

Excerpt from *The Apocalypse of Morgan Turner*

By Jennifer Quist

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Passing from pre-trial time to the time of a trial proper is not like scaling a mountain and arriving at its summit, or making any other graded, controlled progression. Instead, it is like moving from standing in the open door in the side of an airplane—winds and engines roaring and tearing at everything—to jumping out into freefall, racing toward an uncertain end at terminal velocity, falling but with the sensation of hanging, helpless.

Down we go.

The trial of Brett Marshall Finnemore at the Court of Queen's Bench for second degree murder and offering an indignity to a dead body is underway. There will be no more delay—no adjournments, no new lawyers, nothing. The inflight movie for these four weeks of freefall is, of course, a horror movie—Tricia Turner's horror movie, the part after the ending, the credits, the long list of who did what that scrolls on and on, white letters almost too small to read on a vast black screen.

If Morgan bore any kind of sisterly resemblance to Tricia, maybe she would sit on the groom's side of the courtroom, in the front row closest to the prisoner's dock where Brett Finnemore might look up and see her. She would powder her face, hide her hair in a black cowl, and stare straight ahead, as if this time, she is unknowing. A white cowl might be better. It really is a shame the wedding dress is buried. Morgan wouldn't have worn it but maybe, folded into a bag, the courthouse sheriffs would have let her bring it through security, drape it over a chair at the front of the gallery, just behind the bar.

No, there has been none of that—no shrouds, no stunts inside the courtroom. All of this has been in Morgan's mind but in the flesh, she has simply taken her seat with the rest of her family on the bride's side. One hand in her hair, she vacantly pulls hanks of it across her face—a new habit—sniffing to see if it smells like hogs. It doesn't, not yet.

Sheila Turner and her surviving children are in the courtroom listening to the testimony of the woman who was working the drive-thru window the night Finnemore drove Tricia's car sanely and safely through the lane to get his refreshing post-murder coffee. Endless police officers testify—those who handled the forensic investigations at Tricia's apartment, on the lawn outside, in her car, in the impromptu boneyard outside Innisfail. There are the officers who arrested Finnemore at the gas-well site in Saskatchewan, the ones who processed him in remand. Finally, they hear from the star police witness, the detective who sat with Finnemore in an interview room for four-and-a-half hours, through the storytelling about demons in Tricia's head, all the way to the confession. On the video recording of the interview, the court hears Finnemore say in his own voice, through his own tears, that he killed Tricia and drove away with her body.

The stream of medical witnesses begins with the psychiatric nurses and social workers who have worked with Finnemore since his arrest. There is his doctor who treated his mental illnesses before the murder and, last of all in the prosecution's case, a

psychiatrist, an expert witness who supports the Crown's version of events, where Brett Finnemore was aware that Tricia Turner was being murdered and defiled when he bludgeoned her, when he threw her off a balcony, when he abandoned her in a field. Finnemore knew it was wrong to kill people. He understood as well as anyone can what it means to put a violent end to someone else's life. When the killing was over, he had the insight to see he was in trouble and made calculating, callous choices to preserve himself.

“When he's on his medication, Mr. Finnemore is not acutely psychotic. But he is always a psychopath. Psychotic, psychopath—I understand the terminology is confusing,” the psychiatrist apologizes. “We'll often use the term ‘antisocial personality disorder’ rather than ‘psychopath’ but they mean the same thing. Mr. Finnemore could have an anti-social personality disorder and still have understood what he was doing and that it was wrong when he killed Ms. Turner. Someone suffering from acute psychosis might not be able to understand that, but someone with an antisocial personality disorder would—he just wouldn't care. That's what we're dealing with here.”

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