

## Whatever in Creation Exists without My Knowledge Exists without My Consent

Sarah Goodman stood in a circle of six trees holding a bag full of oxycodone. Cellphone the lone light. She waited beyond Vespers, close to Compline. Illegal mercantile transaction scheduled near Last Call not Happy Hour. Eight days after the Summer Solstice.

Single letter inscribed on each tree: spelled beware when assembled. Sarah coached girls middle school church soccer; her catechumens painted the oaks. Preceded the final game which the seventh graders won.

Second light appeared. Several sequential flashes, and Sarah reciprocated the acknowledgment. Many prospects for the local Division II university or the townies accustomed to the bathtub methamphetamine or exhaust port grain alcohol wanted to discuss rates over text message; digitization promoted misdemeanors to felonies.

The man approached. Genteel gentleman carried a cash satchel. Jorge did not rage at the approaching middle age.

“Good day. How is your husband?” Sarah said.

Jorge said, “He is not interested in wheelchairs. He has fifty-seven years, and the MS does not care. Your cousin?”

“Full cast.” Her cousin ran dope. Someone entered his house. District attorney dropped charged due to a technicality- the extra-judicial delivery to the cop shop.

“Insurance doesn’t cover everything.”

“Dr. Standish has insurance; my cousin lacks. Told your step-daughter?”

“No. Husband’s choice.” Jorge’s step-daughter former Johnson County, Kansas sheriff’s deputy. She should have auditioned to be a professional wrestler with her built.

“Understandable. Your cash?” Jorge started opening his bag. It fell to the ground. Sarah looked at the bag. An arrow pinned the satchel. Jorge kneeled, and Sarah watched. Something approached.

Sarah twirled her bag nightstick cosplay. She worked at a hospital pharmacy. Extraneous medication helped people relieve pain. She increased her phone’s light’s intensity.

Force dropped from above. Sarah’s phone cracked on the ground. Force slammed Sarah’s abdomen. She crashed on the ground.

Jorge yelled and then silenced. An orange light started- the moneybag transfigured into ash. Sarah reoriented her eyes.

She first noticed the goggles. Night vision. Darkness did not exist only absence of light. Cold did not exist only absence of heat. The figure held a longbow almost the figures height, and the longbow taller than Sarah. This personage carried a backpack.

Sarah said, “What?” The figure applied handcuffs. Sarah was lifted off the ground and placed over a shoulder. They exited the forest onto a brick street. A powerline pole and street lights stood adjacent.

The figure dropped Sarah and handed a paper cup and a straw; soda from a local eatery, the Man Behind the Curtain.

“Why?” Sarah said. The streetlights illuminated the figure. It opened the backpack. Barbed wire, railroad spikes, an enlarged rail gun. The streetlights showed the night vision goggles and what resembled a muzzle over the figure’s mouth. The figure removed her goggles, and she pushed a button on the muzzle. Distortion, static.

“You do not deserve to die in the manner of our Lord,” she said.