

JULIE

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

Civil War, actually

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

How long has Erica been caretaker?
What is her social status? Age?
What kind of dog is Jack?
What month is it?
Is there snow on the ground?

The island was engulfed in fog that morning. The air was still humid from last night's storm and the sun tried to break through and heat things up. Jack and I had begun our morning walk, and headed out to the center green in the middle of ^{Fort Warren} the fort. Within the confine of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped. Jack ran through it, barking and snapping in the confusion and joy of it. I wanted to feel the smooth cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, and even if I rolled up my jeans, it would feel like any other air. I threw the ball as far as I could, and it disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and eventually he was swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was reassuring.

The sunlight that managed to penetrate all the way down to my island did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ran after Jack, seeing just far enough ahead so that I didn't trip. I looked up for a second, my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. But when I strained to see, everything was still save for the swirling, earthbound clouds. Farther afield, I heard Jack begin to bark, this time he was serious, alerting me to something.

"Jack!" I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense

Use specifics of an historic site.

- At with hour

too many "s" sounds close together

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barking. The motion I'd seen in my peripheral vision couldn't have been Jack; he's too far away.

Did something happen 7 days ago?
Did she just start job?

"Jack!"

This time I called because I wanted him near me. For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station. Jack would not come to me; I had to go get him. The fog still looked like nearly a solid object, but there is a small circumference where my eyesight can penetrate, and eventually Jack's body appeared within this space.

body
+ 2

His body was taut, tail low and out straight, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack ^{was} is here. I called out, "Hello, who's there?"

in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer.

Why doesn't she have a leash?

I took my belt off and ^{gently slipped it over Jack's head to} used it as a leash. I walked purposefully away, trying to look unconcerned, and fighting off the urge to run.

raised?

I walked out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we are past the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack matched my pace, and kept close without me tugging on the homemade belt/leash. I knew without looking that he ^{was} s serious, tense—no open-mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.

My lungs burned from the cold air and my legs ached by the time I reached the door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock. I let Jack off his leash. I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes I did not like being the alpha.

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When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. First I grabbed the satellite phone off the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I looked out every window and contemplated calling Peter and asking him to send a boat out.

The fog had lifted clear of the island. I decided to call Maureen instead; she'd understand and calm me down and I wouldn't be embarrassed later.

Jack and I headed out again to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that leads to the perimeter trail on top of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned back and forth as we walked, from the interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island and found nothing amiss.

Below, the geese had claimed the yard as their simultaneous bathroom and kitchen. Sometimes I wonder that the Bible didn't find use for them as one of the plagues; they were always on the verge of destroying everything around them through the sheer force of their procreation and defecation. Would they be more likeable if there were fewer of them? I think not.

Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, this was the first time I was truly on watch, and now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine at the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping back out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, like I am now.

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, the relentless sunshine managed to restore a feeling of near normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just left of the station and listened to the comforting silence. That's when I noticed the bright sound

Who is he?

off?

Who is she?

Delete. extra

Why 1st?

first x 2

? P. 1 fog then concentrated shafts of sunlight

She's now sitting calm?

word choice

JULIE

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

of the dripping water fountain spigot. I remembered turning off the valve to that spigot weeks ago, to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures. Fear washed over me once again.

I tried to stay logical and calm, I first checked the garage where the water valve was, and the door was unlocked. But then I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. It's entirely possible; since I needed to get in and out of there fairly regularly with the golf cart, I didn't always lock it. Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

I grabbed the phone once again, and headed up to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. As Jack reached the top ahead of me, he stiffened, growled, and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, and I swiveled in time to see a man standing there next to a small fishing boat.

How easy it for a fishing boat to gain access to the island?

How far away is he?

He waved up at us, an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. He was far enough away that I knew I had time to call Peter. I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us. Jack's hackles were up, the barking continued.

Describe what she is doing standing still, waiting for the stranger? walking, running away from that direction?

Show more of Jack's physical reaction as the stranger approaches.

Ringing.

The guy is heading up the path.

The automated Parks Department answering system picks up.

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

I'm such an idiot.

HAVE HER HANG UP AND REDIAL!

Have stranger address Jack to soothe him (heard his name when Erica yelled it)

THIS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE QUITE A THRILLER OR MYSTERY OR ROMANCE — DEPENDING ON THE DIRECTION IN WHICH YOU TAKE THE READER.

