

EVENT HORIZON

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CHARACTERS

A, thirties or forties

B, twenties

A bare room.

Two women.

B wears a long skirt and a plain shirt. Her hair is covered with a headscarf.

A wears contemporary clothing.

Silence, then—

A: What are you looking for?

B: God.

A: Well I mean—

That's—

I mean we'd all love to—

You are so fucking smart!

Don't just stand there. You have a voice. Speak.

B: We only have an hour. I don't want to fight.

A: What are you doing here?

B: What are you doing here?

A: Looking for my sister.

B: You found her.

A: I do want to fight. Actually. Yes, I do. They have my sister. In this—what would you call it? Compound? Walls. Barbed wire. You press a button at the gate and a voice says ‘come.’ They stare at you as you come up the drive, all the other—

B: Disciples.

A: —inmates, and the kids run away. Who says we have an hour?

B: The Elders.

A: The Elders? What gives them the right? The Elders? Who are they? What is this?

B: I’m glad you came. Really I am. I’m sorry how it happened. It has to be quick, you see. The devil is out there, prowling like a lion. You make your commitments; you shed your old self; you enter.

A: Shed?

B: You don’t look back.

A: Shed what?

B: The past, of course.

A: Why? You’re my beautiful baby sister. Why do you need to shed the past?

B: We all need redemption. It doesn’t come cheap. How filthy we are, how far from all we are meant to be.

A: You're a girl from the suburbs. You go to nightclubs, see your friends.

B: Not one of us is holy, even one.

A: Why are you talking like this?

B: I want you to be happy for me. This is a happy day, can't you see that it is? I know it seems sudden. Please understand that for me it is not sudden. I've been searching for this for such a long time now. This place. This community. This truth. I wish you could see how beautiful it is here. Forget the barbed wire. That's just for protection. We have fruit trees and animals. We have large green fields and we work and pray. Five times a day there is teaching. The teaching! It reaches into your heart and holds you. It takes your breath away. It makes you safe.

I want you to understand, because if you do, you won't want me to leave.

I want you to understand, because if you do, you'll want to stay.

A: I want to understand.

B: I know you do. I knew you would.

A: But I want something else, too. I want you to come with me when I leave today. I'm not saying forever. I'm saying come, come with me now, stay with me for a little while, see your friends, talk to Rachel, make sure you're on an even keel. Do some reading, explore a little, I'm not against spirituality. But tell them you're taking a break and then come. Weigh up your options before you decide to take this—well, ridiculous leap.

B: Rachel can't talk to you without my permission.

A: She didn't. I talked at her. I said my sister who you've been treating now for eleven years has gone and joined a cult, so well done.

B: It's not a cult.

A: No? What's the barbed wire for, then? Protection? Really? Is it to keep the world out, or you in? Either way that's not good news. That's not comforting. Or is it to keep someone else out specifically? Like the police? There are rumours, you know. Lot of rumours if you go online.

B: If God touched the earth—as I believe has happened here—would there not be rumours? Would there not be scandal?

A: Oh stop it! Just stop. Tell me why you're here if you want to. But tell me straight. None of this religious shit. You've been to university. You're no fool. I basically raised you. We said we were strong. We saw the world for what it was, remember? And now this. What are you trying to do to me? I'm sorry if you feel neglected. You could have reached out. I thought you were happy. I thought you were well. I had no reason to think otherwise till your housemate called, worried. 'She's gone with this religious group.' I said what religious group, she's not religious, she said she is now. I said what do you mean, gone? She said gone, for good, she said swallowed up. I said Jesus Christ you've got to be kidding me. Can't call, can't visit. What? I fucking well will call. I fucking well will visit. I put it on a letterhead from work: 'I am going to visit, you arseholes, you freaks, you can't keep me from my sister.'

Whatever this is, we can undo it.

B: It's not something I want to undo.

A: You're not a prisoner here.

B: I know. I'm the opposite of a prisoner. Here is perfect freedom.

A: How can you say that? Perfect freedom? Perfect freedom, when they make you wear that?

B: (laughs)

A: I don't see what's funny about it. It erases you. It makes you shapeless, boring—

B: Modest.

A: Unlovely. Your housemate is enjoying your clothes, I bet.

B: She's welcome to them.

A: This is violence.

