

Glenda looked back at Scotland for likely the last time. Watched the light green and yellow grass as it waved goodbye. Watched the foam lap upon the shore in little puffs of activity. The water they tread was deepest blue, nearly black already despite still having sight of land.

They were aboard the Aurora, a fine vessel by all accounts. A great wooden behemoth that rode upon the surface, powerfully cutting through the shallow waves. It was going to be a long trip and their accommodation was cramped to say the least but they were free. They had escaped. No more landlords threatening the crofters, no more notices of eviction served by the brutal factors acting on behalf of the heads of clans who had abandoned their people in favour of securing higher rents.

They were free to head across that ocean to the new lands found there. They were headed to Canada, Nova Scotia in fact. New Scotland, what a thought. A clean start away from all the suffering they had endured.

Glenda turned to look at Gary. A tall and powerful man who had fought so hard against the clearances both legally and by force but the force of a few peasant crofters was nothing compared to the state forces that the landlords had enlisted to perform the evictions. His face was in a near constant grimace these days, not even smiling in the calm, intimate moments of their relationship. When they had first met he was a romantic. She didn't know if he was always smiling or if he always smiled when he saw her but either way, those days were gone.

They had travelled down to the port at Largs in order to board the Aurora. It brought back fond memories of one of the only holidays the young couple had been on. They ate fish by the water and spoke for hours about the lives they wanted to lead, of the children they wanted to raise, of the crops and livestock they wanted to care for.

Tears started to pour down Glenda's cheeks as she watched Largs disappear into the horizon. The realities of the situation started to truly dawn on her. She would never see her mother again, nor her father's grave. She wouldn't hear the church bells toll rousing her to attend on Sunday mornings. Were there even churches in the new world? She thought.

She felt the panic begin to rise up in her mind and attempted to pray it out of her mouth, "Dear God, please protect this voyage. Protect this ship and all the souls that sail in it. Please God, let this choice have been the right one. You have delivered us from evil and we praise you for it. Let our new lives be blessed by your loving kindness. In your holy name, Amen."

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A month passed without incident. Glenda had begun to form something of a routine despite the cramped quarters. Waking up early, she would head to the deck of the ship while it was unoccupied other than by the night watch, standing at the bow looking out with the hope of seeing land despite knowing they were still at least a month from Canada. After a few hours the deck would begin to populate as more people gazed out at the vastness of the ocean. She would then head down to the galley to assist the cooks with preparation. The cooks often told her she needn't bother but she felt like she needed something to do to break up the monotony of ship life. Once the preparations were finished, she would return to the living quarters where other passengers were normally found playing a small selection of instruments. Songs of the homeland would serenade her with occasional bouts of dancing.

This morning was no different. Glenda rose and went to the bow, watching in vain for land. As she stood looking out there was a sudden jolt that rocked the ship, likely hitting a large wave at the wrong angle. A moment later everything seemed fine and she returned to searching the landscape.

However, after a minute or two she began to smell something. It was a familiar smell but she was having trouble placing it amidst the salty air. A knot began to form in her stomach. The smell grew until Glenda realised what it was; smoke. She rushed towards the galley and threw open the door only to be greeted with a room on fire. On the ground she spotted Michael, the head cook, with blood spilling from a wound on his head and a large stew pot on the ground next to him.

She spun on her heel and began to scream. There were no words of appeal, no explanation of the concern, only a piercing scream that came from a place deep within her. She ran to the quarters by which point people had begun to investigate the commotion. Gary was one of the people who met her in the hallway.

He grabbed her arms and said, "Breathe, honey, breathe. What's happening?"

Through hyperventilating breaths Glenda managed to respond, "Fire."

Upon hearing this, the other passengers rushed past her in a fit of activity with shouts of command requesting water buckets and blankets but not Gary. Gary had frozen. His grip on Glenda's arms became tighter. The colour disappeared from his face giving him a ghostly complexion as he stood perfectly still. Tears started to roll from his eyes.

After what seemed like an eternity, Gary began to crouch and then sit and then lie on his side in the fetal position. His tears were silent, he did not wail. He just lay there in the passageway. Glenda didn't know how to respond, she had never seen this response. She would have thought Gary would be the first to run forward, likely the one to try and lift Michael out of the inferno but instead he was here, seemingly paralysed.

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The ship never was quite the same after that day. Firstly in a superficial manner, the galley had been badly damaged along with some of the food stores. Then less superficially, Michael had died. The captain had spoken to everyone on board and announced they would need to ration food much more heavily in order to make it to the new world. Of particular concern was that the ship's supply of oranges had been damaged which could not be replenished until the next colonial ship arrived which was due to leave two months after the Aurora.