INCLUDE DIALOGUE WITH MAUREEN DURING PHONE CALL. HOW MUCH CONTACT DOES SHE HAVE WITH THE MAINLAND? HOW WOULD SHE CROSS BOSTON HARBOR?

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – GEORGES ISLAND BY JOAN YENAWINE

Ynn

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

The island was engulfed in fog that morning. ^{I'm a little confused. "Humid" is already used. So wouldn't more sun increase it.} (The air was still humid from last night's storm and the sun tried to break through and heat things up) Jack and I had begun our morning walk, and headed out to the center green in the middle of the fort. Within the confine of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped ^{by what?} (Jack ran through it, barking and snapping ^{LOVE this! I can totally see it!} in the confusion and joy of it) I wanted to feel the smooth, cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, ~~and~~ even if I rolled up my jeans, ^{be specific} it would feel like any other air. I threw the ball as far as I could, and it disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and eventually ~~he~~ was swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was ~~reassuring~~ ^{reassured me re} — — — .

~~The~~ ^{began} sunlight that ~~managed~~ ^{through the fog} to penetrate ~~all the way down to my island~~ ^{mat} did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ran after Jack, ^{awkward} (seeing just far enough ahead) so that I didn't trip. I looked up for a second, ^{So she'd been looking down?} my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. ~~But when~~ I strained to see, ^{but} everything was still save for the swirling, earthbound clouds. Farther afield, ~~I heard~~ Jack ^{began} ~~begin~~ to bark, ^{but} this time he was serious, alerting me to something.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT - GEORGES ISLAND BY JOAN YENAWINE

Called, expecting him
"Jack!" I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense barking. The motion I'd seen in my peripheral vision couldn't have been Jack; he was too far away.
men did she become certain she'd seen something?

"Jack!"
So called out to him again.
This time I called because I wanted him near me, For the first time in a week, I was I'd left scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station. Jack would not come to me; I had to go get him. The fog still looked like nearly solid, but there is a small circumference where my eyesight can penetrate, and I spotted eventually Jack's body appeared within this space.

His body was taut, tail low and out straight, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack was here. I called out, "Hello, who's there?" I called out, in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer.

I took my belt off and used it as a leash, I walked purposefully away, trying to look unconcerned, and fighting off the urge to run.

I walked out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we are past the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack matched my pace, and kept close without me tugging on the homemade leash. I knew without looking that he was serious, tense—no open-mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.

My lungs burned from the cold air and my legs ached by the time I reached the door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock. I let Jack off his leash, I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes ~~like me~~ being the alpha wasn't

Too much word?
there's no reason to be scared.
nervous, maybe, but scared?

Watch your tenses

Find another word

Which order how to her anxiety?

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – GEORGES ISLAND BY JOAN YENAWINE

Marching

~~When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. First I grabbed the satellite phone off~~

the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I looked out every window and contemplated calling Peter and asking him to send a boat out. } Why?? I don't get it threat

The fog had lifted clear of the island. I decided to call Maureen instead; she'd understand

and calm me down, and I wouldn't be embarrassed later.

TRANSITION - I'd like to see her decide to go back out smile on the phone - if anything happens someone will know

Jack and I headed out again to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that led to the perimeter trail on top

of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned ^{the area} back and forth as we walked, from the interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island and found nothing amiss.

Below, the geese had claimed the yard as their simultaneous bathroom and kitchen.

Sometimes I wonder ^{what kind of?} that the Bible didn't find use for them as one of the plagues; they were always on the verge of destroying everything around them through the sheer force of their

procreation and defecation. Would they be more likeable if there were fewer of them? I think not. } Imagine you live in another part of the country where they don't have these geese. Describe them.

Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, ^{For} this was the first time I ^{felt} truly on watch, and ^{empathizing} now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine

~~At~~ the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping ~~back~~ out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, ^{implied} like I am now.

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, the ^{and now} relentless sunshine managed to restore a feeling of ~~near~~ normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just

left of the station and listened to the comforting silence. That's when I noticed the bright sound

how does one listen to silence?

right word?

I'm assuming Maureen is earlier in the book, I'd know why she feels this way

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT - GEORGES ISLAND BY JOAN YENA WINE

of the dripping water fountain spigot) I remembered turning off the valve to that spigot weeks ago, to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures. ^{I fear} Fear washed over me once again.

dripping water isn't that scary! fear is too big a word

I tried to stay logical and calm, ^{checking} first checked the garage where the water valve was, and the door was unlocked. But ~~then~~ I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. It's ^{was} entirely possible since I needed to get in and out of there fairly regularly with the golf cart, I didn't always lock it.

Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

^{Grabbing} I grabbed the phone once again, ^I and headed up to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. ^{where was it, we never saw it leave her hand} As Jack reached the top ahead of me, ^{and} he stiffened, growled and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, and I swiveled in time to see a man standing there next to a small fishing boat.

He waved up at us, ^{how does she know he's bad?} an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. He was far enough away that I knew I had time to call Peter. I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us. Jack's hackles were up, ^{and his} the barking ~~continued~~.

Ringing.

^{began} The guy ~~is~~ heading up the path, just as

The automated Parks Department answering system picks up.

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

I'm such an idiot.

Same paragraph

Watch your tenses - they're all over the place there wasn't enough of a reason for her to be so nervous - she thought she heard something, the dog was barking - that's really not a big deal. Need a better threat (unless she's already a victim & this is PTSD).

I DIDN'T BELIEVE THIS

PROSE - try to eliminate many of those "I's"

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

Ed
how do we know
this is a woman?

what? where? when in the year?

passive

ambiguous

The island was engulfed in fog that morning. The air was still humid from last night's storm and the sun ^{was trying?} tried to break through and heat things up. Jack and I had begun our morning walk, and headed out to the center green in the middle of the fort. Within the confine ^{from where?} of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped. Jack ran through it, barking and snapping in the confusion and joy of it. I wanted to feel the smooth cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, and even if I rolled up my jeans, it would feel like any other air. I threw the ball as far as I could, and it disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and eventually he was swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was reassuring.

who?

usual
void

Jack's
dog
hopeful?

The sunlight that managed to penetrate all the way down to my island did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ran after Jack, seeing just far enough ahead so that I didn't trip. I looked up for a second, my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. But when I strained to see, everything was still save for the swirling, earthbound clouds. Farther afield, I heard Jack begin to bark, this time he was serious, alerting me to something.

why is
this
prob
not usual

"Jack!" I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense

why is
son etc.
to worry
about?

- good tension
- a little more detail would be good
- I need to know what is "usual" before I can tell what's un-usual.
- also, for suspense: what is she trying to achieve at each point.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

barking. The motion I'd seen in my peripheral vision couldn't have been Jack; ^{he was} he's too far away.

"Jack!"

This time I called because I wanted him near me. For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone ^{why?} with me, or the pepper spray ^{why?}, but they were both back at the ranger station. Jack would not come to me; I had to go get him. The fog still looked like ^{has} nearly a solid object, but there is a small circumference where my eyesight can penetrate, and ^{could} eventually Jack's body appeared within this space.

His body was taut, tail low and out straight, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack ^{was} is here. I called out, "Hello, who's there?" in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer. ^{we need to be told that there's supposed to be no one there}

I took my belt off and used it as a leash. I walked purposefully away, trying to look ^{were tense} unconcerned, and fighting ^{off} the urge to run.

I walked out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we are past the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack ^{panicked no more} matched my pace, and kept close without me tugging on the homemade belt leash. I knew ^{he was} [without looking] that he's serious, tense—no open-mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.

My lungs burned from the cold air and my legs ached by the time I reached the door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock ^{ed} I let Jack off his leash. I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the ^{AC} all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes I did not like being the alpha. ¹

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. First I grabbed the satellite phone off the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I looked out every window and contemplated calling Peter and asking him to send a boat out.

The fog had lifted clear of the island. I decided to call Maureen instead; she'd understand and calm me down and I wouldn't be embarrassed later.

Jack and I headed out again to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that leads to the perimeter trail on top of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned back and forth as we walked, from the interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island and found nothing amiss.

Below, the geese had claimed the yard as their simultaneous bathroom and kitchen. Sometimes I wonder that the Bible didn't find use for them as one of the plagues; they were always on the verge of destroying everything around them through the sheer force of their procreation and defecation. Would they be more likeable if there were fewer of them? I think not.

Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, this was the first time I was truly on watch, and now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine at the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping back out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, like I am now.

