERK on the other end of her phone call handles some plastic evidence bags.

LAB CLERK

Sorry for this late call, but we're closing shop for the Holiday, so I thought I'd get these results to you. Formalities, I'll get in the mail. But, the substance on the dog's fur is vomit.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You're going to tell me the stomach contents was fish and fish before that.

LAB CLERK

Indeed. The blood. The cells have no nucleus.

SHERIFF HARDROY

An animal.

LAB CLERK

Yes.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
I've got another call. Thank you.

LAB CLERK  
My pleasure. Always happy to help  
out.

The Sheriff answers the other call.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
And the girl. Is Macy there? I'm on  
my way.

She dials another number.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
I need you to swing by the nature  
conservancy. Check to see if she's  
there.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The Reverend hurries to the front door, unlocks it, rushes  
in.

INT. CHURCH- OFFICE - NIGHT

The Reverend turns on her desk computer, spins the mouse  
wheel to find something.

The mouse gives off a cry like a sea gull. She stares at it  
for a moment, petrified, then continues.

She notes things on the screen, jots down information in a  
little prayer book.

INT. CHURCH - WORSHIP AREA - NIGHT

The Reverend grabs a prayer vestment, gathers some items into  
a duffel bag.

She quickly exits.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

As the Reverend exits, she's startled by the appearance of Old Man Cullen's sister at the door.

The sister places a hand on the Reverend's chest, with a cold stare, daggers out.

SISTER

I always knew you were a fake old bird.

The Sister grabs the chain with crucifix around the Reverend's neck and yanks.

REV. BEEVANS

Stop!

The reverend gags, fighting for breath as the Sister seems intent on strangling her in the struggle.

SISTER

He told me what you did. Conjuring up who knows what in your anger.

REV. BEEVANS

Help!

The chain snaps.

The Sister grasps it in her hand, huffing with victory.

SISTER

You don't deserve to wear this.

The reverend fights for breath, steps back, stunned as the Sister walks off.

The reverend collects herself, rushes to her car and gets in.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

Sheriff Hardroy pulls up. She gets out as the Deputy approaches.

DEPUTY TACK

I've got men down at the ferry landing and patrolling the boat slips. Those kids won't get very far.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
A drone can't carry people, can it?

DEPUTY TACK  
Not yet.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Good.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - NIGHT

Macy and the Teen Boy at the cliff, both stare out to sea.

MACY  
They'll be looking for us.

TEEN BOY  
My bathroom door can't be locked. I was in the bath. He came in, said something to me. I couldn't hear. I had my earbuds in, listening to music...He makes me uncomfortable looking at me. But he left. I stayed in the bath as long as I could before the water turned like ice.

A fog horn beseeches somewhere out at sea.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)  
I went back to my room. That's when I saw him there on the floor like that.

He turns to Macy.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D)  
I don't understand. Why did you do it?

Macy turns to him, she doesn't understand his accusation.

INT. FOSTER HOME - MACY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hardroy looks about the bedroom, pokes her head into the bathroom.

She goes over to the open window, looks out.

A LADDER has been left on the grass below the window.

Her cellphone rings, she answers.

VOICE (OVER PHONE)

Sheriff. I'm at the conservancy.  
Caretaker here says someone broke  
in tonight. They've got some birds  
missing. I don't see anyone here,  
now.

EXT. DIRT ROAD/RIDGE - NIGHT

Hardroy's car pulls up, stops at the bottom of a hill.

She gets out. A TOWNSPERSON motions towards the top of the hill.

TOWNSPERSON

Car's been sitting up there for a  
spell.

Hardroy struggles up the hill through brush and over large rocks.

She stumbles, regains her footing, forges on.

She stumbles again, grabs a rock for support and lifts herself up with strain, collects her breath and continues.

Making it to the top, she sees it.

The Foster Dad's car faces the other way.

She can't make out who or if anyone's there inside.

She pulls out her gun from its holster, quietly approaches the car.

She steps closer, inching warily, alert to any movement.

Her gun leveled as she approaches the driver's window.

The Teen Boy is in the driver's seat, his head back, mouth open wide.

Hardroy reaches for the door handle.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Don't move.

The Teen Boy doesn't respond. She swings the door open.

She checks the pulse at his neck.

She notices an empty whisky bottle by his side, smells his breath.

