

THIS GODLY SORROW



A BODY HORROR FAIRY TALE

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

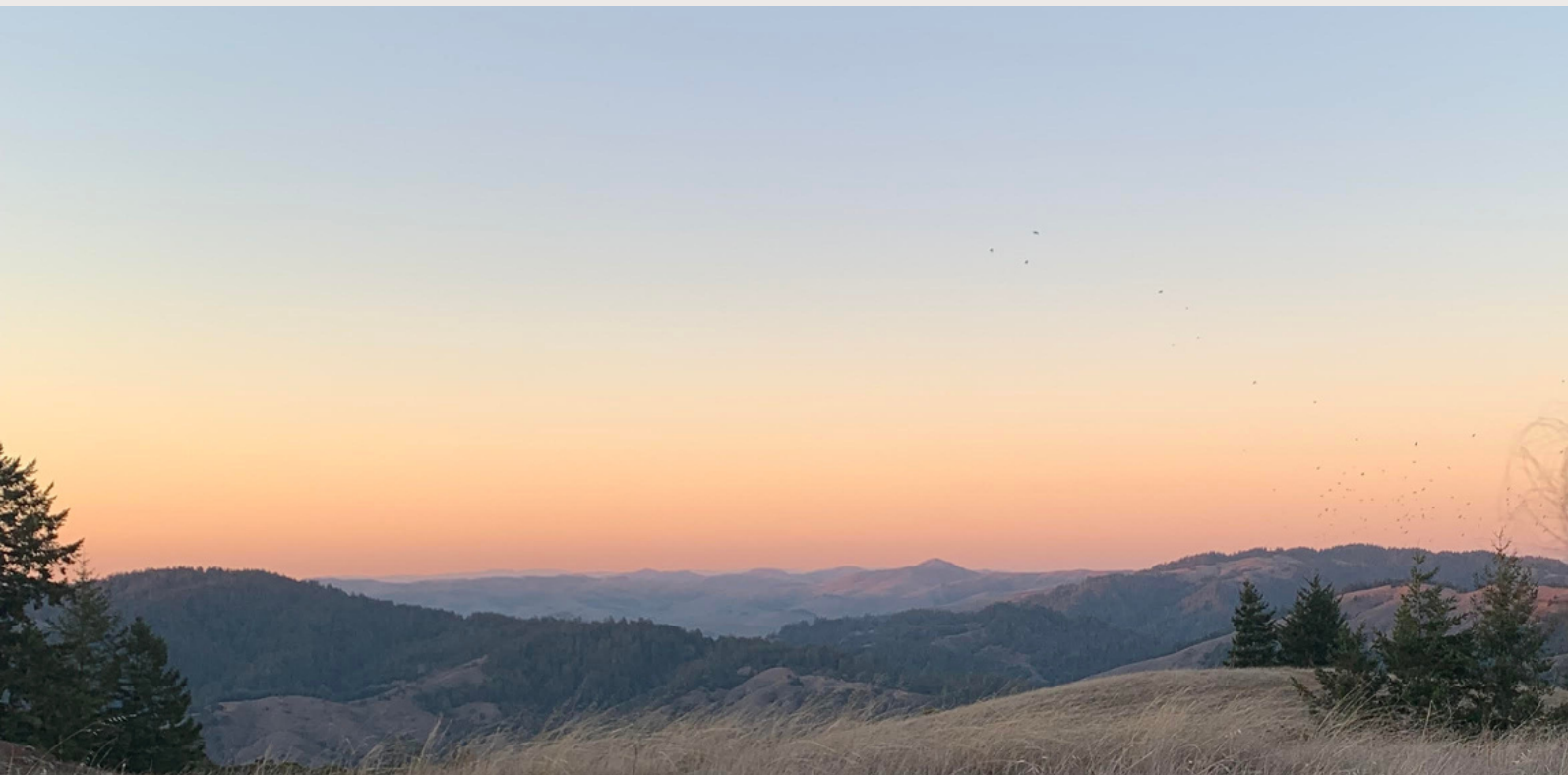
STORY

STRUCTURE

tone & style

CHARACTERS

WELCOME



This *Godly Sorrow* is a feature-length visceral narrative that straddles the worlds of body horror and religious trauma. Set in the high desert of Central Oregon during the early 2000s, this story is inspired by lived experience. Being a 16 year old girl is a terrifying ordeal. Especially when you are not only trapped in your own body, but also the body of a tight knit religious community.

Exploring the crossroads of how disgusting it is to embody teenage hormones and the danger of a high-control environment, the aim is to touch at what is tender. Rooted in the flatness, abstraction, intuitive logic, and normalized magic of traditional folklore, this story is a drooling jaw seeking someone to devour. Dear reader, I hope it is you.



