



Elegant, desirably plump Felicity Moss sits on the edge of the tub, gazing at the razor in its charger. The early morning sun's rays shine through the window. Still in her evening gown, she reaches for the razor, looking into the mirror's reflection of the bedroom. She calls softly, "It's ready, my darling."

Alfred Manning stands in the bathroom entrance in an earnest manner. Standing He stands tall, shoulders back, fingers rubbing his chin. He turns to the window. Felicity removes the razor from the charger and hands it to him. He admires the way the light moves with her gown. She walks toward him and rubs the front and back of her hand on his unshaven cheeks. Still sleepy, he kisses her hand, takes the razor, and turns to face the mirror. She faces the mirror, too, raising her fingers to her face, gently following its shadows and lines.

"Time to return," she says sternly while glancing over at Alfred. She adds in a clean, clear tone, "Look at this, at us. These eyes."

Looking at the window, she hums a gentle tune. Alfred adjusts the razor for a close trim. Her face cream is next to him; he looks down at it and slides it to her.

"Thank you, my darling," she says briskly. "Don't forget to put the razor back in the charger when you're done."

Placing the razor against his cheek, he watches her wash her face, admiring each movement of the cloth against her perfectly smooth, firm, olive skin..

"When are we going on that trip?" she asks in her clean, clear timbre. "Will you come if we travel to the mountains?"

Brushing her short, black hair, and with giving a delightful laugh, she walks into the bedroom. Posturing along the edge of the bed, she continues brushing her hair. Alfred follows, sits next to her, and continues to shave.

“Tell me, my darling: how long will Samuel stay in the beach house?”

He turns off the razor, takes the brush from her, and continues brushing her hair.

“I’m not certain.” He holds her hand and puts it against his cheek for her inspection. “How was he with you?” he asks in a begrudging tone.

“Samuel was a gentleman, my darling. We danced all night only because you were engaged elsewhere. Besides, I believe he loves another.”

Curious, Alfred leans back onto the bed. “Oh? What makes you say that?” Felicity leans into Alfred with a loving embrace.

“Woman’s intuition, my love. It’s just the way he was. I can’t quite put my finger on it. When I asked him about the ladies in his life, he just shrugged his shoulders. He said he’s taking a sabbatical from dating. Are you aware that Samuel hasn’t been on a date since you introduced me to him? Remember, it was the weekend that Rose was with us at the beach house. She came to see how I was doing before she left for Africa. It was Christmas 2007. She and Luc were very close. It was the second anniversary of his—”

He kisses her with a full embrace. “Next time, it’s just you and I who’ll go dancing.” Alfred gets up from the bed to get his jacket. Reaching into its pocket, he pulls out a photo. “What a sight!” he scoffs. “This lunatic with his arm around my shoulder, pretending to be my best friend. Can you believe it? Rose is back in Africa, isn’t she? Why didn’t Samuel go with her? He only went that one time. He hasn’t been back since.”

“He *is* your best friend,” says Felicity as she takes the photo for a closer look.

“The last time Samuel and I spent this much time together was in boarding school in England. I was fifteen when my parents told me we had to move to Canada.” Alfred walks to the open window and looks out. “The sea is calm today. Let’s go sailing.”

“He danced with me all night. He has an opinionated yet seductive stare. Does he know?”

“Felicity, you are the female version of the character in Camus’s *The Stranger*—you are Meursault in many ways. Your choice made you appear indifferent to humankind, a soulless mother incapable of mourning the death of her child, who died at her hands. You had a choice to make, and you chose love and your compassion for life to save Luc. You did what he desired. Assisted suicide was his choice. Your choice will not be revered but shunned by those who feel and believe that they must live in judgment of others. You unwillingly live your life as you see it must be, not by those who tell you how it should be. Remorse is not an emotion you accept, and for this you will always, as Meursault did, await your death while others try to direct you to repent and atone with God. It is their ignorance, my love, that blinds them from seeing that you never turned away from God but toward him, which is what gave you the strength and courage to give your son his final wish.”

She remembers finding Luc on the floor, covered with vomit and shit, begging her to kill him. His bed was soaked with blood-red piss. She recalls how she felt, her will to keep him alive broken. How she drew him a bath, and he screamed for her to kill him. How she remained silent as she removed his clothing. Dragging him to the bathroom and lifting his heavy body into the tub, strapping him in so he didn’t sink into the now-soiled water and drown.