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, the relentless sunshine managed to restore a feeling of near-normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just left of the station and listened to the comforting silence. That's when I noticed the bright sound

use conversation to enlighten vision

what's a way from nature

1

1

1

?

out of

who?

who?

led

conversation? when does it end

ed whether

se se

was ambiguous
tenses

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

from the
of ~~the~~ dripping water fountain spigot. I remembered turning off the valve to that spigot weeks ago, to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures. Fear washed over me once again.

I tried to stay logical and calm, I first checked the garage where the water valve was, and the door was unlocked. But then I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. *It was* It's entirely possible; since I needed to get in and out of there *fairly* regularly with the golf cart, I didn't always lock it.

Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

When did the conversation end?
I grabbed the phone once again, and headed up to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. As Jack reached the top ahead of me, he stiffened, growled and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, and I swiveled in time to see a man standing there next to a small fishing boat. *getting out of?*

He waved up at us, an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. He was far enough away that I knew I had time to call Peter. I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us. Jack's hackles were up, the barking continued.

Ringing.

was
The guy is heading up the path.

The automated Parks Department answering system picks up. *ed*

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

I'm such an idiot.

how big? ground on beach? at dock?

why is he a bad guy?

Jenni's Comments

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

Whenever submitting a manuscript always double space the text. Indent new paragraphs.

- Don't start with weather

The island was engulfed in fog that morning. The air was still humid from last night's storm and the sun tried to break through and heat things up. Jack and I had begun our morning walk, and headed out to the center green in the middle of the fort. Within the confines of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped. Jack ran through it, barking and snapping in the confusion and joy of it. I wanted to feel the smooth cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, and even if I rolled up my jeans, it would feel like any other air. I threw the ball as far as I could, and it disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and eventually he was swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was reassuring.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5"

Comment [PHS IS1]: Is using 'center' and 'middle' redundant?

Comment [PHS IS2]: Good verb

The sunlight that managed to penetrate all the way down to my island did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ran after Jack, seeing just far enough ahead so that I didn't trip. I looked up for a second, my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. But when I strained to see, everything was still, save for the swirling, earthbound clouds. Farther afield, I heard Jack begin to bark, this time he was serious, alerting me to something.

✓ Comment [PHS IS3]: Try to avoid the verbs hear, see, felt. Don't say she heard it. Just tell us what's happening.

"Jack!" I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense barking. The motion I'd seen in my peripheral vision couldn't have been Jack; he ~~is~~ was too far away.

✓ Comment [PHS IS4]: Stay consistent with verb tense. If it's her inner thoughts then it can be in present tense but then it should be italicized so the reader knows it's internal thought.

"Jack!"

This time I called because I wanted him near me. For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station. Jack would not come to me; I had to go get him. The fog was still ~~looked like nearly~~ a solid object, but there is was a small circumference where my eyesight ~~can penetrate~~, and eventually Jack's body appeared within this space.

His body was taut, tail low and out straight, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack is was there.

I called out, "Hello, who's there?" in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer.

I took my belt off and used it as a leash. I walked purposefully away, trying to look unconcerned, and fighting ~~off~~ the urge to run.

I walked out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we are were past the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack matched my pace, and kept close without me tugging on the homemade belt/leash. ~~I knew without looking that he's~~ He was serious, tense—no open-mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.

My lungs burned from the cold air, and my legs ached by the time I reached the station door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock. I let Jack off his leash. I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes I did not like being the alpha.

Comment [PHS IS5]: Avoid adverbs that don't add much to the description

Comment [PHS IS6]: Watch the verb tenses. Stay in past tense since that's how you started.

Comment [PHS IS7]: Start a new paragraph when the speaker changes.

Comment [PHS IS8]: If she's being assertive then make the dialogue sound more assertive. Don't say Hello. Maybe just ask "Who's there!"

Comment [PHS IS9]: Why? To keep the dog close to her?

Comment [PHS IS10]: Don't say she knew. Just say what is happening. It gives it immediacy. The reader will understand that she knows what's going on with the dog.

When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. First I grabbed the satellite phone off the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I looked out every window and contemplated calling Peter and asking him to send a boat out.

~~(keep this with above paragraph)~~ The fog had lifted clear of the island. I decided to call Maureen instead; she'd understand and calm me down, and I wouldn't be embarrassed later.

Jack and I headed out again to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that ~~led~~ leads to the perimeter trail on top of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned ~~back and forth as we walked, from the the~~ interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island and found nothing amiss.

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Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, this was the first time I was truly on watch, and now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine at the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping back out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, like I am now.