B: Oh, come on.

A: They don't have the right to tell you what to wear!

B: What if I give them that right? What if freedom means more than a short skirt today, maybe leggings tomorrow? Who cares?

A: We have fought, you know, generations have fought for our freedom—

B: And this is how I choose to use mine. Do you deny me this choice? There is fire on the earth, my sister! Can't you see? The heavens have opened and the Spirit rained down on all women and men and beasts of the field. Repent, as I am repenting, as all of us here are repenting on our knees day and night. Clothes, what are clothes? Clothes will be burned away, as all flesh will be burned, but some will be saved. Here. In this place. This is the remnant, this is the ark. I'm sorry, sister. I can't come with you. You should stay.

A: When I told our mother, do you know what she said? She said 'of course'. 'Of course she's joined a cult, of course she bloody has.' Coffee and cig. I defended you. Is she why?

B: Is this you asking or her? When did you see her? Why did you see her?

A: On my way here.

B: ?

A: Duty?

B: Please.

A: Because I thought you might have.

B: Me?

A: Yes, I thought you might have consulted with her before taking this step.

B: Why would I?

A: I don't know, why would you?

B: It's none of her business.

A: I agree.

B: She hasn't earned the right.

A: I totally agree with you. But I think I have earned the right. As your much older and much wiser sister.

B: Half sister.

A: Don't pull out the 'half'. You only pull out the 'half' when you don't like what I'm saying. Sister. Look. I think it's pretty clear what's going on here. I mean, look at this place. What is it? A place of rules. Of authority. Of judgement. Honestly, I don't know what I'm paying Rachel for—it's textbook. It's the comfort and certainty of having someone to tell you you're bad. It's our mother all over again. I get it, I really do. I've felt the same things myself; I've had relationships like that. But it breaks my heart because you and I, we got out. Didn't we? We made ourselves free. We won. Why would you volunteer to be put back in chains?

B: That's not what I'm doing.

A: I don't see any other explanation.

B: Well, you don't see a lot of things. You think it's all stuff. Everything around us. You think it's all stuff you can touch, you can hold in your hand. And anything more is just your brain playing tricks on you. Well, I used to think that. You taught me to think that. But I see more now. We see more. We see a heavenly host fill the earth and the sky. We see angels in trees, we see demons in gutters.

A: Do you?

B: Of course.

A: Do you really?

B: Don't twist that. That's not fair and you know it's not fair.

A: I don't know how I'm supposed to hear 'angels and demons' without alarm bells ringing.

B: There. Is more. Than this. That's not crazy.

A: We don't use that word.

B: I don't care what you call it, that's not what this is.

A: Then prove it.

B: What do you mean?

A: Have an assessment.

B: No.

A: An assessment. That's all. It could be Rachel.

B: I won't.

A: Why, what are you afraid of?

B: Well, what do you think?

A: If there's not a—mental health aspect to any of this, they'll see that.

B: Oh, really?

A: It would make me feel better.

B: I don't need an assessment. Why are you being like this? I know when I'm sick and when I'm well. I'm happy, I'm not sad, I'm not angry. I know you care about me and you're trying to help and you're smart, I know that, but at the same time I think you're blind, actually, just a little bit, I'm sorry but you are, because there's more to this world than just hospitals and assessments and stuff you can see. There's heaven, sometimes, right in the middle of it.

A: Who said anything about hospital?

B: I think we're both talking about hospital and I think you know we are.

A: I find it interesting that you raised it.

B: I didn't raise it.

A: I wonder if on some level that's an acknowledgement of something.

B: Will you please believe that I am happy here?

A: You don't sound happy.

B: Because you're twisting everything I say!

A: You're the one saying it. Angels, demons. I said an assessment, that's all. No-one wants to see you in hospital. But if you're bringing it up then it's obviously on your mind.

B: That's not what I meant. They said you would do this.

A: Do what?

B: People say nasty things, evil things, wrong things, so they don't have to face what they can't understand. The Elders are so onto you, I swear, it's amazing how they know exactly what you're going to say before you say it. You can't admit that any of this might be true so you have to invent other ways to explain it.

A: Invent? Invent? Did I invent all those years of therapy? The admissions to hospital? A shelf worth of medication, did I invent any of that? I am merely gently suggesting that in this day and age seeing an angel up a tree might not be a sign of the most robust mental health, that's all.