A confused Luc, hoping she would let him drown, screamed with frustration. “I fucking hate you! Why are you doing this to me? Fucking kill me!”

Felicity, in her silence, walked back into the room to clean the bed. Her head back, she took long inhales, holding her breath to avoid the stench that burned her nostrils. Back in the bathroom, she lifted Luc out of the tub and onto a towel on the floor. Luc was filled with hate toward his mother for not letting him drown. She dried him as he continued crying for her to help him.

“Mommy, why?”

Her eighteen-year-old son wept like a child. She dragged him to his room, still on the towel, and lifted him onto the clean bed.

“I’ll be right back, Luc.”

She left the room. A few minutes later, she returned with a bottle of medication in one hand and a letter in the other. Luc stopped crying and went silent. The letter, written by Luc with the assistance of his lawyer, stated that he had requested assisted suicide to end his life because of the pain and suffering he had endured for the past two years due to kidney cancer that had spread to his bones. Felicity placed the pills and the letter on the night table next to the bed. She sat next to Luc. She opened the bottle, poured the pills into a glass, crushed them, and added juice to take away the bitter taste.

“Thank you, Mother!”

She placed the glass to his mouth. Luc drank with relief.

“I think you left some of your sailing clothes here last time,” Alfred says, his gaze still on the sea.

Felicity is jolted back to the present.

“My shoes,” she responds as she looks down at her bare feet, her toenails painted light pink. “I took them off because they got wet when I got off the boat, when we docked on the island last time. Did I bring them back to your place, or did I forget them on the beach? I don’t remember wearing them when we got back on the boat.”

“I carried them back for you. You were a bit drunk, so you don’t remember. I left them on the porch next to the Adirondack chair you built for me.”

Alfred turns to Felicity with a smile on his face, as though remembering that wonderful day on the island.

“That lunatic Samuel, my love—I wouldn’t worry about him. He says that all women—especially beautiful ones like you—are, from what he has learned from Scandinavian folklore, *huldras*. The *huldra* is a seductive forest creature whose name derives from a root meaning ‘secret.’ The *huldra* is believed to have the mystical power of luring men into the forest to have sexual intercourse with her. These men would be rewarded if they satisfied her or killed if they did not. Or, in some cases, the *huldra* forced the man to marry her.”

Alfred raises his hand to his head, stroking his dark, full hair away from his forehead. His reflection in the full-length mirror mounted on the wall across the room reveals the shape of time. His midforties have presented a new challenge. Extra time at the gym and jogs on the beach to melt away those hard-to-burn fat cells around his midsection were now necessary to maintain the once-effortless sculpted body of his youth.

“As I said,” he goes on, “Samuel is a weird chap. He acts as though he is your conscience. He holds himself at an extraordinary high status in his mind. I think he

suffers from delusions of grandeur, despite the fact that he's extremely wealthy. He comes from old money, is extremely brilliant, and holds two PhDs—one in philosophy, the other in theology. He's fit and good-looking. Women love him, and so do men. But as I said, he's a lunatic! He's never made a donation in his life and never lends money to anyone. He also doesn't gamble and never takes any financial risks. But he somehow, after his parents died, multiplied the family wealth more than his father ever could have done when he was alive. I don't know how he did it. Every cent is honest money. Pays his taxes and never cheats the government or anyone. He doesn't even look for tax breaks." Alfred takes Felicity into his arms and dances around the room with her. "Let's go sailing. We can pick up what we need in town and have lunch on the boat. The *Magdalene* can stretch her legs. We'll take her out of the channel."

Felicity, released from Alfred's hold, continues to glide from the momentum of the spin until she reaches the closet door.

"You know him well," she says. "Samuel misses you. I could see it in his face. You are all he has."

Opening the closet door, she looks up toward the top shelf for a day bag to pack towels and swimsuits in. She removes her evening gown by letting it slide down along her body to the floor.

The sunlight reveals her exquisite, full figure as a shadow gliding as though projected from behind the closet wall.