She slips her gun back into the holster, takes out her phone.

SHERIFF HARDROY (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 I found the boy. Up on the ridge.  
 Get the ambulance out of the barn,  
 just in case. No. I'm fine. Kid's  
 out cold. Drunk as a skunk.

She turns, lifts her voice to the darkness.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
 Macy! Macy?!

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOME - NIGHT

The Reverend's car pulls up past a "For Sale" sign.

She gets out, pulls out her duffel bag.

She stops, hesitates, takes a deep breath.

She reaches for the crucifix around her neck.

She realizes it's been pulled off, may no longer afford her the protection she needs.

She approaches the barn. Hesitates.

REV. BEEVANS  
 Dear God.

With some strain, she slides open the door, disappears inside.

EXT. RIDGE - NIGHT

An ambulance by the Foster Dad's car. The doors and trunk of the car are all open. It's been searched.

PARAMEDICS place the Teen Boy on a stretcher and place him in the ambulance.

Hardroy watches as the Deputy pulls up in his car. She approaches as he gets out.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Do you have it?

The Deputy opens up his trunk.

He pulls out a long hunting rifle, hands it to her.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

We need to find Macy. She could be next.

INT. GRANDPA'S BARN - NIGHT

The Reverend enters, carrying her duffel bag.

She squints to adjust her eyes to the darkness.

REV. BEEVANS

I've come...

She looks up to the rafters.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

I've come to make amends.

She places the duffel bag down in the center of the barn.

She moves to an empty wooden crate. With some struggle drags it to the center of the barn.

She removes things from the duffel bag, arranges them on the crate.

A candle, a bible, a bottle of holy water, a little prayer book, among other objects, each in a particular spot.

A flutter of something above.

The Reverend looks up to catch a fleeting shadow skirting the rafters.

She continues arranging her items.

She lights the candle, it flickers out.

She lights it again, illuminating her face, drawn and frightened.

She murmurs a prayer to herself.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
 Visit, I beseech Thee, O Lord, this  
 place, and drive from it all the  
 snares of the enemy.

A continuous "Cluck" like the sound of a ticking clock from above.

Cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck...

Reverend Beevans inhales.

She speaks aloud to the space and all within, her breath visible in the chill.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
 I confidently undertake to repulse  
 the attacks and deceits of the  
 devil. God arises; his enemies are  
 scattered. Those who hate him flee  
 before him.

The "Clucking" stops.

The Reverend stares up to the rafters.

The quiet is weighty.

PLOP!

A splotch of bird crap lands on her face.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
 Oh!

She gags, takes a cloth, wipes the excrement off her face. It smears, she wipes some more off, hardly getting it all off.

She tries to forge on, her breath heaving now with panic.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
 As smoke is driven away, so are  
 they driven. As wax melts before  
 the fire, so the wicked perish at  
 the presence of God.

A bulb on a long cord hanging from the rafters suddenly lights up with a faint antique glow.

The Reverend's eyes grow wide.

She searches for any form, above her, any shadow around her.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
Where are you?

A Creaking sound.

A rope with a pulley system, the Bird's "zipline" starts to move. The Reverend watches it with fright.

Something squeaks down the pulley.

Squeak. Squeak.

The Reverend stares with fear as it moves to stop halfway across.

A jumbled mass pulsates. Rotten fish heads, live crabs waving their claws, seaweed and jelly fish, squirming sea eels. It's monstrous, alien.

Something moves at the center.

SPLAT!

Breaking through a gelatinous mass, a gull,

Cleo!

She opens her mouth, lets out an ear splitting

SCREECH that reaches to hell and back.

The Reverend clasps hands to her ears, backs away.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)  
We drive you from us, whoever you may be!!! Unclean spirits, all invaders. All wicked legions!!! My curse reclaimed!!! We ask you to bless this pet. By the power of your love, enable it to live according to your plan. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures! Amen!!!

Cleo breaks out of this infernal mass.

She jets forward like a bullet into the Reverend, knocking her to the ground.

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOME - MORNING

The sun rises, greeted by cheerful bird song.

Hardroy pulls up in her car behind the Reverend's. She gets out.

She checks inside the Reverend's car. She returns to her own, grabs the long hunting rifle.

She enters the barn.

INT. GRANDPA'S BARN - MORNING

Dark. Still.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Macy?