B: Well, thank you for your concern, but we don't do that kind of thing.

A: Medical care?

B: It's how they control you.

A: That's completely paranoid.

B: I don't want to talk about this any more. We have less than an hour now.

A: We have less than an hour because they say we have less than an hour.

B: That's right.

A: And you talk about control?

B: I tried it your way for years! Rachel, drugs. But you left out the most important thing. We are human beings and as human beings we are made for one thing and one thing only and that's God. God! God is the thing you left out. And God is what I find here. Who I find here. Why I came. It's not control if you submit to it. And who wouldn't submit to those who speak the very words of God?

A: Let me tell you what I have heard about these so-called godly men. Forced marriages. Underage marriages. Physical and psychological abuse.

B: You can't believe everything you read on the internet.

A: Are you telling me none of that goes on here?

B: We know that people hate us. The darkness cannot stand the light.

A: ?

B: Not forced. Arranged.

A: That's—wait. Are you going to get married?

Oh God.

Oh please God.

Please don't tell me—

B: I am married.

A: !

B: I'm sorry. I was going to tell you, of course.

He's nice.

Really, he's nice, you'd like him, he's such a good man and he's passionate, he's on fire for God.

You don't have to worry, he's gentle and he respects me and he—

A: Stop.

Let me tell you what's going to happen from here. You'll come with me today. That's not a suggestion anymore—that needs to happen. I can't pick you up, I can't drag you out, but if you don't come, I'll come back. With police. With professionals. With paperwork, because this is unacceptable.

B: I know you want the best for me, I know you do.

A: This is not a discussion anymore.

B: I appreciate everything you've done. I thank God for you. I pray for you.

A: Married?

B: Yes.

A: You need to pack your things.

B: Everyone prays for you here, we pray for all our families.

A: Are you listening to me? I'm a lawyer, I'm going to take legal action.

B: You don't want to do that.

A: I will take this place apart.

B: You're not listening to me.

A: Do you think it was easy? Do you? To make the calls that I made? With you screaming and crying and begging me not to?

B: Why are you saying that now?

A: To remind you what I'm capable of when I see you at risk.

B: Don't do anything.

A: I have a responsibility.

B: I don't want you to do anything.

A: Well I am going to do something.

B: You'll only be hurting yourself.

A: What does that mean?

What do you mean by that?

B: I don't want to fight.

A: I would like to know exactly what you meant by that.

B: I don't want to fight.

A: Then what do you want?

B: For you to listen.

A: I've been listening. What do you think I've been doing since I came here?

B: No you haven't. You haven't! You never do. You don't listen. You think about the next thing you're going to say. Or if you do listen you listen to get ammunition, something you can use against the person, like in court. But you don't only do it in court, you do it all the time, you do it at parties, you do it with me.

A: When?

B: You're doing it now. 'When.' Give me the evidence, date and time. All my life.

A: That's not true.

B: You're still doing it!

A: I'm allowed to defend myself!

B: It's not a court!

A: You used to run home from school to tell me everything that happened, everything you said, everything anyone else said to you.

B: Details. Facts.

A: Facts matter.

B: I want to tell you—why I'm here, because—it's not just facts! it's not!—I see—not see, but—know, you know?—inside me—the—memory of a dream or the dream of a memory, which is—no, that's wrong, but—I see it!—a road, a long road—just—empty one way and empty the other, just—stretching, sunny. Little noises of heat. Then a girl—maybe two or three years old?—looking up at the sky, just—happy!—happy!—light!—and free!—but then somewhere—somewhere—in a clear blue sky, just—the puff of a cloud, just the tiniest puff of a cloud—getting bigger, and darker, and heavier inside me.

And I don't know what to do.

I'm the girl on the road.

I'm the darkness too.

Don't say you understand.

A: I do understand.

B: Don't say you do!

A: I'm trying, I'm listening.

B: But all that is not—true!—don't you see? It's words, they don't—they don't work, they just—bounce off the thing you're trying to say.

A: It's our mother.

B: No ...

A: The darkness is our mother, I've known it too.

B: Not everything is about her.

A: It is when you're a little kid and she's your entire world and she hates you.

B: She didn't hate me.