"I'll bring our wool jumpers in case we decide to stay out longer. We can watch the sunset from the Henderson family's seafood restaurant. Let's avoid the club for a while."

As she reaches up for the jumpers, a shadow from behind encapsulates her body with an amatory glow. Alfred carries Felicity to their bed. As the sun continues to rise, casting a stream of shadows across the room, Alfred and Felicity rediscover each other.

"Well done, Mr. Manning. The huldra is quite satisfied. You've outdone yourself once again. I don't think I shall kill you today." Felicity moves gently from Alfred's embrace, motioning him to roll onto his back.

"I am pleased to have satisfied the huldra. I am at your service." Alfred laughs as he asks, "What do you have against the club?"

Felicity, straddling him, lets the breeze from the open windows cool her body. Looking down at him, breathless, she coos, "Do you remember when I first met you on the beach? I was walking in the waves as they came up. The trial had just ended. It was on the one-year anniversary of Luc's death."

Not remembering the details, Alfred gives her a forgetful look, shrugging his shoulders with eyebrows closing in on each other, and says, "I don't remember meeting you on the beach."

"You were on your balcony, fixing your chair, and saw me walking. I was technically within your property line. You called out to me and walked over to me. You asked why I had not taken off my shoes to walk in the water. You then said I looked familiar but you couldn't think of where we may have met. You invited me for a drink. You closed up the house, and we drove to the club. Before going in, you gave me the grand tour and introduced me to the *Magdalene*. You invited me to go sailing that afternoon because you had just done some maintenance work on her and wanted to take her out to see how she was doing. But we never did go out that afternoon because..."

Felicity's words trail off as Alfred brings her close to him, caressing her with his most endearing tone.

"Never mind them," he says.

"Those people recognized me immediately, but you had no idea who I was—not immediately, anyway. When we sat at the bar to order drinks, one of the club members—can't remember his name—asked you who I was. You said you had found me wandering on the beach without knowing if I was coming or going. He returned to his companion, and then they both turned and stared at me. Later, when you went off to the men's room, that man followed you. When you came out, I knew he had reminded you of where you thought you recognized my face from. It didn't take him long to spread the word in the club, and before you knew it, everyone was staring. A year prior, I had been on trial for the murder of my son, which was broadcast on every news channel across the world. I was inundated by a world of judgment."

Alfred gets up, taking Felicity with him, and walks to the balcony doors. Swinging them open, he walks her out onto the balcony overlooking the sea. Her cheeks are flushed, and she can smell the salt air.

Alfred embraces Felicity and says, "They see your choice as an offense. That just may be their offense. We cannot avoid the club or places associated with our painful memories. Death has its place. It was served to you on a platter."

Love is a strange and wonderful thing.
Love dances with our hearts,
Plays with our fears,
Adds color to our world.
It shares our sorrows and joys,
Blinds us with wonder,
Allows us to grow.
It's a challenge of faith,
A journey of hope, and is
Often-uncharted waters.
What a ride!

"Luc gave you the ride of your life," Alfred says. "There's more to come. Let's get dressed."

Felicity stares off into space. Luc had been playing on the beach, laughing, when suddenly he was thrown from one wave to another, all the while hanging on to his shorts for dear life. It was the first time he had forgotten to bring his bucket and shovel; sand castles were a thing of the past. Impressing the girls while trying not to drown or die from embarrassment had become the challenge.

In her one-piece swimsuit with a tiny skirt elegantly adapted to her body, Felicity watched from her Adirondack chair. Her large yellow sun hat, the brim greater than the width of her shoulders, concealed the lowering of her book at every line so as not to lose sight of Luc. Suddenly, at a distance, she could see a large wave forming and traveling at a speed faster than he could swim. She sat up in her chair, dropping the book in the sand, and then got up, shouting out to him to swim as fast as he could. The wave picked up

speed, volume, and height with such intensity, eating everything in its path. Luc was gone.

“No!” Felicity white-knuckles the balcony railing.

“What do you mean, no?” Alfred calls out from inside. “Does my huldra wish to go sailing unclothed?”

The ocean’s glitter redirects her focus. Releasing the railing, her attention is drawn to the sounds of the seals sunning themselves on the large rock at the foot of the cove.