LET ME TELL YOU A STORY

Being a teenager requires a suffocating amount of loneliness. This forlorn journey begins with SCARLET (16), walking home alone in the dark. Her lonely world is upended by her crush, NATHAN (16), and the ever watchful eye of her father, PAUL (40s).

With the silent and permanent presence of CORA (40s), Scarlet's mother, the family dynamic is one where Paul asserts dominance disguised as leadership. As a pastor of a local, evangelical youth group, Paul is maliciously mentoring NATASHA (17), but he has eyes for newcomer LORENA (16).

As Scarlet navigates confusing feelings and confronts reality, she digs deeper into her unraveling inner landscape. Her relationship with Nathan blossoms, even if his best friend ABIGAIL (17) constantly needs to be rescued from local creeps TROY (21) and MICAH (20).

Scarlet's desire for Nathan reaches its apex when they escape to party in the desert. However, it is here that Scarlet begins to honestly confront herself and the horrendous home life that's causing her to literally fall apart. The next morning, Nathan reveals he couldn't possibly have feelings for someone so sheltered—leaving Scarlet to fend for herself.

When she returns from the desert, she is met with an angry father and incompetent mother. At church, she is publicly dragged on stage and berated. This causes her to come completely undone, her insides expelling out in an overt display of anger.

After attempting to physically fight her father, Scarlet is forced to navigate her way home. Traversing several planes of reality before arriving almost exactly where she started: walking alone in the dark to an isolated house and a family that refuses to love or understand her.



STRUCTURE

There is a particular type of dream-like intuition Scarlet follows. This is a world of normalized body horror. To the point that suffering is often ignored.

Following a semi-traditional three act structure, the main characters are paraded out in the first act. Scarlet waffles on what is right and wrong to her. She pines, she runs away from affection. She consoles, she desires. Meanwhile, in the background, the demands of the church and purity culture pound upon her psyche.

The second act is where things pick up. Scarlet runs away to party in the desert, but finds she cannot escape her inner demons. Things fall apart between her and Nathan.



All hopes of unconditional love are shattered as Scarlet returns home to verbal abuse and neglect.

Fully unraveling in the final act, Scarlet's insides abandon her as she confronts her father, her crush, her friends, and the reality that she is being forced back to a life of lonely isolation. She must learn to hold her own hand.

tone



The meaning here is to embody the high desert. The warm colors, the cold nights, the isolation of nature. Everyone knows the desert is haunted. But rarely do we get to witness it. This is a fantastic story to dig into the outer landscapes that define our inner sanctums.



The sounds and songs that relate to this story are a mixture of strange bedfellows. An outer landscape of Christian alternative rock snuggling up to whatever morbid teenagers were listening to before Apple Music became ever present.

(Click the below icons to listen to this curated playlist!)