No answer. Hardroy takes out her flashlight, shines it about.

It lands on the crate and the Reverend's instruments of exorcism.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Reverend?

A flutter, a flickering shadow above.

Hardroy lifts her rifle. Something escapes the barn above.

Quiet again.

A moan.

Hardroy steps towards the sound, lowering her flashlight.

On the floor, the Reverend covered in blood.

The flashlight beam marking the bite marks up and down her clothing.

Her right eye socket, bleeding, now devoid of an orb.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - MORNING

An early morning sun burnishes her hair.

Macy wakes up wrapped in a blanket, surrounded by the bird cages.

She squints, stretches.

MACY

Now, how did you get out?

Cleo sits atop a cage, restless, flaps her wings.

MACY (CONT'D)

Well, good morning to you, too. You want to go up, don't you? Can't even wait past breakfast?

Macy gets up, stretches some more.

She wrestles the drone from her bag, sets it up, harnessing Cleo in.

Cleo squabbles with excitement in anticipation.

MACY (CONT'D)

I'll get you as high as I can.

She toggles the switch, the drone rises.

MACY (CONT'D)

Up as high as maybe up there with grandpa. You tell him how much I miss him.

Behind Macy, Hardroy's car pulls up.

Hardroy exits the car, jogs with haste towards the girl.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Macy!

Macy lowers her goggles, takes a look behind, turns back to watch the drone in flight without the goggles.

Hardroy arrives at her side.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

You need to come with me.

Macy toggles the control to make the drone rise up higher.

MACY

I brought Cleo to the Blessing of the Animals, not so much that she needed a blessing. I wanted to talk to the reverend.

(MORE)

MACY (CONT'D)

I wanted to know if it was a sin...  
if I didn't want to keep my baby.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You're pregnant?

MACY

Cleo was nervous. She bit her in  
the hand The Reverend got real  
angry, then. Didn't think she'd  
want to hear anything from me,  
after that, you know? I'd made her  
mad.

SHERIFF HARDROY

And instead of blessing the bird...

MACY

She cursed her. I couldn't believe  
it. I told her to stop. She was  
whispering words, only me and her  
assistant could hear. She filled  
her with the devil. I heard her say  
it.

Hardroy looks up to the drone buzzing about with Cleo.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Is that the bird?

MACY

Cleo misses it so. This freedom. A  
bird should fly. I think she's been  
cursed now so she'll never be  
happy, no matter what.

Hardroy raises the rifle.

SHERIFF HARDROY

It can fly, Macy. It can do more  
than that.

MACY

No. She's like the others. Wings  
are damaged too much. Grandpa did  
all he could, always has for his  
birds.

Macy notices the rifle raised, swings at it with her arm.

MACY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?! No!!

Hardroy lowers the rifle.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Power it down. Power the drone  
down.

MACY

What are you talking about? I'm  
bringing her in. We're going away  
from here for good. It's all your  
fault, anyway. He said so.

Hardroy grabs the control box from her.

MACY (CONT'D)

No!

Macy wrestles with her, trying to get it back.

MACY (CONT'D)

Stop it!

In the struggle, Macy falls to the ground.

Hardroy confused with the control box, punches at buttons,  
eventually powers the drone down.

It teeters and starts to sink.

MACY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?! It's falling!  
You'll kill her!

IN THE AIR

The drone teeters. Cleo struggles in the harness.

She lets out a loud scream.

She bites at the straps, they loosen, and then gravity grabs  
her as she falls away from the drone.

Macy screams at the sight of Cleo falling to the sea.

But, Cleo quickly lifts her wings, and to Macy's shock.

THE GULL CAN FLY

Macy looks over at Hardroy, questioning.

MACY (CONT'D)

No. How?

The drone tumbles to the grass near them.

Hardroy drops the control, lifts her rifle again.

She scans the sky for Cleo to take a shot, but she's nowhere in sight.

Macy stares at her from the ground.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Listen to me, Macy. No one saw your grandpa being pushed because he wasn't.

FLASHBACKS TO

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Cleo grabs hold of Grandpa's chest with her claws, pulls him off the cliff.

SHERIFF HARDROY (V.O)  
It spooked the reverend's dog.

EXT. REVEREND'S YARD - DAY

Cleo flutters over the dog, grabbing at the rope attached to its collar.

