

LITTLE OYSTERS

Written by

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Based on

"The Walrus and the Carpenter" by Lewis Carroll

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SECURITY ROOM - DAY

An intricate setup of computers and files. MARY-ANNE CARPENTER (37, Asian-American) works behind the system.

A sticky note nearby: "PICK UP ALICE AFTER SCHOOL! - CAROL".

She reads over a code on the computer. A word catches her eye: "WALRUS".

Another computer screen beside hers' displays the security system's firewall still down.

Mary types away on her computer, adjusting the code.

The firewall changes from "INACTIVE" to "ACTIVE".

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Mary gets in her car. She drives through town, right past--

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

SCHOOL BELL RINGS. ELEMENTARY STUDENTS file out of the building, rushing into the arms of WAITING PARENTS.

ALICE (7) hurries out into the parking lot. She scans the area, disappointed she cannot find her mother.

INT. GYM - DAY

A pile of work clothes sit on the bench. Mary, in her workout gear, strikes a punching bag.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

CAROL CARPENTER (38, ) preps for dinner on a countertop. The front door CLICKS open offscreen.

CAROL  
Hey, honey.

The door CLICKS closed. Mary enters, pecks her wife's cheek.

MARY-ANNE  
Hey.

Carol looks out into the hall, then after her wife. Mary walks into--

INT. CITY APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

She kicks some scattered toys out of the way, removes excess items (jacket, briefcase, etcetera).

Carol steps into the doorway, whisking in a large bowl.

CAROL  
Where's Alice?

Realization dawns on Mary.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh, shit.

Mary pulls on her jacket, grabs her keys. She walks past Carol.

CAROL  
Seriously, Mary? I can't believe you!

MARY-ANNE  
I'm sorry.

CAROL  
Honestly!

Mary exits the home.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Alice exits, candy bar in hand. She looks at the crumpled dollar and coins in her hand, a sticky note still attached: "LUNCH MONEY! HAVE A GOOD DAY AT SCHOOL! LOVE - MAMA".

She stuffs the money in her pocket, walks down the street.

A white sedan approaches, slows down beside Alice. TWO MEN, DEE and DUM (33, twins) sit inside. Dum peers out the passenger seat; Dee behind the wheel.

DUM  
Hey, kid.

Alice glances at them, keeps walking. Dee drives alongside her.

DUM  
Hey, do you think you can help me?  
I lost my cat.

She glances, tempted, but keeps walking. Dum fumbles in his wallet, pulls out a picture of a kitten. He holds it out to her.

DUM  
This is her. Have you seen her?

ALICE  
No.

DUM  
Well, I'm new around here. Do you think you could help me find her? Please? I'd hate for anything bad to happen to her.

Alice stops, considers this. She approaches the car. Dum opens the back door from his seat, she climbs in.

ALICE  
What's her name?

DUM  
Uh... Dinah.

They drive off.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Mary pulls up to the empty parking lot. She looks around; Alice is nowhere in sight. Panic sets in.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary sits in a chair, phone held to her ear. Carol paces in front of her, also on her phone. She shoots dirty looks at her wife.

CAROL  
Hey, Bernie, Alice wouldn't happen to be with Jeremy today, would she?

MARY-ANNE  
No, thank you, Amy. See you at the bake sale.

Both hang up, look to each other. Carol's chest heaves with oncoming SOBS. She quickly exits the room. Mary looks at her phone, dials 9-1-1.

EXT. WALRUS'S HOME - DAY

The tweedles park the car outside. They exit, Alice climbs out of the car.

ALICE  
Did she get lost over here?

DEE  
Yeah. You know, I think we should take a look in the house again just in case.

Dum surveys the area, Dee bends down to her height.

ALICE  
I don't think I should.

DUM  
(to Dee)  
We're good.

Dee swings Alice up over his shoulder. Alice SHRIEKS, pounds her fists against his back.

Dum covers her mouth. The men enter--

INT. WALRUS'S HOME - DAY

The place is set up a little too neatly; clearly a front. Dum slams the door behind them. Dee carries a protesting Alice to a back door.

INT. WALRUS'S BASEMENT - DAY

Alice SHRIEKS, kicks, fights Dee as much as she can. Dee carries her downstairs, tosses her on the hard cement.

SEVERAL CHILDREN of different ages, races, genders huddle against the back wall. They look in fear at the Tweedles.

