

CREEKER

Written by

Sydney Hendrix

THE McCALLS

MAGGIE McCall – 27ish. The black sheep. Modern creative type. Favorite writer is Joan Didion.

SARAH McCall – 72. The grand matriarch. Sweet faced with the specific ruggedness of a farmer's wife. Only drives on Sundays.

HOLDEN McCall – 24ish. The good son. Kindhearted, but hot tempered. His shirt is always tucked in proper.

ROBERT McCALL – Dead.

1 EXT. MCCALL HOME - SUNDOWN 1

An old farmhouse. Built generations ago. Nothing too grand. Post-war tobacco money. A fading memory.

2 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 2

Someone steps in the hall. Wanders a few doors down. Disappears into a room. Cracks the door.

The hallway's daunting. Long, narrow, and dark. It looks as though the house is fighting it's own struture. The walls seem to writh. Agonizing itself until--

Same person steps back into the hallway. Heads back to a room a few doors down. Shuts the door behind them.

Still now, but *Something* seems to linger in the shadows.

3 INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 3

A stale bedroom - adorned with primitive furniture and dust. The room's small. The ceiling's low. The walls' short. The furniture's too big for the space.

MAGGIE McCALL steps into the room.

FROM OUTSIDE: A dog BARKS.

Curious. She approaches the window. Peeks out: dog's been let out. Relieved, she strts to drift away when her eyes catch on **a gnarled pecan tree** standing out in front of the house.

4 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 4

SARAH McCALL sits at her roost with a dog at her feet. Goes through her mail. Slices open an envelope with a **large bronze letter opener**. Maggie enters. Sarah's face lights up.

SARAH

You've come at a bad time.

Maggie heads for the coffee maker. Feels the pot with the back of her hand:

MAGGIE

Coffee's not *that* cold yet.

SARAH

Not gonna even pretend?

Maggie searches for a clean mug. Finds one in the cabinet.

MAGGIE

I know better than to ask questions
I already know the answer to.

Sarah smirks. Maggie returns it. Pours herself a cup.

SARAH

It's polite, nonetheless.

Maggie joins her at the table. Puts on her good manners:

MAGGIE

Okay. Anything interesting?

SARAH

No, no. Just bills and junk mail.

Sarah beams. Continues with her work. Maggie sips her coffee. She watches her grandmother's hands shake. Notices the shallow breaths. It's a nice moment. Fleeting.

5 INT. DEN - NIGHT - LATER

5

The McCall family gathers for the first time in a long time. All smiles and LAUGHTER. Maggie and Sarah sit in their spots. HOLDEN McCALL holds court:

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HOLDEN

So you want tall tales or hearsay?

MAGGIE

Let's hear the hearsay. For old
times sake.

Holden straightens up in his chair.

HOLDEN

Oh boy. Well... granddaddy was much
better showman than myself.

(to Sarah)

You think he'd mind of try my hand
at one of his?

SARAH

Not at all.

HOLDEN

Alrighty. So the way granddaddy told it: the land the old home place is built on used to be a pecan grove, part of the old MacEachen plantation. His granddaddy bought it. Planned to farm tobacco and maybe keep a few pecan tress standing here and there. He built the house, cut down the dead trees, plants the fields, the whole deal. However, seasons change and ain't nothing's growing. No tobacco. No pecans. Nothing. The hell do you do? Back then you ain't got a lot of options outside of consulting a higher power. So our great, great granddaddy consults a preacher by the name of Lazurus Blue.

MAGGIE

That's not a person's name.

HOLDEN

I promise you I ain't inventive enough to think it up myself. And mind you, this won't no normal preacher. They say old Reverend Blue took up with some Indian woman. Cherokee. Supposed to have spent a few years with her people up in the mountains learning moon magic from them moon eyed doctors and the like. So he rolls up to the farm versed in this moon magic and great granddaddy asks him why nothing's growing here. Rev. Blue takes off his boots... shakes the dust off. Bad news. Says the land's been scorched and forsaken. Abandoned and left to die from the sickness that's been put upon it. Great granddaddy asks well what the hell he's to do about that. The good Reverened prescribes him to put his ear to the ground and make atonement.