“Can you get me my long-sleeved blue shirt with white-trimmed collar and blue pants?” she says. “They’re hanging on the far left, next to your work shirts.”

The early autumn sun is rising over the mountains, and the air carries a light breeze, leaving Felicity with a gentle shiver of tiny goose bumps on her olive skin. The blissful sea maneuvers the composition of the waves, executing a flawless waltz. Felicity takes the knitted, umber-colored blanket hanging over the chair next to her and wraps it over her shoulders. A chill of frost felt, she looks down at her feet.

“I mustn’t forget my boat shoes,” she says quietly to herself.

“Felicity, your clothes are on the bed. Get dressed, my love. Let’s make the most of the day.” Alfred’s plea, filled with excitement for the day ahead out at sea, is muffled by an electric toothbrush head’s rapid oscillation against his teeth, followed by gurgling and spitting sounds. “Your shoes, my love. Don’t forget your shoes outside, by the chair.” Alfred walks out of the bathroom, drying his face with a towel.

Felicity, wrapped in the blanket, which hangs down past her feet, gives the illusion that she is gliding into the room. Shivering, she turns to close the doors, looking out onto where she has left her memory of the sea.

“Honey, here’s your clothes. I love these colors on you.” Alfred takes the clothes he laid on the bed and hands them to her. “Swap?”

Felicity, with a winglike motion, removes the blanket from her body.

“Thank you,” she says with love in her eyes as she takes the clothes he holds against his body, which is naked except for the towel thrown over his shoulder. “It will only take me a minute to get ready. Don’t forget to get the jumpers from the closet, Alfred. They fell on the floor.”

“Our sunglasses and gloves and everything else we need are already on the boat,” he says. “Out of the sea will rise Behemoth and Leviathan, and sail ’round the high-pooped galleys...”

Amused by his playful accent, she responds, “I’m ready, Oscar Wilde. We can go.”

Alfred scoops up the cardigans from the closet floor and with a skip and a hop, leaps to the bedroom doors and opens them with enthusiasm.

“Good morning!” calls out Samuel. “It’s about time you two got up.”

The fervor in Alfred’s step vanishes as quickly as the light is blown from a candle. “Samuel, what the hell are you doing here?” Alfred looks back at Felicity with his arms thrown in the air in disbelief. She takes the jumpers from him and throws them on the bed.

“Did you forget I was here?” Samuel is stretched out on the sofa with a cup of coffee, reading the paper. He sits up and, in a confident but challenging voice, baits

Alfred. "And good morning to you, too!" Seeing Felicity, he softens and says, "Good morning, my lovely Felicity. How are you today? Lovely morning, don't you think?"

"What the fuck, Samuel?" Alfred walks sternly toward the sofa. "You were supposed to be gone before we got up. I know you have an office, and I think you can afford a place of your own."

"Yeah, but I like it here. Why would I want to stay anywhere else? This is the best beach house on the coast. While we're all here, let me make you breakfast." Eager to please, he gets up off the couch to greet them both with kisses. "Would you like to start with a lovely home-brewed cup of coffee?"

Alfred places his hands on his hips in an attempt to assert his authority in his own house. "For fuck's sake, Samuel, put on some clothes!"

Samuel wraps the *Daily Journal* around himself to lessen the offense.

"My God!" Alfred fumes. "I can't believe this!" He takes Felicity by the hand and walks toward the front door. "Samuel, we have plans today. Felicity and I are going sailing all day and then out for dinner. We won't be back until later tonight."

Felicity walks back to the bedroom to get the jumpers. "What did you have in mind for breakfast?" she asks Samuel. "Honey, we do need to eat something before we go."

"Now, that's better. A little bit of gratitude. Hostility only equals stress, Alfred." Samuel throws the paper on the sofa. "I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere. Breakfast will be ready in no time."

Alfred's frustration is even further compounded by a knock at the door.

"Now, who could that be at this time of the morning?" Alfred's compass is set, and he senses it will no doubt be readjusted, and it will be a futile attempt to try to keep his plans on course. He can only hope that the remains of the day allow him to chart a course on the *Magdalene*.

"Good morning, Mr. Manning," a voice calls from behind the door. "It's Mrs. Hitchcock from the bakery. I have your order."

"Hitchcock? What order?" Alfred, not moving, resigns himself to the day ahead of him.