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, ~~and~~ the relentless sunshine ~~managed to restore~~ a feeling of near normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just left of the station and listened to the comforting silence. That's when I noticed the ~~bright~~ sound of the dripping

Comment [PHS IS11]: Does she have the pepper spray ready to use? Any other weapons like a screwdriver or a walking stick?

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Comment [PHS IS12]: Give us a snippet of the conversation. At this point we still don't know she's completely alone on the island.

Comment [PHS IS13]: Move this paragraph up so you tell us earlier that she's completely alone on the island. Will add tension since we know she has no one to run to.

water fountain spigot. I ~~remembered turning had turned~~ off the valve ~~to that spigot~~ weeks ago, to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures. Fear washed over me once again.

I tried to stay logical and calm, I first checked the garage where the water valve was, ~~and t~~The door was unlocked. ~~But then I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. Had I left it that way?~~ It's entirely possible; since I needed to get in and out of there fairly regularly with the golf cart, I didn't always lock it. Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

I grabbed the phone ~~once~~ again, and ~~headed up~~ ~~climbed/hiked~~ to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. As Jack reached the top ahead of me, he stiffened, growled and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, ~~and I swiveled in time to see a~~ A man ~~was~~ standing there next to a small fishing boat.

He waved up at us, an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. He was far enough away, ~~that I knew~~ I had time to call Peter. I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us. Jack's hackles were up, the barking continued.

Ringing.

The guy is heading up the path.

The automated Parks Department answering system picks up.

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

I'm such an idiot.

This is great. Gets right to the action and builds tension. The writing is solid.

If he's on the beach then
was he the movement
she saw in the fog?

Comment [PHS IS14]: Don't need this adverb

Comment [PHS IS15]: When did she end her conversation with Maureen?

Comment [PHS IS16]: Find stronger verb

Comment [PHS IS17]: Like avoiding see and hear, avoid remember and know when possible.

Comment [PHS IS18]: Is this inner thoughts? If so then italicize.

DAVE

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

This section emphasizes the moodiness of living by the sea. The fog and wind, etc are well done. Juxtapositioning of tranquility and the potential threat is well done. Always good to have a woman in peril. It grabs the reader's attention.

I really liked this section and would continue reading.

isolation is a good hook
most horror stories use this technique

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

The island was engulfed in *(early morning)* fog ~~that morning~~. The air was still humid from last night's storm(.) ~~and the~~ The sun tried to break through and heat things up. Jack and I had begun our morning walk(.), ~~and We~~ headed out to the center green in the middle of the fort. Within the confine of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped*(in, under, because of... something)*. Jack ran through it, barking and snapping in the confusion and joy of it. I wanted to feel the smooth cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, and even if I rolled up my jeans, it would feel like any other air. *(nice)* I threw the ball as far as I could(.), ~~and it It~~ disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and eventually he was swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was reassuring. *(great visuals but too many ands)*

The sunlight that managed to penetrate all the way down to my island did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ran after Jack, seeing just far enough ahead so that I didn't trip. I looked up for a second, my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. But when I strained

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

to see, everything was still save for the swirling, earthbound clouds. Farther afield, I heard Jack begin to bark, this time he was serious, alerting me to something. *(good. Something breaking up the tranquility of the scene)*

“Jack!” I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense barking. The motion I’d seen in my peripheral vision couldn’t have been Jack; he’s too far away.

“Jack!”

This time I called because I wanted him near me. For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station. Jack would not come to me; I had to go get him. The fog still looked like nearly a solid object, but there is a small circumference where my eyesight can penetrate, and eventually Jack’s body appeared within this space. *(eerie)*

His body was taut, tail low and out straight, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack is here. I called out, “Hello, who’s there?” in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer.

I took my belt off and used it as a leash. I walked purposefully away, trying to look unconcerned, and fighting off the urge to run.

I walked out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we are past the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack matched my pace, and kept close without me tugging on the homemade belt/leash. I knew without looking that he’s serious, tense—no open-mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

My lungs burned from the cold air and my legs ached by the time I reached the door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock. I let Jack off his leash. I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes I did not like being the alpha.

When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. First I grabbed the satellite phone off the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I looked out every window and contemplated calling Peter *(was he identified earlier in the story?)* and asking him to send a boat out.