Sarah's face twists up. This *hits* her hard.

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MAGGIE

That's a lot more old testament than I remembered.

HOLDEN
Grandma did always say I oughta
been a preacher myself.

MAGGIE
(to Sarah)
Still think so?

SARAH
I think I've had enough tall tales
for this evening.

Holden checks his watch.

HOLDEN
'Spose it is getting time for the
welcome wagon to ride on out.

Maggie helps Sarah out of her chair.

SARAH
It's nice to have my grandkids all
here together again.

Sarah takes her leave. Maggie walks out with Holden to...

6

I/E. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

6

It's cold out. Maggie and Holden step out. The dog follows
them out. Maggie stops. Leans up against the wall.

MAGGIE
It's funny. I thought we'd be
older.

Holden bends down to pet the dog.

HOLDEN
How you mean?

MAGGIE
Before the time came when we see
each other and all we do is talk
about people that're gone.

Holden rises. Props himself up on the porch railing.

HOLDEN
Well... I guess we've been out of
each other's lives for a few years
now. Ain't exactly sure what else
we'd talk about.

A light turns off inside the house. Maggie migrates over toward the stoop.

MAGGIE

I didn't know she'd gotten that frail since last Christmas.

HOLDEN

Yeah. It's been hard. Don't let her fool you too bad though. She gets a second wind after midnight. Calls it her witching hour.

Holden shifts gears:

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

You two good here by yourselves?

MAGGIE

Gun over the mantle actually work?

HOLDEN

Probably.

MAGGIE

Then, probably. I'll hold the line.

HOLDEN

Here I thought you'd refined yourself over in the big city.

MAGGIE

Nah. I'm still a little rough around the edges.

HOLDEN

So it seems.

He grins, rolls back up on upright on his feet. Takes a ball cap from his back pocket. Places it on his head as he eases down the steps.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Call me if anything goes bump in the night. If anything just so I can witness Maggie McCall's turn as a gunslinger.

Maggie salutes. Holden sinks into the truck and drives off.

Beat. All quiet now. Maggie catches a cold chill. She calls the dog. Heads inside. The screen door SLAMS behind her.

7 INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 7

Maggie tosses and turns. Unable to get comfortable, she sits up on the edge of the bed.

Her breath hits the cold air. She shivers. Odd. She scans the room: the window's open. Odd, still. She rolls out of bed. Shuts the window. That's that.

She mills about the room -- restless. Considering her surroundings with more scrutiny than before.

FROM THE DEN: a TV cuts on. The VOICE of an infomercial salesman.

Her attention shifts toward the voice. She follows it.

8 INT. DEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 8

The VOICE echos. Hard surfaces everywhere make every sound reverberate for just a little too long.

Maggie arrives. Stands in the door -- surveys. Empty. She proceeds in. Her presense feels unwelcome. Invasive, even.

She retrieves the remote from the caddy on the side table. Cuts off the TV. Darkness envelopes everything. Silence.

A chill runs down her spine. The dark room no longer feels like a safe place. She replaces the remote. Starts out.

Nails CLICKING on hardwood cut through the silence.

Maggie whips her head around to see the dog coming from the direction of the front door. Disconcerting. She creeps around to investigate. Peeks over at the front door: **it's wide open.** Through the pit in her stomach:

MAGGIE

Grandma?

No answer.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

Fear mangles her words. She gathers herself. Takes a breath. Advances toward the door with extreme caution.

She posts up just inside the door. Pokes her head out: all clear. She forces a deep breath. Presses on to--

9 I/E. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 9

Windchimes softly RING out in the breeze. Maggie keeps her guard up. Scans the area. All *seems* quiet.

From inside the house: the dog BARKS.

Startled, she 180s. Backpedals to the edge of the stoop.