A: She hated both of us. It's not hard to see why. We reminded her of our fathers. A.K.A., her choices. Still do. But what do we say? Well? What do we say?

B: We don't say that word here.

A: Then I'll say it for you: 'Fuck her'. Fuck her! That's what we say. That's what we always said. What's wrong? Can they hear me? Well, fuck them too! Do you hear me? Elders? Perverts? Are they listening? Fuck you all!

B: The darkness cannot stand the light.

A: What do you want me to say? That I'm sorry?

B: For what?

A: I tried to protect you from her. You know I did.

B: It's not about her.

A: Could I have done more?

B: I could be saying anything. You're not listening!

A: What did you mean? When you said I'd be hurting myself, what did you mean by that?

B: I don't know.

A: You must have meant something.

B: I want your blessing.

A: You can't have it.

B: Don't walk out of here in anger, please.

A: Why would I be hurting myself?

B: Because it would end us, of course.

A: Why, what happens here?

B: What do you mean?

A: Why would legal action end you?

B: Us. You and me.

A: End us? You and me? Why?

B: They wouldn't let me see you again.

A: How cruel is that?

B: It would be for my own good.

A: Your sister.

B: Our destroyer.

A: Well it wouldn't matter, would it, because you wouldn't be here.

B: If you win.

A: Which I will win. I will. Because that's what I do is I win. It's her gift, her special gift—thank you, mother! To make me prove I was good. To make me make myself be what she told me I wasn't.

B: We have lawyers.

A: What?

B: You might not win. We have lawyers too.

A: Do you? That's interesting. Why would a nice little religious community need lawyers?

B: The darkness cannot stand the light.

A: That's not an answer, you know. That's not going to mean much in court.

B: If you win—do you think I'll ever speak to you again?

A: I think you will. If I'm honest. I think it will take a while, but I think you will.

B: You think I'm that shallow.

A: I think you have a good heart.

B: I think you just answered my question.

Let me go.

A: Don't say that.

B: Let me go.

A: I'm not the prison, this is the prison.

B: I want your blessing.

A: How can I give you my blessing? How can I? You don't know what you're doing.

B: I know what I'm doing!

A: You don't know who you are.

B: I am a child of God. I am—

A: To me. You don't know who you are to me.

B: I'm sorry I said half sister.

A: I'm not talking about that. Don't you understand? You are what I have done in this world. Nothing else matters. You. You are what I have done that is good.

B: I love you, don't cry.

A: Our mother made me nothing. Small. Until you came along there was nothing to redeem me.

B: That's a big job!

A: I could put myself between you and her; I could be for you what I never had for myself.

B: I appreciate it, I do.

A: I don't want you to appreciate it, I want you to make something of your life.

B: I am making something of my life.

A: How? Here? Married? Praying? Obeying? These men, these strange men, these 'Elders' up to God knows what?

B: I know it's not what you wanted.

A: It's not what I wanted.

B: But it's what I want, though.

A: But I don't think it is, though.

B: How can you say that?

A: Because no-one could want it! No woman could want it, not really.

B: There are women here who want it.

A: They say they want it.

B: You're infuriating!

A: Maybe they even think they want it.

B: So unless a person wants what you want they don't know what they want?

A: If I ask you a question will you answer me honestly?

B: Of course.

A: Was I right?

B: When?

Are you talking about hospital?

A: Yes.

B: Which time?

A: All the times.

B: That's an impossible question to answer.

A: No it's not.

B: There was more than one time.

A: What would have happened? If I hadn't made those calls, what would have happened?

B: Which time?

A: All the times!

B: No. Not necessarily.

A: You said you would be honest.

B: 'May I remind you that you are under oath.'

A: ?

B: Yes, probably, alright, fine.

A: Say it.

B: Yes, I probably would have.

A: ?

B: Tried to kill myself.

A: Which time?

B: All the times.

A: Thank you.

You think I'm missing something and maybe I am—but you thought I was wrong all those other times, too.

B: This is different.

A: It's not that different.

B: It is.

A: How?

B: I have a different saviour now.

It's not your fault. You're just not God, that's all. You can't help that.

On the road is a shape. It's tiny on the horizon but it grows. With a thousand screams it grows—then nothing. Still. But the weight remains. Solid and true. I'm the girl on the road, I'm the darkness too.