SHERIFF HARDROY (V.O)  
It attacked her assistant.

INT. REVEREND'S HOME - DAY

Cleo jabs at the Assistant's eyes with her beak.

SHERIFF HARDROY (V.O)  
It gathered fishing lines with hooks, and plastic bags into Old Man Cullen's barn. Attacked him there. Cut itself somehow and left its blood there. We had it tested.

INT. CULLEN'S BARN - MORNING

Cleo takes bites at a rope, sending a pulley down into Cullen's head.

FLASHBACKS END

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - MORNING

Macy stares out at sea.

SHERIFF HARDROY

She invoked the devil. That bird  
she cursed. But. A bird can't hold  
a knife. Do you want to tell me  
what happened at the foster home,  
last night?

A radio squawk over from her car startles Hardroy. Too much  
like a gull's.

DEPUTY TACK (OVER CAR RADIO)

Sheriff. You're got to come here.  
See this. We're over at the  
hospital.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Macy. Tell me what happened.

Macy sits motionless, unable to speak.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

We'll have to put it down. If it  
comes back, we'll have to do that.  
You understand, don't you?

Hardroy goes towards her car. Macy pushes herself up from the  
ground, turns to her.

MACY

He had all kinds of sweet things to  
say. I didn't want to.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Who?

Macy shakes her head, turns back to the sea.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Wait for me here.

Hardroy gets in her car and leaves.

Macy thinks, grabs the goggles, control box. She picks up the drone and adjusts it.

The drone rises. Macy determined, bites her lip.

MACY

Cleo. Where did you go?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A NURSE adjusts an IV line.

Reverend Beevans, lies bruised and battered, a bandage over one eye.

The nurse finishes up, goes to a window and stares out.

NURSE

There's more of them.

EXT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S HOME - DAY

A little dock extends to quiet bay waters.

Hardroy's Husband wheels himself out on the dock in his wheelchair.

He starts to toss pieces of bread to fish in the water.

Suddenly a gull swoops down, grabs a piece of bread from his hand.

HUSBAND

Hey! It's not for you! Scram!

The gull lands upon a post, barks a squawk at him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The Deputy is there outside his car.

Hardroy pulls up, gets out, hands him the long rifle.

SHERIFF HARDROY

If one comes at you, you shoot it.

She motions to a middle-aged CITIZEN.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
Ralph, you armed? Come with me.

The two rush into the hospital.

The Deputy stares at dozens of gulls gathered on the hospital lawn.

The gulls seem to be agitated, moving about in mass.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy in her goggles, toggles the control.

MACY  
Where have you gone?

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The drone comes into view overhead, hovers high over the hospital grounds.

GOGGLE POV:

*The swarm of gulls shuffle and scream, as though being herded by one of their own into a form and from this view above, it's apparent, they have been.*

*That undulating pentagram.*

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy lowers the goggles, inhales with alarm at the sight.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Hardroy and the Citizen approach a patient room as the Nurse exits it.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
The reverend's in here?

The nurse nods.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
Ralph, don't let anything past this door.

He nods, takes a position outside the door.

A pair of female screams from down the hall.

Two HOSPITAL WORKERS come running down the hall towards them.

HOSPITAL WORKER  
There's a bird got itself trapped  
in the cafeteria, all in a tizzy!

SHERIFF HARDROY  
All of you, out that way!

The nurse and hospital workers flee.

Hardroy, her gun raised, moves towards the cafeteria door.

She calls back to Ralph at the reverend's door.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
My mother used to say, "To hunt  
well, you must know your ground,  
your pack, and your quarry." I  
haven't been in this hospital since  
the day she gave birth to me, here.

CITIZEN  
She gave birth to you? Irene. We  
always thought you swam up from the  
sea on the back of a Humpback  
whale.

A crash comes from within the cafeteria.

Hardroy enters, gun leveled.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Hardroy steps carefully, eyes darting left and right.

She notes trays with splattered food on the floor. Chairs overturned.

Something knocks over. Hardroy quickly turns. Aims.

Scanning the area. Nothing there.

Hardroy approaches a buffet area. Steam rises over a fully dressed chicken.

Squawks echo in a doorway. Hardroy turns, moves towards a doorway.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - DAY

Hardroy enters, gun raised, alert to any movement, any sound.

Suddenly, the sound of flapping wings echos off the bare walls.