The fog had lifted clear of the island. I decided to call Maureen *(again, identified earlier in the story?)* instead; she'd understand and calm me down and I wouldn't be embarrassed later.

Jack and I headed out again *(have you justified why she's searching again? Seems a bit contrived unless there's a good reason to go back into potential danger.)* to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that ~~leads~~ *led* to the perimeter trail on top of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned back and forth as we walked, from the interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island and found nothing amiss.

Below, the geese had claimed the yard as their simultaneous bathroom and kitchen.

Sometimes I wonder that the Bible didn't find use for them as one of the plagues; they were always on the verge of destroying everything around them through the sheer force of their procreation and defecation. Would they be more likeable if there were fewer of them? I think not.

(The above paragraph seems out of place. The tension you built up deflates as the reader begins to think about geese and so on.)

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, this was the first time I was truly on watch, and now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine at the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping back out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, like I am now.

(I really like how you keep the potential threat on the verge of her – and our – thoughts)

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, the relentless sunshine *(when did the fog break?)* managed to restore a feeling of near normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just left of the station and listened to the comforting silence. That's when I noticed the bright sound of the dripping water fountain spigot. I remembered turning off the valve to that spigot weeks ago, ~~to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures~~. Fear washed over me once again.

I tried to stay logical and calm(.). I first checked the garage where the water valve was(.), ~~and the~~ *The* door was unlocked. But then I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. ~~It's entirely possible; since I needed to get in and out of there fairly regularly with the golf cart, I didn't always lock it.~~ *(No need to justify the unlocked door.)* Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

I grabbed the phone once again, and headed up to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. As Jack reached the top ahead of me, he stiffened, growled and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, ~~and~~ . I swiveled in time to see a man standing there next to a small fishing boat.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – JOAN YENAWINE

He waved up at us, an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. He was far enough away ^{Keep it close} that I knew I had time to call Peter. I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us. Jack's hackles were up, the barking continued.

Ringing.

The guy is heading up the path.

The automated Parks Department answering system picks up.

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

I'm such an idiot.

Really good section. Well thought out and with some editing, this will work quite well.

Susan

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – *GEORGES ISLAND* BY JOAN YENAWINE

Summary: Erica is the lone winter caretaker out on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. With only her dog for company, every day she hikes the island which is home to a decommissioned fort from the Revolutionary War era. She is gaining confidence and becoming comfortable with solitude, until one foggy morning she begins to suspect she's not alone.

~~The island was engulfed in fog that morning. The air was still humid from last night's storm and the sun tried to break through and heat things up.~~ Jack and I ~~had begun~~ left the ranger station for our morning walk, ~~and headed out~~ heading for to the center green in the middle of the island's fort. Within the confine of the cold stone walls, the fog was roiling, beginning to lift, but for now it was still trapped. Jack ran through it, barking and snapping in the confusion and joy of it. I wanted to feel the smooth cottony veil of nearly solid air against my legs, but it was just an illusion, and even if I rolled up my jeans, it would feel like any other air.

I threw the ball as far as I could, and it disappeared into the mist. Jack ran ahead and ~~eventually he was~~ became swallowed up into the white void as well. The tinkling of his collar and tags was reassuring.

The sunlight that managed to penetrate all the way down to my island did so in concentrated shafts, ethereal beams of light. I was giddy. The light, the air, the clouds—the whole display was just for me. I ~~ran~~ scurried after Jack, ~~seeing~~ able to see just far enough ahead so that I didn't trip on anything. I ~~looked~~ glanced up for a second, my attention caught by a flash of motion to the left. But when I strained to see, everything was still save for the swirling, earthbound clouds.

Comment [s1]: Starting with weather is considered a no-no if it can be avoided. Weave the weather into the following sentences without having it dominate. It's really there already; you don't need the first two sentences.

Comment [s2]: Insert a transition sentence here that gets them from the station to the fort, concentrating on details that matter. Their aloneness in the fog, something like that, but just setting the scene. Perhaps she is fingering the ball in one hand as she follows him. This is an unusual scene—a woman caretaker on an island. Make it obvious at once and don't worry so much about the weather beyond setting the atmosphere. Does she wear a uniform? Do her keys jangle?

Comment [s3]: Love this sentence.

Comment [s4]: Watch tense throughout

Comment [s5]: Because you were afraid of him getting lost, or of being alone? I didn't get the feeling until now that you were nervous at all.