A: I tried. I told our mother I would try, and I tried. She said don't bother; lost cause. I said no, I believe in her. I've always believed in her. But if you don't want my help then I'm not going to force it on you.

B: You used to be God, to me.

A: Have it, then. All this. Have your Elders, and this place, and your God, your special God that only this lot know about. Have your fucking ugly clothes as well. But tell me something before I go.

B: I love you, don't be angry, you can ask me anything. I just wish we could talk like sisters, like friends—

A: Tell me about the weapons.

B: What weapons?

A: You tell me.

B: I don't know anything about any weapons.

A: I think you do. Because it's not just the Elders, is it? It's not just the men. They're sexist, but they're not that sexist. Everyone has to learn how to use them. Women, kids. Everyone is needed when the final battle comes.

B: Do you think I'm surprised you're across your brief?

A: Is it true?

B: You can't believe everything you read on the internet.

A: Is it true?

B: The person who wrote that was cast out of the community for a wicked tongue and a corrupt mind.

A: The darkness cannot stand the light.

B: Exactly.

A: Do you remember when you were a kid and you slapped a girl and the teacher told Mum and Mum asked if it was true and you said the girl told lies and Mum accepted that and then later I asked you if you had in fact slapped the girl and you said yes, you had, and really hard too. One thing doesn't rule out the other, you see? She did tell lies; you did slap her. Brilliant. Little lawyer, even then. So much potential. Wasted here.

Is it true?

B: Why are you here?

A: You know why I'm here.

B: Tell me again.

A: Because I care about you.

B: No. Yes. I know you do. But one thing doesn't rule out the other.

A: What do you mean?

B: Is it you?

A: Is what me?

B: The Elders said it could be anyone. A tradesman, a doctor. Someone down at the shops. Did they approach you or did you approach them?

A: Who are you talking about?

B: You found out I was here. You looked online. You saw what she said, that traitor, that witch. You drove to the town. You spoke to the police.

A: I didn't stop in the town.

B: They probably said this was how you could help me.

A: I didn't speak to the police.

B: I was honest with you. You have to be honest with me.

A: And I will be.

B: Are you wearing a microphone?

A: Are you serious?

B: Are you?

A: Do you want me to show you?

B: Please. Just tell me. Is it you? I won't be angry, just tell me the truth. Have I let the devil in?

A: No!

B: Do you promise?

A: I'm your sister. Everything I have done I have done because I love you.

B: And what have you done? With your love? What have you done to us?

A: Nothing!

B: Then why do I see darkness? Why do I see darkness around you?

A: What are you talking about?

B: It's there. It's all around you. It's reaching out and suffocating me. Will you stop it? Stop this pressing on my chest!

A: I'm not doing anything!

B: You're hurting me!

A: I am not!

B: Lord thank you for this vision though it cuts me to the bone.

A: I think I need to call Rachel.

B: It's not our mother.

A: What?

B: The darkness. It's not our mother.

Oh Lord, I thank you that you have vouchsafed me this vision of the truth. May I prove worthy of it, may you give me words to say and wisdom to know the truth path from the false.

It's you.

A: ?

B: The darkness is you.

A: What?

B: I'm sorry my sister.

A: How can you say that?

B: All my life you've been watching me.

A: Watching over you.

B: No. Watching me. You did come between us. Every day. You never let me know her. You never let her near.

A: That's not true.

B: What did she do? What did she ever do to me?

A: Apart from undermining you at every opportunity?

B: You said that. You said she did.

A: Because she did.

B: I never saw it.

A: Because I protected you from it.

B: She tried, I think. She tried to get close.

A: Oh, she could look like the perfect mother.

B: I pushed her away.

A: No you didn't!

B: Because you told me to.

A: I don't know where this is coming from.

B: Always there. Always hovering.

A: It was love.

B: It was surveillance.

God forgive me. She tried. And she sits there now, in that horrible place, cigarette in her hand, wondering what happened.

A: If you think she's sitting there thinking about you then you're even more deluded than I thought you were.

B: This is where the darkness lifts. This is where the clouds break up.