STYLE



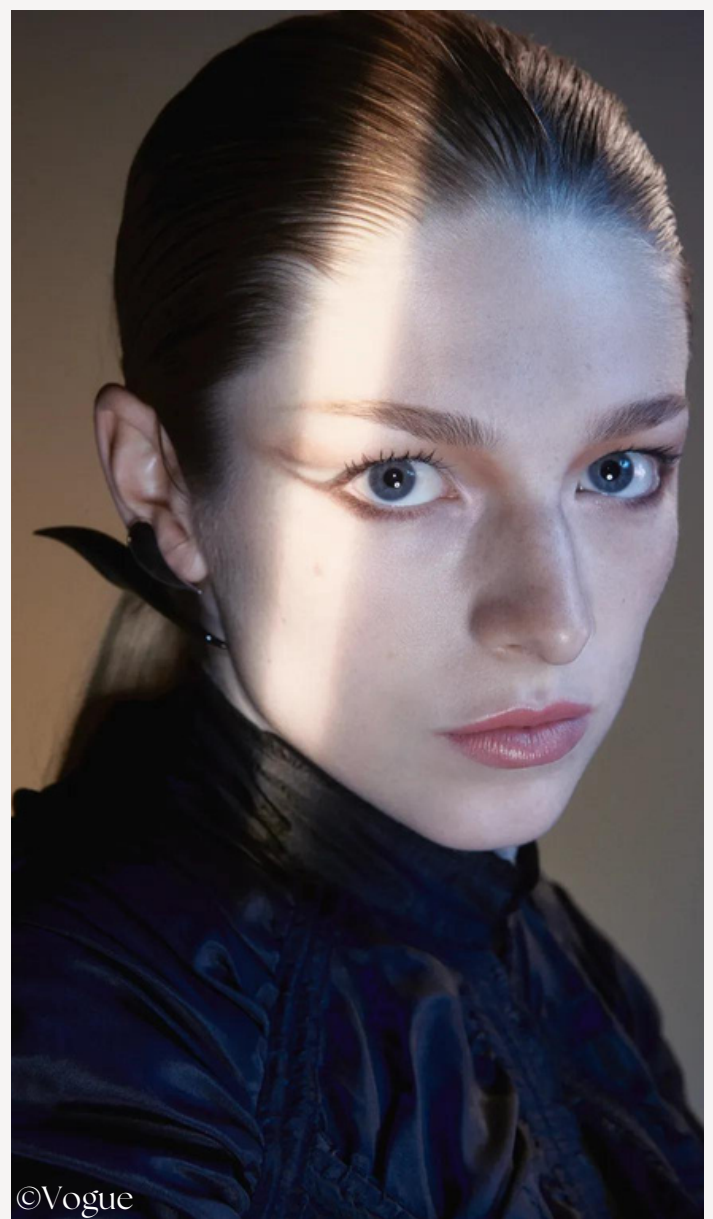
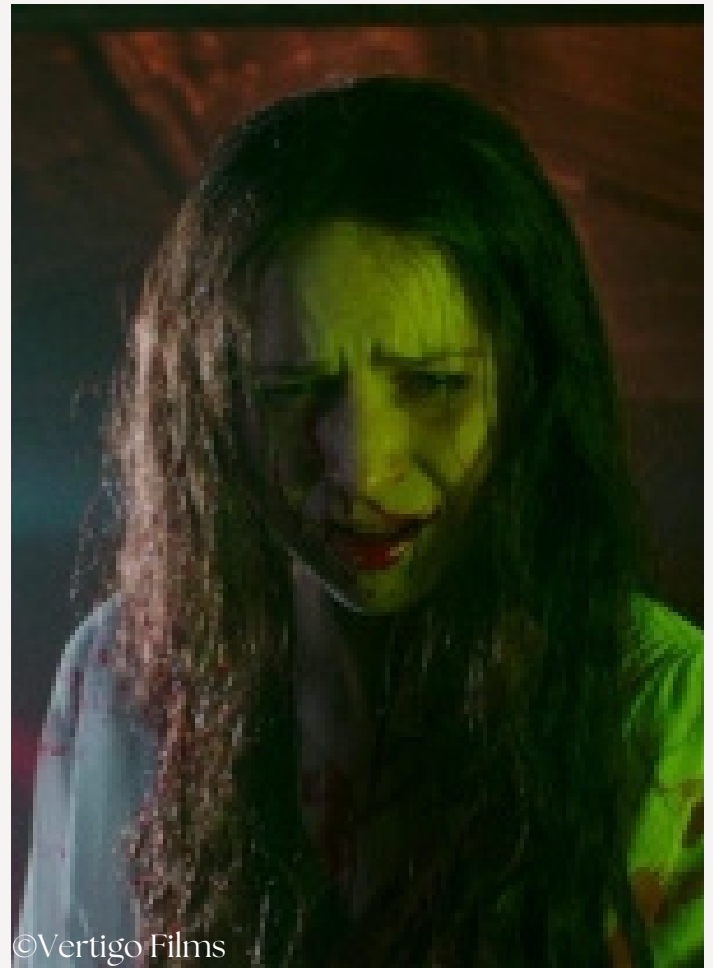
The imagery in this story is both a visceral experience as well as the realization that nowhere is safe. NO ONE WILL LOVE YOU.

Scarlet's body is the representation of her inner self made manifest. Put plainly, this film is about the terror of being a teenage girl. The horror of religion, rape, purity culture, loneliness, isolation, and a lack of autonomy.

It's also worth noting that since this takes place in the early 2000s, cell phones are an emergent technology. None of these characters can rely on or use them in these remote landscapes. Besides, they still live in a world where the internet is used for Creepypasta, Salad Fingers, and Homestar Runner.

CHARACTERS





Lanky and lonely at 16, Scarlet lives under the thumb of her overly religious and dominant father. After being constantly jostled around the country, she is now realizing she hasn't been properly socialized with the outside world. Living in constant fear of both authority and rejection, her all-consuming crush on her neighbor Nathan is disturbing to both herself and those around her. All she wants, with every bone in her body, is to be loved.

SCARLET

PAUL



In his 40s, Paul is Scarlet's father. He is pastor of an evangelical, fundamental youth group. Ruling with an iron fist, he abuses his position of power. Under the guise of private discipleship groups, Paul preys upon the young women he oversees.



He is constantly agitated with Scarlet, especially as she begins to blossom into a creature that he might not be able to fully control.