"Honey, let her in." Felicity points a finger at the door.

He opens it as instructed. There stands a woman with bluish-gray hair tied back in a bun. A wrinkled face maps her journey from here to there. Her body curves from east to west. And held in her dried, knobby-knuckled hands is a white bag, with the inscription "Hitchcock Buns," releasing an aroma of freshly made baked goods.

"Good morning, Mr. Manning. Lovely to see you again." She smiles and quickly explains her presence. "I got a call this morning. He said his name was Samuel. He said he's a friend of yours and was staying at the beach house. He said it would be nice to have fresh bread and pastries this morning and asked if I wouldn't mind making a delivery."

"Thank you, Mrs. Hitchcock, that's very kind of you to go out of your way," Alfred says. "I hope it wasn't too much trouble."

"Not at all, Mr. Manning," she exclaims, redirecting her gaze at the man walking toward her. "Good morning. How are you today?"

"I'm just wonderful! You must be Mrs. Hitchcock. You look lovely this morning. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Samuel," he says, putting out his hand.

“Ah, thank you, Mr. Samuel. Here’s the order you placed. Would you like me to cut the bread and put the pastries on a dish for you?”

“That would be lovely—”

“No! Mrs. Hitchcock, please,” Alfred pleads. “Do not bother yourself.” He frowns at Samuel.

“Please, Mrs. Hitchcock, allow me.” Felicity gracefully leaps toward her and takes the bakery bag from her.

“Allow me to introduce Felicity Moss, Mrs. Hitchcock,” says Alfred.

“Yes, Samuel mentioned you had a friend with you. It’s lovely to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Moss.”

Alfred cringes at the thought of Samuel keeping Mrs. Hitchcock interested with tales of this and that surrounding his personal life.

“Please, call me Felicity, Mrs. Hitchcock. It’s lovely to make your acquaintance as well.”

“Would you like a cup of coffee, Mrs. Hitchcock?” offers Samuel as he gestures toward the kitchen table. “Please, take a seat.”

“Oh please, if it’s no bother.”

Samuel takes her by the hand and directs her to a chair. “Please, sit here, Mrs. Hitchcock.” He pulls out the chair and tucks her back in at the table.

“Milk? Sugar?” he asks.

“Milk, please.”

“May I offer you one of these great pastries, Mrs. Hitchcock? The baker comes highly recommended,” he says with a wink. Samuel takes the bag from Felicity. He gestures with his hand to both her and Alfred. “Please, have a seat while I get the coffee ready.”

Alfred reluctantly takes a seat while Felicity goes to help Samuel.

“Samuel, have a seat,” Felicity implores as she takes the bag from him. She gently grabs him by the shoulders and turns him around toward the table.

“Lovely. I’ll sit next to Mrs. Hitchcock,” says Samuel.

Alfred, restless in his chair, keeps looking outside and realizes that Mrs. Hitchcock’s car isn’t there.

“How did you get here, Mrs. Hitchcock?” Leaning back in his chair, he points toward the driveway.

“I walked, Mr. Manning. It’s a lovely morning.”

“You walked all the way from the bakery? That’s more than two miles. Felicity and I will drive you back to the bakery. We’re going into town and can drop you on the way.”

“That would be lovely, Mr. Manning. Thank you.”

Felicity returns to the table with a tray of baked goods, cut bread, butter, and jams.

“Honey, can you get the coffee cups and coffee, please?” she asks Alfred.

He gets up from the table and returns with cups and coffee. As he is about to set them down, Samuel leans forward, with elbows on the table, getting in Alfred’s way, and directs his attention to Mrs. Hitchcock.

“Tell me, are you related to Alfred Hitchcock?”

Alfred just about dropped everything on the floor and nudged Samuel for both getting in his way and asking a personal question of Mrs. Hitchcock.

"No, I'm not related to Alfred Hitchcock," she replies. "Hitchcock was my husband's name. He died in the war. I left England shortly after to come live with my sister. I needed help with my children. It was difficult for women to find work when the men returned home after the war ended. My sister had settled on the West Coast with her husband. He was a schoolteacher. Back then, this part of the coast was very remote and isolated from other cities and communities. It was difficult to get teachers out here. He had a friend who had come to Canada a few years prior as a teacher as well but worked in Montreal. He wrote him and mentioned in his letter that teachers were needed on the West Coast, north of Tofino. A few months later, my sister and her husband arrived. They lived for forty years in the house around the bend, just past the big rock."