A MAN- "WALRUS" (52, fat, resembles a walrus with his stature and facial hair)- steps out from what might be his office; a door in the wall, leading to another room. He smokes a large cigar, uses a cane.

WALRUS  
Didn't I tell you to be careful with them?

DEE  
Sorry.

Alice scrambles to her feet, tries to rush past the men up the stairs. The Tweedles push her back.

A CLIENT follows after Walrus, along with a frightened BOY (10), dripping wet, under his grip.

CLIENT  
I'll be leaving then.

Walrus nods to Dum. Dum gestures for the client and boy to follow him up the stairs.

Alice shuffles back as Walrus nears her. He grips her chin, looks her over. Alice COUGHS as cigar smoke clouds her face.

WALRUS  
Get her cleaned up.

Walrus exits upstairs. Dee grabs Alice by the wrist, yanks her toward the back of the basement where a shower is attached to the wall.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

On a television screen, Mary and Carol watch footage of the kidnapping from a surveillance camera at an intersection.

Carol breaks down in SOBS. Mary tries to keep her devastation in, but she clearly struggles. She notices the general store sign in the background.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

A has-been store that's run down. A BORED TEEN works the cash register, clearly nursing a hangover. Nametag: DEREK. Mary approaches.

MARY-ANNE  
Can I speak to your manager?

Derek WINCES, walks to a back door. He peeks his head in.

The MANAGER (56, fried hair, homemade hat) steps out of the door. Nametag: HARRIETTE.

HARRIETTE  
Can I help you?

Mary places a picture of Alice on the counter.

MARY-ANNE  
Have you seen this girl?

HARRIETTE

The police already questioned us  
about this. We don't know anything.

Mary shoves a picture of the car from the security footage on  
the counter.

MARY-ANNE

What about this car?

HARRIETTE

Ma'am--

Mary SLAMS her hands down on the counter, intimidating.

MARY-ANNE

Have you seen the damn car?

Harriette steps back. A couple of customers stop and stare.

HARRIETTE

You have to leave.

MARY-ANNE

I just want to know--

HARRIETTE

Leave or I'm calling the cops.

Mary looks between Harriette and the curious onlookers. She  
grabs her photos, hurries out of the store.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Mary walks down the street, stares at the photo of the car.  
She looks off in the direction the car took off at.

A security camera stares down the road from a nearby store.

MONTAGE:

INT. STORE - DAY

Mary enters, shows the MANAGER pictures of her daughter and  
the car. The manager waves her back to the--

INT. STORE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Mary watches footage of the car traveling down the road past  
a--

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Mary enters--

INT. MOVIE THEATER SECURITY ROOM - DAY

SECURITY GUARD sits back while Mary copies security footage files onto a flash drive.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, OFFICE - DAY

Mary sits at her computer, several different video files pulled up from security footage.

Pictures of the car driving down the streets fly out of the printer. Mary tapes them to a wall in the room; she makes a trail.

Mary steps back, takes a picture of her work.

END MONTAGE.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mary strides to the front desk, flash drive in hand. The SECRETARY takes notice.

Mary sets the flash drive down on the desk.

MARY-ANNE

I need to speak to Detective March.

SECRETARY

He's a little busy at the moment.

MARY-ANNE

It's involving my case.

SECRETARY

He's out on patrols. Do you want me to leave a message?

Mary looks down at the flash drive. Irritated, she stuffs it back in her pocket.

MARY-ANNE

No, don't worry about it. I'll take care of it.

Secretary shrugs, returns to her computer; a game of solitaire. Mary exits.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, OFFICE - NIGHT

The computer screen illuminates the room. Mary, exhausted, eyes bloodshot, e-mails--

INSERT: "March@.San\_Davis\_Police.com"

Files upload successfully on the screen. She hits send.

Carol steps into the corridor.

CAROL  
Are you almost done?

Mary doesn't really acknowledge her, distracted.

CAROL  
I need to use the computer. We need more missing posters.

MARY-ANNE  
Uh-huh.

Carol shifts in the doorway, uncomfortable.

CAROL  
I need another hundred.

MARY-ANNE  
Yeah. Sure.

Carol turns to leave. She glances back at her wife; Mary's zoned out, like a zombie. Carol SIGHS, exits.

Mary clicks out of the e-mails and pulls the security footage back up. On another tab, she has Google Maps up.

On a notepad, she draws herself a makeshift map of the route, scribbling street names.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Mary sits at her desk, completely out of it. She stares down at the map she drew, trying to decipher it.