She starts climbing the stairs. Her shoe lands on something slippery,

she slips to her side, twisting her ankle.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Ow!

She grabs her ankle, winces in pain.

She pulls herself up, noting a smear of bird crap on her shoe.

More flapping sounds, she continues to make her way up.

She steps onto a landing. Another flight of stairs leads up from there. She stops to catch her breath.

BANG!

A frosted open window flaps shut with the wind, then swings open again.

Hardroy turns with gun raised at the sudden noise.

From the top of the stairs, agitated screeches.

Hardroy climbs up the second flight of steps, grimacing with the ankle pain.

At the top of the stairs, a large storage area devoid of light.

She disappears into the void.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

A bank of old frame windows. The drone moves along them outside.

The Little Boy at the beginning sits up in his bed to get a better look as the drone hovers and then moves on.

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE AREA - DAY

Hardroy enters, grabs a small flashlight from off her belt.

She shines it about: Piles of dusty boxes, old surgical equipment illuminate in her beam.

The room takes up a whole floor it seems.

Against a shiny surface, the shadow of wings flapping.

A sudden caw!

Hardroy raises the light, her gun level with it.

A rattle, like bottles hitting each other grabs her attention.

A white metal cabinet, one door half open lies a few steps away. The rattling sound seems to come from within.

Hardroy steps towards it, slowly, carefully. Her flashlight beam accentuating the rust eaten steel.

Hardroy reaches for the handle with the flashlight hand, carefully levels her gun for any surprise.

With a quick pull, she swings the door open.

A fluttering shape rockets out of the cabinet before she can react.

Claws grip at her hair. Hardroy fights them off with punches.

SHERIFF HARDROY

No!

She falls to the floor, the screeching bird scratching at her head.

The flashlight drops from her hand to the floor.

She reaches for it as the bird flies off her.

She grabs the flashlight, lifts its beam up to a nearby table.

There, moving its head about, frantic, disoriented,  
not Cleo.

But a LARGE BLACK BIRD,

Its eyes have been covered with a wrap of tattered plastic.

It's frightened, fluttering its wings, screeching with warning.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

It's not you.

Hardroy pushes herself up, intent on helping the bird.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

It's blinded you. Gentle now. I'll  
help you.

The bird seems to calm at her voice.

Hardroy quickly snatches the plastic off the bird's eyes.

It lifts up, finally released.

Hardroy hobbles out of the room as fast as her strained ankle  
will take her.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - DAY

Hardroy makes a concerted dash down the stairs.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Ralph!

The black bird flutters past her and out the frosted open  
window to freedom.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Hardroy exits the cafeteria entrance, hobbles down the hallway, sensing already the horror.

The Citizen she's placed to guard the Reverend's door is laying still on the floor.

His gun knocked several feet away.

She comes up to him, gun raised, alert to any movement.

He tries to speak to her through bloody lips, but half of his tongue is missing.

Hardroy notes the door.

A hole has been gnawed open.

She slowly pushes the door open.

INT. THE REVEREND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Hardroy enters, gun raised. Wary of any sound, any movement.

The room is trashed, flowers knocked over, petals scattered about.

She notes an IV line has been gnawed through.

The bed is empty. The Reverend nowhere in sight.

SHERIFF HARDROY

Reverend?

GRAB!

A bony hand in hospital gown surges out from under the bed and clutches her bad ankle.

Hardroy is startled, catches her breath.

She bends, slowly...

...daring to look under the bed.

The Reverend is tucked down there on her stomach.

She brings a finger up to her lips as though to warn, "Quiet".

She motions with a hand towards the other side of the room.

A rolling curtain divider divides the Reverend's side from that of another patient's bed.

Hardroy slowly moves to where she can see what's behind it.

A slurping, chewing sound comes from the other side of the curtain.

Hardroy continues to move until she spots her,

A disheveled ELDERLY FEMALE PATIENT on a bed enjoys her lunch tray before her.

ELDERLY FEMALE PATIENT  
I'm treating my visitor here. It  
sure loves the pudding. Don't you?

Hardroy steps forward some more until she gets the whole picture.

Cleo pokes its beak at the vanilla pudding in the tray.

Hardroy raises her gun at the bird.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Ma'am. Don't move.

ELDERLY FEMALE PATIENT  
The dear tried the mashed but  
didn't care for it.