"Yes, that's a lovely old, big house," says Samuel. "Are they still there?"

"No. George died five years ago and Martha eight years ago." Mrs. Hitchcock sips her coffee after she finishes her sentence.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Hitchcock." Samuel offers her a pastry.

"Thank you." She accepts it, grateful for the attention.

Samuel, still inquisitive, continues with his interrogation. "Was your husband related to Alfred Hitchcock, then?"

"No, afraid not."

"How many children did you have when you came to Tofino, Mrs. Hitchcock?"

Alfred addresses Samuel with his eyes, giving him a stern look. "Let's not tire Mrs. Hitchcock with all these questions after she just walked more than two miles to bring us these lovely pastries. Let her enjoy her coffee and eat in peace. I'm sure you must be tired, Mrs. Hitchcock."

She finishes chewing and sips her coffee. "Thank you, Mr. Manning."

"Please, Mrs. Hitchcock, call me Alfred."

Felicity raises the coffeepot, ready to pour. "Would you like more, Mrs. Hitchcock?"

"Yes, please. Thank you, Mrs. Moss."

"Call me Felicity."

"You have a lovely home, Mr. Manning. Alfred," Mrs. Hitchcock corrects herself as she looks around the room.

"Thank you," he replies. "It took some time to build because of the details, but it was worth the wait. It was important to have the house blend with the natural environment as much as possible and for it to be welcoming. I also didn't want a mansion, despite the large property. I wanted comfortable yet spacious and ended up with what you see today."

"You did a wonderful job, Alfred. I think—"

Samuel cuts Mrs. Hitchcock off, leaning toward her. "Would you like a tour? It has a lovely view of the cove from the bedrooms and, on the other side, the sea as far as the eye can see."

"I can see you, Samuel, and that's as far as that." Mrs. Hitchcock points at her glasses, resting on the tip of her nose.

"Great. Let's go for a tour. I'll bring the binoculars."

Alfred, now completely resigned to the fact that he's not going anywhere anytime soon, still reminds Felicity about her footwear.

"Don't forget your shoes before we go. Let's accompany Mrs. Hitchcock on her tour."

Samuel helps Mrs. Hitchcock out of her chair, presents his arm like the gentlemen he is, and directs her to the back of the house. "Let's go see the cove. You can see the seals on the rocks."

Everyone makes his way to the U-shaped beach that wraps around the property. A deep, massive forest covers the remaining part.

Samuel is still intrigued by finding out how this sweet little old lady could be related to Alfred Hitchcock. Unable to help himself, he continues the probing questions. "Mrs. Hitchcock..."

As perceptive as he is about Samuel, Alfred sees that he is about to launch into a fit of questions and decides to intervene. "Mrs. Hitchcock, please let me know when you are ready to return to the bakery. I don't want to take any more of your time."

"Thank you, Alfred. I am feeling tired." Before making a move, she turns to address Felicity. "Mrs. Moss, tell me, have we met before? You look terribly familiar. Have you been in my bakery?"

The sea pounding against the shore is amplified in the sudden silence. Felicity regains herself when Alfred puts his arm around her, and she cautiously responds, "No, I don't think I've been in your bakery, Mrs. Hitchcock. I don't think we've met before."

"I'm sure I've seen your face somewhere," she insists.

"I must just have one of those familiar faces. I look like many people."

Mrs. Hitchcock raises her hand, tapping her finger to her head. With a sudden realization, she excitedly responds, "I know where I've seen your face."

Everyone freezes with anticipation. A knot forms in Felicity's stomach. She likes Mrs. Hitchcock and doesn't want to think that this lovely old lady could be part of the jury that would sooner sentence her to death by hanging or throw her into the sea with hands bound and rocks tied to her feet than give her a fair trial.

"I saw you at my sister's house," Mrs. Hitchcock says.

Everyone stood there, looking confused.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Hitchcock," says Felicity. "I don't think I've ever met your sister either."

"Yes. You are in her photo album," Mrs. Hitchcock insists.