On her computer screen, the firewall changes to "INACTIVE".

A COWORKER beside her smokes from his vape. He glances at the screen, nudges her.

COWORKER  
Hey.

Mary jumps, startled. She looks to the screen, immediately pulls up the code and types.

As she goes through, she sees "WALRUS" again. She stops, stares at it.

On the back of her map, she writes down the name.

She types again. The firewall returns to "ACTIVE".

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Mary, in her car, pulls to the exit of the parking lot.

INT. MARY-ANNE'S CAR - DAY

She waits for the light to turn green. A car- the white sedan- passes her. She stares after it, anxious.

The light turns green.

She turns after the car.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Mary follows the car down the street. It veers right.

So does she.

They make a sudden left--

Mary drives right after.

The car cuts down an alleyway too small for Mary's vehicle.

INT. MARY-ANNE'S CAR - DAY

Mary glances down at the map on her passenger seat.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Mary drives off around a corner to--

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

The white sedan pulls of the alley way by the general store.

Mary's car SCREECHES as she turns at the intersection toward them.

The sedan speeds off to the left. Mary follows straight after them onto--

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAY

The white sedan speeds past a stop sign.

A MAN walking his dog crosses the street after them. Mary SLAMS on her breaks.

The white sedan disappears down the road.

Mary BLARES her horn at the man and his dog to hurry. The man flips her off, keeps walking.

Mary PEELS out into the street.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Mary spots the white sedan parked in front of a garage.

INT. MARY-ANNE'S CAR - DAY

She steers her car off into their yard, parks it.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Two teens watch her from the living room window. They quickly close the blinds when spotted.

A SUBURBAN MOTHER, donned in red, exits the home, furious.

SUBURBAN MOTHER  
What the hell?!

Mary storms up to her. The mother holds a baseball bat out to her.

MARY-ANNE  
Were you the one driving the car?

SUBURBAN MOTHER  
Who the fuck are you? Get off of my property!

MARY-ANNE  
Where the fuck is my daughter!

As Mary approaches the porch, the mother SWINGS the bat. Mary stumbles back in surprise.

SUBURBAN MOTHER

Why the fuck were you following my kids?!

MARY-ANNE

Where is my daughter!

SUBURBAN MOTHER

I'll have your damn head for this!

SIRENS sound nearby. Mary, desperate, runs for the door. The mother holds her off, standing in the doorway with the bat between them.

MARY-ANNE

Give me back my daughter!

Police cars arrive. Mary continues to try to force her way in the home. POLICE OFFICERS exit the vehicles.

An OFFICER pins Mary down. She looks into the home. The two teens stand a little down the hallway, car keys in hand.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mary sits in a cell, defeated.

Carol approaches behind a POLICE OFFICER. The officer unlocks the cell.

Carol refuses to look at her wife. Mary exits the cell, approaches the officer.

MARY-ANNE

You guys got my e-mail, right?

CAROL

Mary.

MARY-ANNE

I made a mistake, but if we can just work together I bet--

OFFICER

We appreciate the help, but I think you should leave the tracking to us, alright?

The officer pats her shoulder. Mary stares at him, disheartened.

MARY-ANNE

It was one mistake.

OFFICER

If you find any actual evidence,  
let us know.

Carol nudges Mary to leave. Mary glares at the officer, but follows her wife out.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary walks straight through the apartment toward her office. Carol follows behind.

CAROL

We need to talk.

Mary keeps walking.

Carol THROWS the car keys across the room, furious.

CAROL

Mary-Anne!

Mary stops, turns toward her wife. Carol walks toward her, clearly breaking down.

CAROL

You can't keep doing this, Mary!  
The police are working hard to find  
her--

MARY-ANNE

They haven't found her yet!

CAROL

Neither have you!

Carol falls back onto a chair, shoves her face in her hands.

Mary, slow, approaches her wife. She hugs her. Carol SOBS into her shoulder.

MARY-ANNE

I'm going to find her, Carol. No  
matter what it takes.

She kisses the top of Carol's head, exits into her office.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, OFFICE - DAY

Mary sits at her computer. A search engine from the dark web is on the screen. She looks to her notepad beside her, types in "WALRUS".

Several links for info on walruses appear on the screen.

Mary tries another search: "WALRUS TRAFFICKING".

New websites pop up; a few for selling baby walruses, but one stands out as a screenname- "WALRUS"- offers bids for "oysters". She clicks on it, confused.