Suddenly, the Reverend dashes forward with a scream, holding up a crucifix.

She knocks Hardroy aside and lands on the Elderly woman who screams, knocking the lunch tray to the floor.

In the clattering commotion, Cleo takes flight out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Hardroy stumbles out of the room as the Deputy and the Nurse come rushing down the hall towards her.

The Nurse assists the Citizen on the floor.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
(to the Deputy)  
Come with me.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - DAY

Hardroy and Tack creep up the stairs, guns raised.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
It's smart enough to create a  
diversion. Don't let your guard  
down.

A flutter echos from the storage room.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)  
It's up there.

They continue to climb the stairs.

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Flashlight beams scan over old hospital beds, their cast iron  
headboards casting odd shadows against peeling walls.

Old Oxygen tanks lined up like sentries.

Hardroy and Tack step forward.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
I'll take this side.

They separate. Guns raised, alert.

DEPUTY TACK  
Maybe we can lure it with some  
food.

Hardroy shines her flashlight down to the floor.

A fresh kill. A half-eaten rat already attracting ants.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
It's had its breakfast.

The Deputy comes upon an old baby incubator.

His flashlight beam shines against the dirty glass sides, notes a cobwebbed blanket inside.

Something under the blanket shuffles.

He stares at it. Notes the access hole into the incubator.

Small rises in the blanket continue as though some baby is struggling to pull it off.

The Deputy reaches, squeezes his flashlight hand through the access hole into the incubator.

He pokes the flashlight at the blanket.

Whatever's underneath reacts to the touch with a rise in the blanket.

He moves the flashlight to pull the blanket back, when.

GROWL!

A small POSSUM rears up from underneath it.

It sinks its razor teeth into his hand.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Gun raised, flashlight beam swaying, Hardroy checks through a hanging line of ghostly full surgical gowns.

At the last one, she startles.

The Deputy stands there, holding up his hand, gashed and bleeding.

DEPUTY TACK

I know. You warned me.

A MOMENT LATER

Hardroy shines her light on a cabinet full of labeled glass bottles.

She takes one down, checks the label, opens it.

SHERIFF HARDROY

This will do. Has enough alcohol to kill anything.

She pours the liquid over his gash.

He winces with the sting.

DEPUTY TACK  
God, that smells.

Hardroy looks about. Ponders.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
My mother would take me to the beach in the summer. The gulls would collect on the sand, always facing the wind, they would. I asked her, you'd think they'd face the other way so they could fly off with ease if they needed to. Let the wind lift their wings. She said, they stood like that because the wind brought them information. They could smell so much in every gust.

She pours the remaining liquid on the floor.

SHERIFF TACK  
It can smell us until it can't.

They both quickly grab bottles off the shelf.

They open them, splash the contents about.

A flapping sound erupts on the other side of the space.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
This way.

They move then towards the sound.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy in goggles, shakes her head.

MACY  
My battery is dying. Cleo, where are you? Let me help you.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - DAY

A MOTHER leads her LITTLE GIRL by the hand as they approach the entrance.

The girl holds several "Get Well" mylar balloons in her other hand.

Macy's drone comes into view, hovers above the balloons, keeping pace with them.

The little girl sees it hiding there, beams with her secret discovery, the mother remaining clueless.

The drone hovers along with them as they enter the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE AREA - DAY

Hardroy grabs a bed sheet from a shelf, unfolds it.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Here, take one end.

The Deputy grabs one end of the sheet.

They walk with the sheet outstretched between the two of them.

They move down a clear space between piles of boxes.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

The drone moves down an empty hallway.

A DOCTOR appears coming out of a room.

The drone ducks behind a water fountain.

The Doctor walks past it, his head in a chart without noticing it there.

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE AREA - DAY

Hardroy and Deputy Tack hold the sheet between them.

They've stopped dead in their tracks.

Something in the shadows has drawn their incredulous stare.

Up on top of a pile of boxes,

A HUMAN SKELETON MODEL.

It's been twisted on its side into a circle, the skull facing them.

A plastic bag of hotdog buns hangs from the skull's mouth. Holes have been chewed through the bag, bits of buns chewed off.

Upon this bone circle, a large NEST.

It spreads with weaves of twigs, yarn, and here and there a money bill.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
It's built a nest here.

FLASH!