Comment [s6]: Not sure of punctuation here

Comment [s7]: Watch usage

Comment [s8]: Why glancing up if the flash of motion was to the left? Also, if you are running after Jack, are you watching for him or are you watching the ground so you don't trip? I know this is being picky but think about step-by-step what is happening and then fix it. The writing is very good; just don't want you to confuse the reader.

Comment [s9]: Good phrase

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – *GEORGES ISLAND* BY JOAN YENAWINE

Farther afield, I heard Jack begin to bark. ~~The serious tone of it caught me off-guard (or something like that)~~ this time he was serious, alerting me to something. A warning.

I stiffened.

“Jack!” I wanted him to stop barking, to come running to me with his usual goofy grin, letting me know there was nothing to worry about after all, but he continued his staccato, intense barking. The motion I’d seen in my peripheral vision couldn’t have been Jack; he’s too far away.

For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station.

“Jack!”

This time I called because I wanted him near me. ~~For the first time in a week, I was scared. I wished I had the satellite phone with me, or the pepper spray, but they were both back at the ranger station.~~ But Jack would not come to me; ~~I had~~ I’d have to go get to him. The fog still looked like nearly a solid object, but there ~~is~~ was a small circumference where my eyesight can could penetrate, and eventually Jack’s body appeared ~~within this space.~~

His body was taut —, tail low and out straight —, but he glanced back when he heard me behind him. He relaxed now that the alpha of his pack is was herewith him. He was the lucky one.

I called out, “Hello, who’s there?” in as assertive a voice as I could manage, and was happy there was no answer.

I took my belt off and used it as a leash. I walked purposefully away, trying to look unconcerned, and fighting off the urge to run.

Comment [s10]: Something like this—give us a physical tag with regards to how she reacts to that. Stops short, etc.

Comment [s11]: Implies “he is” which would throw off your tense—change to “he was”

Comment [s12]: Maybe this info can be in the transition sentence I mentioned in the opening paragraph, and then here, she feels for them again automatically but they’re still not there. Again, when she does that, what is her visceral reaction? Does her breath catch? Something physical to show us she’s nervous.

Comment [s13]: Maybe this info can be in the transition sentence I mentioned in the opening paragraph, and then here, she feels for them again automatically but they’re still not there. Again, when she does that, what is her visceral reaction? Does her breath catch? Something physical to show us she’s nervous.

Comment [s14]: Again, notice this sentence is present tense (is and can), unlike the rest of the story.

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Comment [s15]: Implied when Jack has to glance back to see her

Comment [s16]: Maybe you should mention earlier that you didn’t have a leash? I’m not sure where this sentence came from, or how you’re using it as a leash. Are you hooking it somehow on Jack’s collar?

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WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – *GEORGES ISLAND* BY JOAN YENAWINE

I ~~walked~~ out of the fort, forcing myself to remain calm until we ~~are past~~passed the permanently drawn drawbridge. Then I let panic take over, and I bolted toward the ranger station. Jack matched my pace, ~~his nervousness matching mine, and kept keeping~~ close, ~~making without me tugging on~~ the homemade belt/leash ~~unnecessary~~. ~~I knew without looking that he's serious, tense—no open mouthed grin, no playful jumping at my side.~~

My lungs burned from the cold air and my legs ached by the time I reached the station door. Keys in, door opened, then closed and lock. I let Jack off his leash. I wanted him to sweep the place, and come back to give me the all clear, but he stayed loyally next to me, looking expectantly for the next order. Sometimes I did not like being the alpha.

When I could breathe again, I marched up the stairs. ~~First~~ I grabbed the satellite phone off the charger and dug out the can of pepper spray from the junk drawer. I ~~looked~~peered out every window. ~~The fog had lifted clear of the island, and contemplated calling~~Should I call Peter and asking him to send a boat out?;

~~The fog had lifted clear of the island.~~ I decided to call Maureen instead; she'd understand and calm me down and I wouldn't be embarrassed later-, when it turned out to be nothing.

Jack and I headed out again to search the island, all the while talking to a surprised but supportive Maureen. We climbed the thin skeleton of stairs that ~~leads~~led (again, tense) to the perimeter trail on top of the fort. From this vantage point, I scanned back and forth as we walked, from the interior parade ground to the rocky coast of the island, and found nothing amiss.