Mary ignores most of the post, focuses on tidbits: "OYSTERS AGES 2-16 FOR SALE", "CONTACT ME AT thewalrus@onionmail.net".

MARY-ANNE  
(to herself)  
Oysters?

She pulls up a dark net e-mail website called "ONION MAIL". Mary puts in his e-mail. On another browser, she pulls up the website's code. She types.

After a few seconds, she logs into his e-mail.

Several e-mails consist of headers listing age and sex. Mary clicks the most recent one: "7, F".

She scans over the e-mails, but finds the client's address in the most recent one. She writes it down.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carol sits at the coffee table, waits anxiously by the phone.

Mary rushes out of the office.

CAROL  
Mary?

Mary rushes out of the apartment.

EXT. CITY APARTMENT - DAY

Mary grabs a fire extinguisher off of the wall. She leaves.

INT. WALRUS'S BASEMENT - DAY

Alice huddles with the other children. Walrus descends the stairs, another CLIENT- BILL (42, lizard-like)- behind him.

WALRUS

As you can see, we have a wide selection.

Walrus gestures toward the children. Many look down, avoid him. Alice sits beside another GIRL- EMMA- that's the same in age and hair color.

WALRUS

I believe this one might suit your tastes.

The client looks over Alice and Emma. The girls cling to each other, terrified.

BILL

I'll take her.

Walrus snaps his fingers. Dee and Dum approach the girls, drag one off screen. It's unclear which one is grabbed.

EXT. CLIENT'S HOME - DAY

Mary pulls up to Bill's home, parks. Fire extinguisher in hand, she barges into the home.

INT. CLIENT'S HOME, UPSTAIRS - DAY

Bill hears the commotion. He shoves the blonde girl into a room, locks the door behind her.

INT. CLIENT'S HOME, DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Mary explores the home, searching.

MARY-ANNE

Alice? Baby come out, mom's here for you!

Bill descends the stairs, gun in hand. He aims at Mary from behind.

A stair SQUEAKS.

Bill shoots. Mary narrowly dodges. The bullet hits the wall.

She rushes toward the stairs--

Bill shoots again, misses--

Mary sprays the fire extinguisher at him.

Bill knocks into the banister, but catches himself. Mary rushes past--

He shoots at her; the bullet hits the fire extinguisher--

WHITE SMOKE ERUPTS from the fire extinguisher, blinding both.

Mary COUGHS through it, runs upstairs--

Bill comes out of the smoke, smacks her with his gun--

Mary stumbles, but smacks him with the extinguisher--

He falls down the stairs. The smoke dissipates.

She throws open a few doors, frantic. She reaches the locked one; bangs it down with the fire extinguisher.

Emma sits curled up at the bottom of the walk-in closet.

Mary tears up, devastated. A GUNSHOT pierces the silence. Mary glances back; Bill, shaky, ascends the stairs.

She gestures for Emma to leave the closet--

EMMA

Look out!

Bill, behind Mary, is about to shoot--

Mary throws a punch, he stumbles back, drops the gun over the balcony.

Bill grabs her neck, chokes her--

Mary claws at his hands, losing air--

Emma grabs the empty fire extinguisher, throws it at Bill.

His knee buckles, he stumbles over in pain, lets Mary's neck go.

Mary punches him. He falls over the balcony.

Mary and Emma rush down, Mary grabs the gun from the floor, stops, grabs his wallet.

Bill GROANS. Emma gives Bill a kick for good measure. They run out.

EXT. CLIENT'S HOME - DAY

Mary unlocks the door, she and Emma dive in.

INT. MARY-ANNE'S CAR - DAY

The girls buckle up, speed off.

MARY-ANNE  
What's your name?

EMMA  
Emma White.

MARY-ANNE  
Okay, Emma, I'm going to need you to do a big favor for me. Try to direct me to the bad guys' house, okay?

Emma nods, examines where they are.

EMMA  
Turn that way.

Mary turns left.

EXT. WALRUS'S HOUSE - DAY

Mary and Emma pull in front of the home. Emma starts to get out, Mary gently pushes her back in her seat.

MARY-ANNE  
Stay in here, alright?

Mary pulls out her cellphone, gives it to her.

MARY-ANNE  
My location's on. Just call the police and get them here, alright? Go hide in the backseat.

Emma nods, crawls to the back. Mary tucks the gun in her pocket and rifles through Bill's wallet. She shove his cash in her wallet, exits the car, approaches the door.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Dee opens the door, surprised.

