

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

written by

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**INT. ORPHANAGE / EMPTY ROOM - DAY**

CHILDREN scrub the floor, walls and windowsills spotless.

Away from them alone in a corner CATHY Anderson's wiping the skateboards, making swirls and loops with the cloth.

She writes her name "Cathy" in the dirt.

The door opens, the children stop and look at the round figured MRS MANTHERS (we never see her face and her back is to us).

She motions for a MEEK CHILD to come over and they obey.

The other children get back to work.

Mrs Manthers whispers something inaudible in the child's ear.

CHILD  
(without looking up)  
Yes Auntie.

Mrs Manthers leaves followed by the child.

**INT. ORPHANAGE / DRAWING ROOM - DAY**

The children are gathered around a table drawing and chatting.

Cathy's by herself at the window reading her notebook.

CATHY  
(whispers)  
Then what?

She turns the page: ***I don't know let me think...***

CATHY  
(whispers, impatient)  
Come on.

Next page: **Hold your horses Cathy.**

She can't help but give a little smile.

One of the children can't help but throw a pencil at her.

CHILDREN  
You did it! / You told on him! /  
Why'd ya do it! / We hate you!

Beside the children, the Meek Child stares at Cathy and she looks down at his bandaged hands.

She buries her head in her notebook, trying to hide her humiliation.

(CONTINUED)

She turns the page: **Don't.**

She does, goes over to the child and gives her a nasty Chinese burn.

Mrs Manthers enter and everyone looks up silent.

Except for the child who holds their arm bawling forcefully and upping it up to a scream.

**INT. ORPHANAGE / MRS MANTHER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Mrs Manthers places a horsewhip on a desk and sits down.

Cathy stands across from her rubbing her sore red hands, wincing.

A KNOCK on the door and a MAN'S head pops in.

MAN

Mrs Manthers? The Houlihan couple  
are here.

Mrs Manthers nods and leaves, leaving Cathy on her own.

From outside, the door's heard LOCKING.

Cathy frowns angrily and looks around the room.

A mug of water on the desk.

She opens a drawer in the desk and pours the water into it. Finishing, she spots something.

A note with her name on it.

She checks up at the door - all clear - and reads the note.

A moment later she looks away in disbelief.

She stuffs the note in her pocket.

Snatches a set of keys from the drawer.

Closes it.

Stands back in her position and Mrs Manthers opens the door for her to leave.

She does, gazing at the floor.

**EXT. ORPHANAGE / TREE - DAY**

She's back at the tree, notebook opened on her lap.

CATHY

My parents are alive they were asking for me!

She turns the page: **Are you sure?**

She nods.

Turns the page: **How sure are you?**

CATHY (CONT'D)

A lot.

Page: **Are you positive?**

Nod.

Page: **How positive are you?**

CATHY (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Here! I need to find this person.

She shows the notebook the signature "Sarah Anderson" on the note.

She flips the page but it's blank.

Few more pages.

Blank.

She's getting irritated now until a map, drawn in the style of a pirate's treasure map, shows her where to go.

She smiles.

At the top reads: **"X" marks the spot!**

**INT. ORPHANAGE / CORRIDOR - DAY**

With her notebook by her side Cathy hurries through the corridor and at the-

**EXIT**

-takes out the set of keys, unlocks the door and leaves.

**EXT. OLD LOOKING CHURCH - DAY**

Cathy's in high spirits staring at her notebook which leads the way to the church.

Her notebook flies out of her her hand and onto the ground.

It flips open and the words: ***In the church --> Look for your NAME.***

**INT. CHURCH / RECORDS OFFICE - DAY**

Cathy tiptoes inside.

The place's clear.

But within a matter of seconds it's is turned into a tip with old directory books, records, and censuses strewn about.

At one moment she takes a sly sip of Christ's blood to quench her thirst.

Pulling out birth certificates and going through them, she finds hers:

D.O.B; Place of birth; Her name (written as 'Female'); Her sex; Father's name (blank); Mother's name (Sarah Mac Phelan); Father's occupation (blank); Date registered; Name of registrar; and finally County.

Cathy stares at it for a moment in awe and holds it up to the light... And Jesus and Mary.

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**

Cathy stands at the gate staring at the house holding her birth certificate and notebook opened.

She puts on a brave face and approaches the door.

She glances at her notebook and smiles.

The door opens.

Cathy looks up.

Holds her notebook tighter.

Looses her smile.

Mrs. Manthers is at the door towering over her.

**EXT. ORPHANAGE / TREE - DAY**

Catherine's back at the tree staring at her notebook opened on her lap.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
She can't raise you because it's  
a very difficult situation-

**INT. ORPHANAGE / OFFICE - DAY**

Catherine's sitting across from a the WOMAN who's face we don't see but voice we hear.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
-for her. She's not fit for  
anything.

The voice fades out and-

CUT BACK TO:

**EXT. ORPHANAGE / TREE - DAY**

Catherine turns the page and crude child drawings are shown.

First page: Showing a mother in bed cradling a baby wrapped in a pink tattered blanket.

Second page: The child being taken away from the mother by a fat woman (Mrs Manthers).

Third page: The child (Catherine) in front of the orphanage.

Fourth page: Catherine by a tree looking down at a notebook containing the image of a mother in bed cradling a baby.

Last page: The End.

CATHERINE  
(hopeful)  
Thanks.

She closes the notebook and walks off.

FADE OUT.

THE END