Bright beams of light flicker, then illuminate them from behind.

They turn.

A large surgical operating room lamp glows.

On a table in front of it,

Cleo.

The gull has her back to them.

Her mouth wide open as though gasping for breath.

An audible raspy breathing in and out, in and out.

She's disoriented by the smell of the bottle contents they've tossed about.

Cleo raises her head and wings.

FROM THE REAR

Her shadow appears on the sheet held between them.

The shadow twisted from reality, but now unmistakable.

A Gothic dragon lifting its wings in fury.

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE AREA - DAY

Hardroy and Tack advance on Cleo, the sheet held between them.

SHERIFF HARDROY

(in whispers)

The sheet will keep it off us. We shoot when it moves. Don't miss.

Cleo continues to have its back to them. Mouth open as though gasping for breath.

Hardroy and Tack move forward with caution.

A sudden ray of light. A door opens.

A SECURITY GUARD steps into the room.

SECURITY GUARD

Someone in here?!

Cleo turns at the voice, lets out a hellish screech.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Hardroy and Tack unload a volley of gunfire at her, but Cleo escapes the bullets, flies at the Security Guard, knocks him to the floor and out cold.

Cleo disappears out the open door.

Hardroy and Tack rush after it.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOF TOP - DAY

The two come out onto the roof. Narrow passageways between dirty concrete barriers.

Pipes release choking clouds of steam around them.

DEPUTY TACK

It's gotten away.

SHERIFF HARDROY

It may not be through with the Reverend. Take a look over there. I'll check this side.

Deputy Tack takes a narrow passage between some pipes.

He hears some crackling noise coming from inside of an open pipe.

He nears the opening, gun raised.

SPLAT!

A jellyfish is thrown up on his face.

The Deputy falls back, grabbing the jelly fish off.

DEPUTY TACK  
AHHHHH! AHHHHHH!

The jellyfish's venom begins its sting.

DEPUTY TACK (CONT'D)  
AHHHHH!

SHERIFF HARDROY (O.S)  
Tack? Tack?

Hardroy finds him. His face buried in equally burning hands.

DEPUTY TACK  
It was here. Keep looking. Damn  
this burns.

Hardroy turns at the sound of fluttering wings. She follows the sound.

She comes upon an open area. Steam rises on both sides of her.

Something catches her eye. She levels her gun.

It's the drone!

It hovers there in front of her.

SHERIFF HARDROY  
Macy.

Hardroy is unaware as...

...Cleo steps up from a ledge behind her.

The gull has a surgical scalpel in its beak.

The drone continues to hover, unmoving.

Hardroy notes the camera underneath. The lens flash with their reflective quality.

She makes out Cleo in the reflection behind her!

She quickly swivels,

BANG!

Cleo is hit, the scalpel falls.

Cleo falls off the ledge, flutters and flies for a moment, then falls to another ledge.

Hardroy rushes to the ledge, looks over and watches as,

Cleo, bloodied, attempts to fly again, flutters for a moment, and then collapses on the next ledge down.

The gull starts to drag herself across the ledge. Something there beckons her.

It's the drone perched there on the same ledge.

Cleo drags herself to it and crawls within the harness.

It lets out a plaintive caw.

The drone lifts.

Hardroy above, lifts her gun, lets off some shots, but they miss.

The drone flies off untouched.

Hardroy backs up against a wall, and sits, catching her breath.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Tack?

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy in goggles pilots the drone.

MACY

My battery's almost dead.

EXT. AIR - DAY

The wind through Cleo's bloody feathers as the drone whizzes over the island.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Tears stream over Macy's cheeks.

MACY

We all got to fly for a while,  
didn't we?

She toggles the control pad.

MACY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

EXT. AIR - DAY

The drone takes a wide tilting turn.

Up ahead that jut of rock and cliff face, Hardroy called "The Captain".

Cleo senses it. It's been betrayed. Macy's deliberate turn has sealed its fate.

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy gives one more toggle of the control with determination.

MACY

I'm sorry.

EXT. AIR - DAY

Cleo lets out a earsplitting scream until.

SMASH!

The drone with her hits the cliff and with the impact, disintegrates in to a million pieces!

EXT. PROMONTORY BY THE SEA - DAY

Macy tosses the control over the cliff into the sea, falls to her knees and weeps.