The air of the ship's quarters was never quite joyful again. Songs would still be played but where before there had an infectious joy, now there was a reservedness, a dullness of concern.

One clear and warm morning Glenda was on the bow partaking in her usual meditations and prayer when she heard a squawk. Immediately thrown out of her trance, her eyes darted around. They had heard no sound like that for months.

Alex appeared high up in the crows nest, popping his ginger head over the barrier and shouted down, "Glenda, pal, did you hear that too?"

"Aye," Glenda yelled back up, "Does that mean what I think it means?"

"Aye," came the giddy response, "It probably means we are nearly at land!"

Alex whipped out the telescope and frantically scanned the horizon, "Holy shit! LAND HO! LAND HO!"

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The next day they had drawn close enough that they were able to see land with the naked eye and decisions were being made about where to land the ship. The coast line

was dense with forests and the few visible beaches were incredibly rocky which could have proved challenging for the ship.

Well deliberations of where to land took place, Glenda stood on the bow as she had so many days before but today she had something to look at; land. As she looked, she noticed something unusual, it almost looked like something was coming out from the land. Continuing to observe the object, eventually she realised it was a series of small boats with people rowing out towards them. She shouted to others to come and look and shortly a small crowd had formed.

There are people here? Thought Glenda with surprise. She hadn't been aware of anyone being in the new world other than the explorers who had been and gone. How could there be boats of people coming out towards them?

Eventually the crowd could clearly see two boats with around ten people rowing each of them. As they drew closer still, more details could be discerned. On each boat one person was dressed fully in a black, feathered outfit and once the boats had pulled alongside the Aurora, those two individuals stood up and began to sing.

Their song was unlike anything Glenda had heard before and after a few moments, the rest of their small crews began to sing as well. Each one harmonised with the others and before long the feathered men started to dance. There were small bells attached to their outfits that jingled percussively along with the song and the whole scene left the boat enamoured. Even the Captain had come to witness the marvel.

After about 10 minutes the performance came to an end and the small boats changed direction, still flanking the Aurora, causing the Captain to also change with them. The boats led them along the coast for a little under an hour until they came across a sandy beach where the small boats landed. The Captain ordered the anchor be dropped and the passengers prepared to disembark.

As the Aurora disembarked, more and more of these unknown people arrived at the beach. When each load of passengers landed on the beach, they were quickly showered in food and water. The hive of activity coming in and out of the forest seemed unending.

Glenda and Gary stepped onto the new world for the first time. A young girl walked up to Glenda and seemed to examine her before she took Glenda's hand and led the couple towards the forest. Her skin was only a little darker than Glenda's but her eyes were a different shape. She had the most beautiful, long, black hair braided into an

intricate pattern. The girl led them through the woods and after a few minutes they arrived at the village this community must have come from.

They were taken to the largest, wooden building with carvings of animals adorning the doorway and inside was a large fire with a gap in the roof for ventilation. The girl took them to an elderly woman before the girl started to point at Glenda's face and hands. They exchanged conversation in a language that was beyond foreign to the couple before the elderly woman nodded. The young girl quickly rushed off.

The elderly woman had straight, grey hair and a smile that reminded Glenda of her mother. It radiated a kindness that suggested everything was alright and that they were going to be okay. A minute later the young girl returned with a small pot containing a greenish liquid that smelled like trees and a little wooden cup that she scooped up the liquid into before offering it to Glenda.

Gary reacted saying, "Wait, are you sure you should drink that?"

"What do you mean?" replied Glenda, "Why not?"

"Well, you don't know what it is. What if it's poisonous?"

The girl offered it again and mimed a drinking motion.

"Don't do it," said Gary, his concern visible on his face.

The elder woman saw the concern and took the cup before taking a big drink from it and somewhat theatrically let out a big ahh. She then said a few words to the girl who did the same and then offered it to Glenda again.

"Well, I doubt they would do that if it were poisonous," she said before taking the cup, smiling and taking a sip. It tasted like a weird tea but its warmth was welcome.

The elderly woman spoke again to the young girl who nodded again and took Gary's hand and led him away. The woman gestured for Glenda to sit next to her and she wrapped her arms with Glenda's, cradling her hand. A little later Gary reappeared holding a massive jug full of the tea and the girl gestured for Glenda to come with them and they returned to the beach where the girl started to distribute tea.

Interestingly Glenda noticed that the girl was not giving the tea to everyone but would inspect them first. After a handful of cups were given out, Glenda noticed that it was being given to people who looked very pale.

The scene on the beach was astounding. There were so many people who had come out from the village and in one area they had begun to drum using instruments made out of wood and hide. Some of the passengers had brought their instruments from the Aurora and were joining in to the great amusement of the dancers. An odd mix of Scottish country dancing was performed alongside the community's style of shuffling with individuals from each group attempting to join the others.