"How do you mean?"

"You're that actress. My sister was your photographer."

"Are you saying that Martha Wilson is your sister?" Felicity, verging on hysterical laughter as the knot in her stomach releases, quickly regains her composure.

"Yes, that's her. A few years after George began working, Martha decided to take up a hobby she had put aside while looking after her two children. While they were at school all day, she started taking photos of people in the community and at the school. She was then asked to take photos at weddings, parties, and—well, what can I say? The rest is history."

To bring Alfred up to speed, Felicity explains the connection. "Alfred, Martha was known as the top photographer in North America. She definitely was the best. She

mentioned that she had a place on the coast, but I didn't know any more than that. She was a very private person. Her work was her work, but her homelife was her own."

"Yes, that was Martha," agreed Mrs. Hitchcock.

"Well, now that we have all that cleared up, let's continue our tour." Samuel offers her his arm once again.

"Thank you, Samuel, but I think it's time I return to my bakery. The staff is going to wonder where I am."

As slow and graceful as a drifting feather, Mrs. Hitchcock turns from the sea and begins heading for the front of the house, thinking to herself that Felicity is as beautiful in person as she is in the photographs taken by Martha.

Felicity gently places her arm around Mrs. Hitchcock. "I'll drive you."

"But we didn't get a chance to look at the seals sitting on one of the Eustand horses," cries Samuel as he points the other way.

"What do you mean, sitting on one of the Eustand horses?" Alfred says, clearly annoyed.

"Have you not heard of the legendary horse of Eustand?" goads Samuel, rolling his eyes.

Alfred, quickly losing patience, directs Mrs. Hitchcock toward his car. Samuel ignores Alfred's gesture to shut up and walks toward the sea, pointing at an island far in the distance.

"Look, over there!" His arm is stretched straight as an arrow, with his finger pointing as though he's able to reach out and touch the island. "Since you are not familiar with the local legend, Alfred, I will have to educate you. Eustand was a monk who lived on the island—that one out there. He was alone except for ten wild horses that resided on the island with him. These horses were not like all the other horses. Their colors and their names were different. These horses were the colors of the rainbow, and each was named after one of the Ten Commandments. Life on the island was peaceful. Everything, every thought, was in harmony with nature and each other. One day, the sea turned gray; the dark sky and the sea were one. The wind ferociously tossed towers of waves onto the island. Eustand and the horses believed God had released his vengeance on them for their sin. But what sin? None of them knew that a sin had been committed. They spent the night huddled together in a cave. Thunder rattled the island. The ferocity of each lightning strike illuminated the entire island. All they could do was to wait out the storm until morning."

"Samuel, we don't have time for this," shouted Alfred. "I plan on going sailing today, and I don't want to miss it. Mrs. Hitchcock needs to get home. She's already been put out enough. My apologies, Mrs. Hitchcock. Let me help you into the car."

Not fazed in the least, Samuel shrugs his shoulders and heads for the car.

"I'm curious, Samuel," says Mrs. Hitchcock. "What was the sin, and which of the ten horses turned to stone?"

"Thou shalt not kill, Mrs. Hitchcock."

The slamming of the car door echoes throughout the forest. Alfred walks toward Samuel, who quickly shuffles away from the fury before him. Suddenly, the scream of a coast guard siren snaps Alfred out of his murderous rage. They turn to see the boat racing up the coastline, the siren announcing that there is a man overboard. Just up around the bend, there's a 200-meter cliff waiting for its next victim. In spite of the danger and the

inevitable disastrous outcome, the vast splendor of Devil's Chin's panoramic view lures its prey along the precipice, tempting the person to take that one last step to see what's there, just out of reach.

Alfred runs to where his binoculars are hanging on the back porch. He leaps, unhooks them in one sweep, and races off to the edge of the shore. Samuel is in tow, leaving Mrs. Hitchcock and Felicity sitting in the car.

"It looks like it's just us girls, Mrs. Hitchcock," Felicity quips as she gets out of the backseat and into the driver's seat.

"I hope no one is hurt," says Mrs. Hitchcock as she looks in the direction of the sirens.

"I'm sure no one is," Felicity says, trying to assuage Mrs. Hitchcock's concern.

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