

You've arrived on the coastline of an obscure Scottish island in August. An old woman, whose swollen legs dangled off the pier in Campbelltown, urged you to experience an impressive harvest festival that happens here once every 10 years. You hitched a ride in a dingy, steered by a gruff, waifish captain named Glenn, who didn't speak a word for the entire two hour voyage. First, you notice how much bluer the sky is here, and how the chartreuse hills roll on forever and vibrate in a way that hurts your eyes. Next, the tall, sharp stakes lining the perimeter of the entire island. Finally the missing sun, nowhere to be seen, even though there isn't a cloud in the sky. It's troubling, but you took this trip as part of your new "say-yes-to-life" mantra, and you're ready to reinvent yourself.

Parched from the trip, you head to the corner shoppe for water after being dropped off in town by an old, busted cabbie. The friendly woman only offers you tap water, which you decline because of its off-putting, grayish appearance. You decide to walk to the inn instead for dinner before retiring early so you can catch the festival tomorrow with an alert mind. The cobblestone streets have been painted vermilion, and you can feel them under your running shoes, still sticky. It smells like dead livestock.

Passing the produce market, you notice the lack of bounty- all that is left are unripe, dwarfish stonefruits and green, sprouting potatoes. Baskets of berries have rotted into congealed, bloodlike masses, and no one seems to be shopping. But across the way, the butcher is buzzing with activity- a shouting line forming down the street. Pig carcasses are snatched from the window as soon as they are hung, assaulingly fresh, and a sandwich board is scrawled with the words: "We sell living things!" A woman leads a goat she has just purchased down an alleyway corridor. You double-take- she looks just like the woman from Campbelltown.

Ahead of the inn, you notice a church graveyard, overgrown with colorful flora and bustling fauna. Oleander, Delphinium and Belladonna grope every headstone, and rabbits with glowing red eyes climb over each other towards something you can't see. Up the steps of the church, three women in vibrant robes stand in the door leading to the atrium, staring at you. Their dresses are embroidered with the same flowers found in the graveyard, and the woman standing center has a massive cockroach emblazoned on the entirety of her full skirt. The woman beside her carries a pitchfork. This is obviously unsettling.

Your meal at the inn is basic- sandy mashed potatoes, boiled cabbage and roast beef with the silvery film of deli meat left too long in the fridge are hard to swallow, but you're starved from the long day, and wash it down with a pint forced upon you by the aggressive bartender. The crowded pub sings songs of blood and hay. Before he leads you to your room, the innkeeper mentions a custom of the island: "All new visitors must drink our special single-malt alone before bed," he tells you, handing you a glass of whiskey, "especially on the eve of the harvest." You thank him and he replies unnervingly with a strange smile, "Thank *you*."

Once in bed, you take a whiff of the whiskey. It smells acrid, you have to look away. It is intensely minty, almost like salvia. Its smell alone is starting to make you feel paranoid.