It was a sight to behold and Glenda would never forget this.

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They had been in the new world for around a month and the settlers were beginning to settle. There had been much back and forth with the people of the land and rudimentary translations had begun to allow the groups to understand each other better. They told the settlers they were called the Mi'kmaq. It was clear the people had a thriving community as well as established trade with other nearby members of the nation and they did all they could to help the settlers survive as the weather grew colder.

An initial settlement was formed slightly inland about a mile along a river that flowed past the Mi'kmaq village and out towards the Atlantic. The settlers were given instruction on the crops of the land as well as tools to help cultivate appropriate areas. The majority of settlers still had no accommodation and so the elderly and sick would be sheltered in the Mi'kmaq village; the rest made do with camping as houses were constructed.

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More time passed and relations started to grow tense. It had begun with the leaders of the Mi'kmaq asking the settlers to implement latrines instead of putting all their sewage into the river as this was flowing downstream to their village. The settlers told them quickly, they would not do this.

The second incident came when a settler and a villager got into a fight regarding a trapped red fox. The villager had placed and set the trap but the settler claimed it ought to be his spoils because the fox was caught near his home, on the land he claimed.

There was a meeting called in the church that had been built by the settlers.

"They can't keep doing this sort of stuff. We need to live the way we live," said one of the settlers who had been involved in the latrine discussion.

A chorus of ayes came in response.

"It's unreasonable that they set traps so near where we live and expect us not to take the proteins caught by them," said the father of the settler who was involved in the altercation, "I mean look what they did to my boy. It's savage."

Ayes.

"And speaking of savage," he continued, "Do you know what they pray to? They pray to the trees and the spirits of their ancestors. Even the Catholics don't go that far."

He spat at the ground for emphasis.

Glenda stood, "They have been gracious and helpful in our establishment. Why are we speaking like this about them?"

"Shut up, Glenda. Just cause you're all pally with the grandma doesn't mean they aren't heathens," came the short response.

"Aye, we should do something about it before things get worse," another settler shouted from the back.

"Oh aye? What do you propose, Mark?" Glenda shouted back, "Do you want to fight them and tell them to fuck off? Where are your virtues? Where is the grace that pastor Davidson preaches?"

"My grace extends only as far as my farmland."

"You're pathetic," Glenda exclaimed.

"Something needs to be done," said Gary, "There's no doubt about it."

Glenda spun on him with the fury of a Scottish mother whose favourite vase was just broken, "The fuck are you talking about Gary?"

"Listen, clearly tensions are rising so let's be proactive," he responded, "Let's speak to the leaders and see if we can come to an arrangement."

"Fine," Glenda spat out furiously, "but you are all pricks."

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A meeting was arranged but in the morning it was set to take place, Gary told Glenda she was not welcome. He said she had too many sympathies for the villagers and that compromised the bargaining position of the settlers. As he left, he picked up his sword.

The meeting was only meant to take an hour or so but the morning had elapsed without Gary's return. Glenda's nerves grew too strong and she decided to make her way to the village. As she approached she noticed concerning signs, namely great plumes of smoke rising above the tree lines. 2

When she arrived at the village, she saw it was ablaze. Each building had been systematically torched and the common areas were full of screaming and warfare. The settlers had formed a mass that trudged forwards while the villagers shot arrow after arrow on the encroaching raiders. Small groups of settlers would rush into each house and emerge after a few minutes in plumes of smoke attacking children who were trying to flee the scene.

Glenda was shocked. Shocked didn't go far enough, no words could go far enough.

Once she had processed what she was witnessing, she rushed forwards to the mass of settlers, screaming, "What are you doing? What is this murder? Why are you attacking the people who have saved us from dying in the cold?"

Her cries fell upon deaf ears and so she grappled individuals, trying in vain to prevent their onslaught. The men threw her off and hit her hard as she fell to the ground.

She looked up just as Gary emerged from a building, flaming wood in hand, eyes wide and manic, a snarl etched on his mouth. He never smiled anymore. He spotted Glenda on the ground, weeping.

"How could you do this?" she wailed, "How can you have become this?"

"I told you not to come," he said as he crouched down next to her.



“But you are burning down these homes! You are burning them like the factors did! What have you become?” She sobbed.

“Don’t speak to me like that woman. This is no place for you to question me. I am your husband and I decide what is good for this family.”

“What family?” Glenda spat back, “I will never give you a child now!”

“You fucking will,” Gary barked.

Behind him, the elderly woman, who had so gently held Glenda’s hand when they had first arrived, came out of the now burning home. Gary spotted Glenda’s eyes jump away from him and turned to look.

He stood up and strode over to the elder, grabbed her by the hair, pulled her head back and slit her throat.