The dog looks back at her. Wags its tail. BARKS at her again.

She softens. Kneels down:

MAGGIE

C'mere.

The dog trots up to her. She scratches his head.

Beat. She gives him one last pat. Stands back up. Exhales.

One last look around. All's well until... the dog takes off around the house. She follows after him to see... *

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10 EXT. MCCALL HOME - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 10 *

There's *something* strange about the tree. The dog BARKS up at it. Jaw clenched tight so that no noise can escape, she investigates. *

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Her eyes grow wider as she gets close enough to see a bundle of sticks and dried leaves hanging from the branches. *

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*

Maggie stares at it. Carefully examining. Trying to make sense of it. *

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Apprehensive, she gently touches it. Her fingers run with blood on contact. The source unclear. *

*

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11 INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY 11

Sarah sits at the table reading today's paper.

Maggie wanders in. Her eyes dark and heavy. She notices a fork on the ground. Picks it up. Places it back on the table.

MAGGIE

What's new?

Sarah peers over her paper as her granddaughter settles in the chair across from her. Resumes reading.

SARAH
County elections.

MAGGIE
That man who tried to kill his wife
still County Commissioner?

SARAH
Nobody else wants the job.

Maggie squirms in her seat. Tries to be nonchalant:

MAGGIE
I can let the dog out tonight. It's
fine. I don't sleep much anyhow. *

SARAH
Why don't you sleep? *

MAGGIE
I just... doesn't matter. I'm just
worried about keeping the door open
all night. Night's are starting to
get cold... I just want help-- *

SARAH
I have better manners than to put
guests to work. Especially when you
should be in asleep in bed. Not
wandering the house at odd hours. *

This hits Maggie the wrong way. She pushes further: *

MAGGIE
What was that thing hanging from
the old tree out back? *

Sarah sharply lowers her paper. A stern warning: *

SARAH
Leave it alone.

MAGGIE
I just touched it and it stained my
hand. Red. *

Sarah's face goes pale. She sets down her paper. Rises from
the table – too fast. Maggie jumps to help her. She doesn't
let her. Steadies herself on the table instead. *

SARAH
You shouldn't interfere with things
you've taken great care to seprate
youself from. It's my fault. *

(MORE) *

SARAH (CONT'D)

I love you so I let you. That was a
terrible mistake on my part.

*
*

With tears streaming down her face she leaves Maggie sitting
alone at the table -- withering behind her.

*
*

12 INT. DEN - NIGHT

12

Maggie sits up on the couch with the dog. No chance of sleep.
An old western plays on the TV. Maggie's wide eyes fixed on
the screen. Staring straight through it.

The room is still. Suffocatingly still.

FROM OUTSIDE: wind HOWLS. The window pane RATTLES.

Maggie stirs. She gently removes the sleeping dog's from her
lap. Goes to the window. Peaks through the curtains: all's as
it should be. She steps back.

Silence engulfs the room. The TV Cowboys' VOICES fade. The
dogs SNORING fades. NOISE from outside fades. Dead silence.

Her spirit weights heavy. She drifts to the center of the
room. Too wound up to sit back down, so she stands there.
Exposed to the room around her.

It swallows her.

Eyes glued to the window. She can't bring herself to move.

The house breaks the silence. Old wood CREAKS and ACHES. The
plumbing HISSES and WAILS. The air POPS and CLICKS.

She can't stand it. Her eyes dart toward an old shotgun over
the mantle.

13 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

13

A neat bedroom suite. Unfamiliar. Stuffy.

Sarah lays on her side asleep in her bed. Unnaturally rigid.

Shotgun slung over her shoulder, Maggie slips in. Tiptoes
over to the bedside. Places a hand on her shoulder:

MAGGIE
(whispering)
Grandma...

No response. She shakes her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Grandma?

Nothing. Shakes her again, with more intensity:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Grandma!

Sarah rolls onto her back. Eyes wide open. Strained. Her face stiff. Petrified. She tries to speak. Her mouth won't open. Her teeth won't unclench. Only a muffled SOUGH comes through.