Below, the geese had claimed the yard as their simultaneous bathroom and kitchen. Sometimes I wonder that the Bible didn't find use for them as one of the plagues; they were always on the verge of destroying everything around them through the sheer force of their

Comment [s17]: Throughout, use better verb than "walked"

Comment [s18]: "are" – present tense

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Comment [s19]: Something like this in here

Comment [s20]: You wouldn't see that anyway if you weren't looking.

Comment [s21]: Too jerky compared to the rest of it.

Comment [s22]: Need something here to give me a quick layout of the station. One room? Several? I have no clue. Don't elaborate, because you'll pull me out of the scene, but something to give me an idea. You could even do this in the first paragraph, also as part of the first paragraph (We headed away, the 3-room ranger station quickly disappearing in the mist...something like that but not as tacky/common as "disappearing in the mist" I know you use that when you throw the ball, and it's totally fine there...hopefully this makes sense.

Comment [s23]: Again, having a very quick descriptor would help orient me to surroundings.

Comment [s24]: Watch usage

Comment [s25]: Why surprised?

Comment [s26]: Okay, where is Maureen in all of this? Are you talking to her at all? If not, then talk to her and hang up, or have a conversation while you're walking around.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – *GEORGES ISLAND* BY JOAN YENAWINE

procreation and defecation. Would they be more likeable if there were fewer of them? I think not.

Comment [s27]: You're in the middle of a tense scene; I would save this visual/observation for later.

Though I'd walked this perimeter countless times, this was the first time I was truly on watch, and now I could empathize with the soldiers who originally made these rounds. I imagine that, at the first sign of an unfriendly ship, they would have scurried below and inside, peeping back out through the slits in the rocky facade, guns and cannons at the ready. But back then, no one would have been stationed out here alone, and they wouldn't have been worried that the threat was hidden within their own walls, like I am now.

Comment [s28]: good

Still, the exercise, the pure ocean air, and the relentless sunshine managed to restore a feeling of near normalcy once we'd walked the whole circuit. I sat on the wall near the playground, just left of the station and listened to the comforting silence.

Comment [s29]: tighten

Comment [s30]: I wonder if you need a transition between the silence and the bright sound of the dripping water?

That's when I noticed the bright sound of the dripping water fountain spigot. I remembered turning off the valve to that spigot weeks ago, to keep the pipes from bursting in winter temperatures. Fear washed over me once again.

I tried to stay logical and calm, I first checked the garage where the water valve was, and the door was unlocked. But then I couldn't remember if I'd left it that way. It's - It was entirely possible; since I needed to get in and out of there fairly regularly with the golf cart and, I didn't always lock it. Nothing else seemed to be amiss.

Comment [s31]: Let's hear your inner dialogue that helps you accomplish this.

Comment [s32]: The door or the water valve?

I grabbed the phone once again, and headed up the hill to the highest wall of the fort to have another look around. As Jack reached the top ahead of me, he stiffened, growled and then let loose with ferocious barking. This time his attention was directed down toward the beach, and I swiveled in time to see a man standing there next to a small fishing boat.

Comment [s33]: I'm confused here. You're following Jack, he reaches the top of the hill. Where are you? Coming up behind him? Do you get to the top and then look down at the beach? Etc.

WOMEN'S FICTION EXCERPT – *GEORGES ISLAND* BY JOAN YENAWINE

He waved up at us, an oddly friendly thing for a bad guy to do. I hesitated. Was I overreacting? He was far enough away that I knew I had time to call Peter. Maybe he'd just stay there on the beach and I could go back and call Peter. But then the guy started up the hill, toward us.

Comment [s34]: good

Comment [s35]: Again, where is Maureen at this point?

~~I fiddled with the phone as the man started walking toward us.~~ Jack's hackles were up. His barking continued. Yes, I'm definitely calling Peter.

Comment [s36]: Do you hesitate here? Because now this guy seems nice. I tried a fix here.

Ringing.

The guy is heading up the path.

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The automated Parks Department answering system picks up.

Goddamn it, why didn't I call the emergency line?

~~I'm such an idiot.~~

Overall, I think you're writing is really good, and as much as I marked this up, most of what I did here is more technical in nature. I definitely want to know what happens next, and you have some phrases in here which are terrific. Watch usage of words such as "still" and "just." Those get me, too. Don't worry about them in the first draft; you can look for them after that. Watch your tenses – you flipped back and forth several times. And for a couple of sections, think about what's happening step-by-step (picture it in your head) and then describe it so that you don't confuse the reader.

Keep writing!

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