EXT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S HOME - DAY

Hardroy's car pulls up beside another car.

Hardroy steps out, hobbles on her injured ankle, heads for a wooden gate.

Hardroy opens the gate with a start.

It's Holsum's Nephew.

Those bee sting swells to his face subsiding but, still a scary sight.

HOLSUM'S NEPHEW

I'm here to paint like I said I would. But, your ladder, Sheriff. Can't find it nowhere.

Hardroy reacts with a stare.

SHERIFF HARDROY

The ladder?

A gust of wind rustles her hair. She closes her eyes.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

Yes. The ladder

EXT. SHERIFF HARDROY'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Hardroy hobbles on her strained ankle towards the dock.

Her husband stares out to the water, watching as a group of gulls play out over the whitecaps.

He turns, feeling Hardroy's presence there. Their eyes meet.

He senses she knows something. Something that condemns him.

SHERIFF HARDROY

The first day we met you were  
deceiving me. However benign with  
your empty cup. It never left me  
that you could just have gotten up  
and left for more.

She comes up to him, places her hands on his wheelchair  
handles, gives them a touch as though they're burning with  
heat.

SHERIFF HARDROY (CONT'D)

You forgot the ladder.

A weighty silence from him that takes her breath away.  
Finally...

HUSBAND

I don't know what got into me.  
She...

Suddenly, Hardroy pushes the chair with him across the dock  
and over the edge!

He lands with a splash into the water.

Hardroy watches as his wheelchair capsizes, quickly  
disappears under.

Her husband flounders in the water. Arms splashing, reaching  
for her.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

Irene!

He disappears under the water after his chair.

Hardroy stares as bubbles break the surface. Doubt crosses  
her face, what have I done?, until...

Whoosh, he breaks the surface, treads water quite  
sufficiently with working legs.

He spits out water, climbs up onto the dock and collapses.

His voice boyish now with pleads.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

After the accident, I enjoyed you  
taking care of me. Put us in this  
cozy place, it did. But, after  
awhile, I began to despise you.

(MORE)

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

I could see...I could see how much stronger you were than me.

SHERIFF HARDROY

You got her pregnant. God, how long have you been able to walk?

HUSBAND

I tried to stop myself. But, I couldn't stop thinking about her. I had to see her one more time before she left the island for good.

SHERIFF HARDROY

He found you there with her in her room, didn't he? Threatened to report you. God help us. You went and killed that man.

She exhales with the exhaustion of reveal, turns away from him.

HUSBAND

I lost it!

Hardroy's back to him as she walks away and never stops.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Hardroy hobbles past an office where her Husband in handcuffs is being interrogated by the Deputy.

She bares him no mind.

Hardroy hobbles past another room, where the Teen Boy sits waiting to be interrogated.

The Teen Boy, wide-eyed with worry. His eyes meets hers. She flashes some sympathy.

Hardroy continues to another room.

She sits opposite Macy there, places a recorder down and a notepad, ready for more questions.

REV. BEEVANS (OVER LAP)

If we could take God's perspective from on high, we might better see our weaknesses. Those things we are blind to, whether by choice or neglect, in our everyday lives...

INT. CHURCH WORSHIP AREA - DAY

The Reverend, her back to us, sermonizes to the congregation.

REV. BEEVANS

...Our own impatience. Our devotion  
to anything that undermines our  
true spirit.

We move to her front. We see her face, now, with several  
scars, a red eye patch covers one eye.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

The little cruelties to one  
another.

Macy listens in the front pew. Her stomach, a pregnancy in  
bloom.

REV. BEEVANS (CONT'D)

Evil finds a home where it can  
disguise itself as weak.

Sheriff Hardroy enters quietly, hoping not to make a fuss,  
looks around, spots her there in the front pew.

She joins Macy's side in the pew.

Reassurance unspoken.

REV. BEEVANS.

Only the strong can see it for what  
it is.

The Reverend clasps her hands, steps to the front pew, takes  
a seat alongside Hardroy and Macy.

A CHOIR begins a stirring melody of redemption.

We stay on these two women, one girl, their stares, each one  
pondering their fate...

...until we lift up towards a window over the congregation.

Sunlight accentuates the form of gulls there in rustic  
stained glass,

The sun glows brilliant through their shapes, until it  
consumes us in white.

FADE OUT            draft, November, 2019