A: There's a room full of weapons here. Tell me there isn't. When the end comes, every man, woman and child will stand by a window or lie on the roof. When the cars come up the drive the Elders will rebuke them: 'Turn back or face the vengeance of the Lord.' They will shout at the helicopters, call fire from the sky.

Do you think you can escape? Do you think you can leave when the police make their move?

B: You said that you love me.

A: You know that I do!

B: Then prove it. We'll see.

A: How?

B: Leave me alone. For the first time in my life. Stop watching me. Stop being there. Stop coming to get me when you think I need rescuing. Stop saving my life.

A: Do you know how much it hurts me to hear you say that?

B: Yes.

A: There's another way.

B: No.

A: I can prove that I love you.

B: How?

A: There's one thing I can do.

B: 'There's nothing you can do. Don't you understand? That's the whole point! There's nothing you can do for me! There's nothing I want you to do for me! There's nothing I want from you! Nothing you can give me! Won't you please, finally, just let me go?

I don't know why you hated her so much!

A: I'll tell you.

B: Please don't. Just go. Please just go far away from here.

A: There's one last thing I can do for you. Then I'll go, I promise.

B: Oh, go on then, tell me. What? What is it? What can you do?

A: I can tell you about the girl on the road.

I can tell you about the darkness too.

She didn't like me. Mum. I swear she didn't. Ever since my father left. When I found him in my twenties I realised why. I look like him. I'm a female version of him. And he was, to be fair, awful. Hit her I think. Tried to get money off me. Fat and fucking angry and self-pitying and mean. Good riddance to him. Then yours came along and he was better. He was a world better. Didn't stop him leaving and leaving her pregnant again at really too old for that—but you. You were perfect. Happy and healthy and the most beautiful baby, I mean really beautiful, strangers-commenting-in-the-street beautiful. But Mum had spent so long being a bad mother she'd forgotten how to be a good one. And alright, I exploited that. I was fifteen years old and for the first time in my life I had someone in the house who looked at me with love. Pure, simple, deep in the eyes, bubbling up from the heart-type love. And I couldn't get enough of it. I loved you back. I loved you till it hurt. And she went with that. She let me raise you. Shoved you at me more and more. I wasn't complaining. I didn't like her smoking around you anyway. I took you. Took you everywhere, and as soon as you could walk you followed me everywhere. When I turned eighteen and got my licence I took the child seat out of her car and put it into mine. I don't think she ever noticed. We used to drive around, you and me, if there was nothing else to do, we used to drive and drive and talk and laugh. It was one of your first words, was

'drive'. To the swimming pool, to the forest, to the beach. 'Drive!' I would always say yes, I would drop whatever else I was doing and say yes, of course, of course we'll go for a drive, of course we will. 'Drive!' And it was just an ordinary day, just another Sunday, dead, boring, Mum at the pub, you going crazy in the house, nothing on TV, nowhere to go except anywhere we wanted, which was what I loved about having my licence, we could go where the buses didn't, where the train lines stopped. And we did. We just drove and kept on driving, I don't know why, I don't even know in what direction. Until everything disappeared, all the shops, all the houses. Nothing left, just an empty road stretching. All the way in one direction, all the way in the other. Sunlight. Engine. And you. Laughing. How you used to laugh. Three years old, laughing in your seat like an idiot. Laughing about everything. Laughing about nothing. Tears in your little eyes. Screams from your little mouth. Of course I watched. I watched you. How could I not? It was the most delightful thing I ever saw. You laughing. You happy. And I watched you, and I watched the road, and I watched you, and I watched the road, then I kept watching you, and then I didn't watch the road, and then I hit her.

Silence.

B: Who?

A: I don't know. A child. Young, about your age. Tiny, about your size. She lay on the road, behind where I stopped. Nothing but a little rise on the surface, a little mound of clothing in my rear view mirror. I turned off the engine and it ticked in the sun. Made you stay in the car and got out. And walked back. And looked. For minutes that seemed like hours, I looked. With the sun on my neck and nothing in my heart, I looked. Why? Why didn't I feel anything? I'll tell you why. Because none of it was real. None of it could be real. It was impossible. Not something that could happen, not to us, not to me. There was a bump, there was a body, but it wasn't real. It was nothing but a dream. I knew this, and I knew otherwise, all at the same time. I got back in the car. And we sat there in silence. And then you said, 'Girl.'

B: Had I seen her?