DEE  
Can I help you?

MARY-ANNE  
I saw your advertisement. I was  
looking to make a purchase.

Dee starts to close the door.

DEE  
I don't know what you're talking  
about.

Mary shoves her foot in between the door frame.

MARY-ANNE  
I have the cash.

Dee starts to shut the door. Walrus shoves Dee out of the  
way, steps forward.

WALRUS  
Did I hear you correctly, my dear?

Mary shuffles through her wallet, pulls out several hundreds.

Walrus opens the door. Mary enters, Dee glances around the  
yard after her before shutting it.

INT. WALRUS'S HOUSE - DAY

Mary looks around, visibly stressed. Walrus gestures for her  
to follow him. Dee trails after her.

INT. WALRUS'S BASEMENT - DAY

Walrus leads Mary into the basement. Dum gives his brother a  
confused look.

Walrus snatches the wallet from Mary's hand, flips through  
the cash.

Dee and Dum frisk Mary over, much to her discomfort. They  
find the gun, Dum pockets it.

WALRUS  
What are you interested in?

Mary looks over the children, spots Alice.

MARY-ANNE  
A little girl.

WALRUS  
Is that it? Well, we have a couple  
of those.

Walrus gestures to a different set of girls, all a little  
older than Alice. Mary shakes her head.

MARY-ANNE  
I was thinking that one?

Mary points to Alice.

WALRUS  
She's out of your budget. Now, if  
you don't mind age range, we have--

MARY-ANNE  
No. I want that one.

WALRUS  
I don't make bargains.

MARY-ANNE  
Neither do I.

Walrus stops, TAPS his cane on the floor once.

The twins grab her arms, pull her back. Mary struggles,  
unsuccessful.

Walrus uses his cane to tilt Mary's chin up. They stare each  
other down.

Walrus SMACKS her with his cane.

ALICE  
Mom!

The men look between Alice and Mary.

WALRUS  
Oh, I see now. Isn't that sweet?

Walrus beats her with the cane repeatedly. Mary SCREECHES,  
struggles under the Tweedles's hold.

WALRUS  
I like to think myself as a fair  
person, but there are certain  
things I cannot tolerate. Children  
shouldn't neglected.

Alice CRIES, tries to rush up to her mother. Dum holds Mary still, Dee holds Alice back.

The cane leaves deep bruises in its wake. Blood drips from her mouth.

WALRUS

If you had bothered to pick her up  
from school, she wouldn't be here.  
But I fix those situations.

As Walrus beats her, Mary discreetly pulls the gun from Dum's belt.

WALRUS

The children here all go to someone  
that wants them.

Dum notices the movement.

DUM

Hey--

Mary grabs the gun, shoots his thigh. Dum SCREAMS, pulls back.

Walrus smacks his cane at Mary, she dodges.

Dee lets go of Alice, rushes at Mary--

She shoots him in the chest. He falls over, not dead.

Dum grabs her neck from behind--

Mary punches at his face, hits him in the eye. He retreats--

She shoots him in the stomach. She turns her gun on Walrus--

Walrus holds Alice up as hostage.

WALRUS

I think you should put the gun  
down.

Mary points the gun at him, hesitant. Alice WHIMPERS.

She sets her gun on the ground.

Walrus reaches into his pocket, pulls out his own gun. He points it at Mary, then at Alice.

SIRENS sound in the distance. He glances up, points it back to Mary.

Alice BITES DOWN on Walrus's hand. He YELLS in pain, smacks her away.

Mary fumbles for the gun, it skids across the floor.

Walrus shoots at her--

The bullet lodges into Mary's arm. She GASPS in pain, but grabs the gun.

She shoots at Walrus.

The bullet dives into his chest.

Walrus stumbles back. He shoots at her again, but the bullet goes into the wall.

Mary shoots him again; this time in his head. Walrus falls over, dead.

Police barge into the house upstairs. Alice runs to her mother. They embrace.

INT. CITY APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Carol, Mary, and Alice eat breakfast together at the table. Mary flips through a newspaper.

The front page headline reads: "THE CARPENTER CAUGHT THE WALRUS! A CHILD TRAFFICKING SCANDAL".

She flips to another page. An advertisement for her new Child Locating app- "CHILD LOCK"- sits on the bottom corner.

Carol clears her throat. Mary crumples up the newspaper, gets up, tosses it into the trash.

She rejoins her family at the table. They all eat in peace.

FADE OUT.