Maggie **jerks** back in terror. Too shocked to scream. Tries to sit her up. Can't. Sarah is *glued* to the bed by some supernatural force.

Trying to staunch all out panic and think, Maggie backs away. Breaks for the door escaping into the...

14 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

14

Panicked GASPS for air explode in the still hall.

Maggie steadies herself against the wall. Tries to get it together. Sets off down the hall.

The space feels as claustrophobic as ever. Walls closing in. Strangling it. The window at the end of the hall is the last connection to humanity.

Her heart POUNDS. The floor CREAKS and ACHES under foot.

Behind her: a door knob RATTLES.

Maggie stops in her tracks. Looks over her shoulder: it's her bedroom door. She watches for a moment. Readies her gun.

While her nerves up, she charges the door. Reaches for the door knob. Her hand inches just inches away when...

...A **grotesquely tall man** FLINGS the door open. Steps through, his head barely clears the door frame. It's not entirely a man. His face and the side of it's head is *hardened* resembling tree bark. The wooden side of his head is *missing an ear*.

The man moves in on her. Maggie SCREAMS. Backs away. He keeps a steady pursuit after her.

She fumbles with the gun. Trying to find the trigger without taking her eyes off of the man for more than a second. He gets closer...closer...and closer.

There! She takes aim: BANG! Hits him in the shoulder. He takes the hit. Unfazed.

Maggie cuts and runs.

15 INT. DEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 15 *

There is no obvious direction to run.

Maggie raises the gun Spins around to...he's vanished.

She lowers the gun. Snatches up a phone. Starts frantically dialing as she wheels around: searching... waiting. *

It gets quiet. Excruciatingly quiet.

Out of nowhere, he appears slamming her against the wall. She loses the phone and the gun as he throws her to the ground. *

He grabs her from behind. Maggie digs her nails in. Trying to pry off his grip. It only tightens. Almost tearing into her skin through sheer force. He drags her deeper into the house. *

16 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 16

Maggie comes in THRASHING. Kicking up and SCREAMING. She tries everything. Elbowing him in the stomach... trying to gauge at his eyes... biting his hand... anything she can.

The man doesn't so much as flinch.

Maggie catches the corner of the counter as they pass. He YANKS her toward the kitchen table. She holds on.

Her face mangles in his hands as she tries to twist free.

He loses his grip -- an opening -- she dives for the floor.

She's free. He staggers.

In one quick, desperate motion, she snatches up a **bronze letter opener** off the edge of the countertop.

For a half a second, she looks at the letter opener. Considers her few options. Looks up at the man: all her attention's drawn to his missing ear.

He regains his balance. Starts back at her.

She tightens her grip around the letter opener. Bolts for the front door.

17

EXT. MCCALL HOME - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

17

Maggie tears out of the front door. Stumbles down into the yard. Letter opener in hand. Moving with an urgency driven by something other than fear -- an absolute certainty.

Her eyes lock in on that gnarled pecan tree.

The house towers over her.

Maggie looks over her shoulder: the man trudges through the front door.

She looks back to the tree. Tightens her grip on the letter opener. Sets course.

He continues steadily stalking after her.

Maggie collides with the tree.

He keeps coming.

She turns to face him. Raises the letter opener to her ear.

Still coming.

She digs her heels into the ground. Grits her teeth. Deep breath before... she hacks off her ear.

Maggie lets out an exhausted SCREAM. Her ear falls into the grass along with the letter opener. Blood gushes from her head down to her shoulder. She drops down to her knees.

The man stops in his tracks. Stands motionless.

Maggie watches him. Waiting for his next move...

There isn't one. He breaks away. Drifts toward the fields.

She doubles over. Blood seeps into down to the ground. She lets herself fall apart for just this moment.

All's calm. Slowly, she gets to her feet. Places her hand over the wound. Dawn's not far off now.

Maggie picks up the bloodied letter opener and returns home.

CREDITS.