A: You had. You'd been looking forward, while I'd been looking at you. And I said to you— God forgive me but I said to you—'No. No girl.' And you said, 'Girl,' and I said, 'No.' And you looked out the window for a long time. And then I turned the engine on and we drove

home. And by the time we got home we weren't talking about the journey. We weren't talking about the girl. We were talking about dinner. You wanted fish fingers. I gave them to you. Sat you down by the TV. And we said nothing. Nothing more about it, ever. We just went on. And for the next few days I waited. Didn't read the news. Didn't watch TV. Just waited in that house for the catastrophe to come. I knew that it would come, I accepted it would come, and eventually I was even ready for it to come, even wanted it—but it didn't. It didn't come, one day or the next. A week passed then a month, and no-one came. No knock at the door, no call on the phone. And of course I thought, I can't live with this. But then I thought, well—maybe I can. I know how that sounds. That sounds horrific, I know it does. But it wasn't that I could live with it. It was that maybe I should. I wouldn't have denied it if they came. I promised myself that. I'm not a monster, I'm not a horror, I would have told them everything if they had asked. But no-one did ask. No-one came. Why not? To this day I don't know. But what I do know is that there was nothing to be gained by confessing. I think I do know that. It was an accident. It was quick. And she was young, very young, and some parents were grieving somewhere, I knew that, but I had a little girl of my own, I had a little girl who needed me. You needed me then and you need me still. You needed me because if you didn't then of course I would have said what happened, of course I would have, but you needed me then and you need me now, you do, because I love you and I think I proved that I do because I'm in your hands now.

B: How?

A: Because now you know. This is my gift to you. To know who I am.

B: This is your gift?

A: Hate me. Spurn me. Turn me in to the police. Do whatever you need to do, but know.

B: I know.

A: Yes. Now you know. These visions, these dreams. This internal darkness, you were just a child, it wasn't your fault, so you don't have to do this anymore, do you see? This place, these people, this strange turn you've taken; it's unnecessary, you don't have to do it anymore, because now you know who I am, now you know what I've done.

B: A confession in an empty room.

A opens her shirt to reveal the wires of a recording device.

A: I'm sorry.

She removes the recording device.

A: I stopped in the town. I spoke to the police. They asked me to get you to talk about the weapons. I said that I would. I didn't see the harm. I just wanted you out of here. They already knew. They knew about the weapons. They knew everything. They just wanted confirmation. I was happy to do it if it would help get you out.

She hands the device to B.

A: Evidence.

She sinks to her knees before B.

After a moment, B takes off her headscarf and shakes out her long hair.

B: She knows you better than you think she does, our mother. She sits in that place, that horrible place, which you chose for her. Cigarette in her hand. Weak coffee on the table. They never make it the way she wants them to. Spoonful of instant, too much milk. When I told her, when I told her what had happened all those years ago, when I told her about the girl on the road and about what you did and how it weighed upon me, well, everything seemed to click into place. You could see it in her eyes. Why you changed. Why you hated her. Why you kept her from me. My sister, I'm sorry. Many times I wanted to tell you that I knew. That I remembered everything. And that I hated myself for knowing. For knowing who you are and loving you anyway. I don't want this.

B hands the recording device back to A.

B: I want something else.

A: Anything.

B raises A to her feet. Throughout the following, B puts the headscarf on A, and does up the buttons of A's shirt.

B: I think you'll like it here, sister. I really do. It's warm. It's beautiful. The people are lovely. It's nice to be in the truth. You'll see. This is the ark when the waters come, and they do, my sister, they do. But not for me. Not now. Because I told them, I have a mother. I have a mother who I neglected. I confessed it. I confessed to the Elders that I hated her unjustly and they agreed that I need to make that right. To be near her. To visit. You think this is a prison, but it's not. They understood. They said I could go. My husband said so too. They gave me their blessing, all of them. But they said I should give them something in return. So I said I would. I said I would give them my sister.

B walks to the door.

B: I told you that if you understood you would want to stay. Oh my sister, I see it already. The darkness is lifting. Can't you see? You will. You'll see all sorts of things. This place will open your eyes. To angels and to glory and the heavenly host. Oh, glory, glory be!

This is a happy day.

B leaves.

A stares straight ahead. The end.