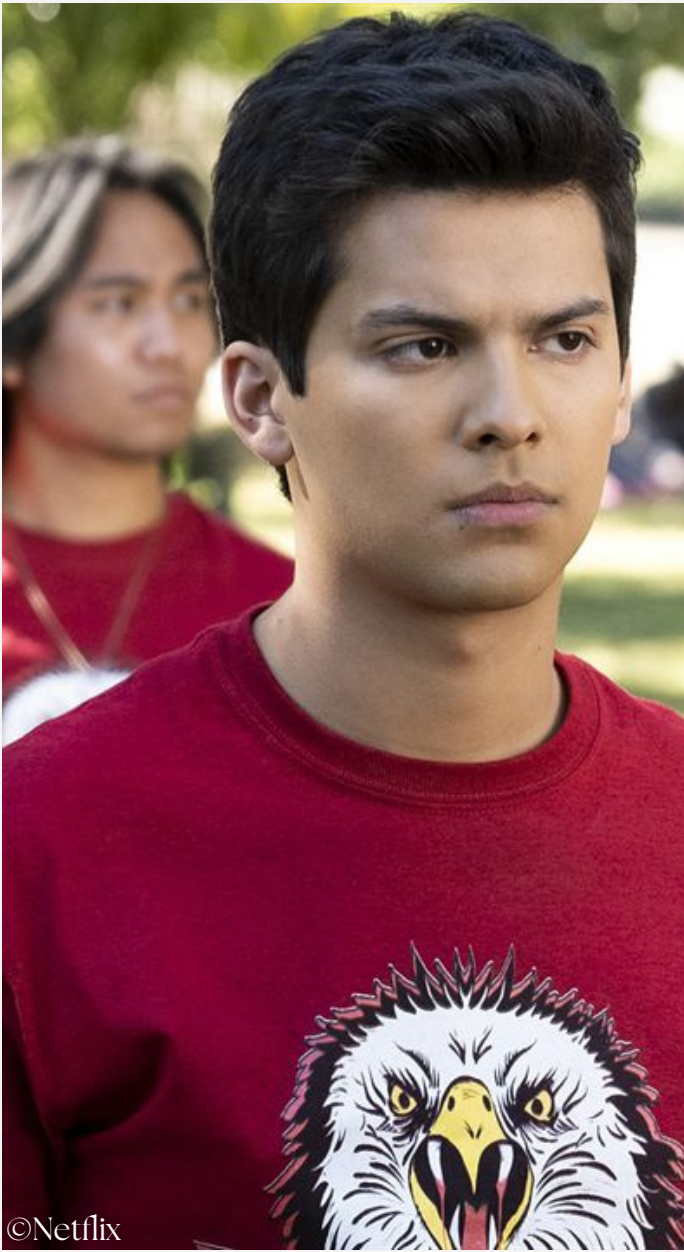


CORA



Also in her 40s, Cora is Paul's wife and Scarlett's mother. She is mute, more so a representation of what the church expects than a fully formed woman. She is to be seen and not heard, understanding and accepting of her husband as the head of the household, regardless of his actions. She must keep the family together, even at the cost of her own self.

NATHAN



Scarlet's neighbor and the object of her desire. He is Mexican-American, 16, and has a troubled home life.

Thriving on the attention of Scarlet, he pursues her. But realizes, a bit too late, he doesn't actually know what he's looking for until he's aware he no longer wants what's in front of him.



As a 16 year old Latina newcomer to the overbearing youth group run by Scarlet's father, Lorena is drawn to Scarlet. But mostly wants to get on Paul's good side to make life within the youth group bearable. She has an upsetting history of dating Troy, an older boy who sexually abused her. This information is often used against her.



LORENA



ABIGAIL

Nathan's best friend. She's a gorgeous, gorgeous blond at 17 years old. She has a pure feminine quality about her that the other girls have yet to manifest. She's grown up fast, but finds herself constantly in the clutches of Troy and Micah.

TROY

21 and a slimy, predatory young man. Troy is a bully and an instigator. His goal is to have sex with most anything that moves.



MICAH

At 20, Micah is Troy's best friend. He is happy to run alongside Troy and wreak havoc on the young women in their hometown.



NATASHA

Like most church girls, Natasha is a mousy almost-18 year old who sees herself as the queen bee of the youth group. She has a special relationship with pastor Paul, but is too young to realize it is predatory and inappropriate.



FINAL THOUGHTS

This story has a cyclical beginning and end. It does not have a happy ending. Witness the manifestation of being ignored and denied love. To lay bare the pain of being young and told you'll never be good enough, in fact you might be too much just the way you are. A manifesto of what it means to grow up with these grotesque inner critics and dedicated to all of us that made it out.



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I wish that pointing out to conservatives how much suffering this will cause would move the needle but the idea that women are destined to suffer is actually a cornerstone of far-right Christian ideology. It's freaky stuff!

11:29 PM · 5/2/22 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



THANK YOU!

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