

Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Rabbit Catcher

By Rebecca Martin

Breakfast Plays: New Tracks
Traverse Festival 2020

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

[AUDIO BEGINS]

You're listening to the Traverse Theatre's Breakfast Plays: New Tracks, a series of powerful new podcast plays, fresh from some of Scotland's most exciting new creative voices.

The Breakfast Plays are a key element of the Traverse's talent development activities, and a mainstay of our celebrated Edinburgh Festival programme. They're usually performed at 9am in the morning throughout August, with the audience enjoying a breakfast roll and cup of tea whilst watching – hence the name!

Over the last four months the Traverse's artistic team have worked with five writers to develop new stories for this series of Breakfast Plays, which were each rehearsed and recorded remotely over the span of two days.

You're listening to *Rabbit Catcher* by Rebecca Martin.

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Characters

REN - newly dead. Stronger than she thinks. Is in the process of discovering the truth of Ord Hill and her vital role within it.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL - thinks he owns Ord Hill. Has been on the hill for over 200 years. Enjoys tormenting his victims, especially after their death.

DEAD GIRL - has been dead a while, flesh is rotting. Believes Ren is the answer to Liberate Ord Hill.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

The world of Rabbit Catcher takes place in the Scottish Highlands, looking out to Inverness, in the Black Isle on a hill called Ord Hill. Rabbit Catcher is half in our world and half in an otherworldly one. Where legends are formed, devils rule, deities are birthed and the dead talk. We are tipped into a mythical land- this is Rabbit Catcher.

Scene 1.

REN OF ORD HILL Inverness,

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Inbhir Nis,

shneck,

the mouth of the River Ness.

DEAD GIRL Where the River Ness meets Moray Firth,

REN OF ORD HILL Connected by Kessock Bridge,

onto Easter Ross

and the Black Isle.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL The Black Isle.

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Dark,

dense,

woodland.

“Witch blood.”

REN OF ORD HILL “Bad blood.”

And on its land

where I stand,

Cnoc an Ùird¹,

DEAD GIRL “Croft of the small round hill”,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

anglicised as Ord Hill.

REN OF ORD HILL Round hill,

DEAD GIRL A forested ridge,

REN OF ORD HILL Overlooking the Shneck,

DEAD GIRL With the views of Black Isle,

REN OF ORD HILL Cromarty,

DEAD GIRL Beaully Firth to the east,

¹ Cnoc an Ùird - Gaelic for Ord Hill.

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REN OF ORD HILL Glen Affric mountains to the west.

DEAD GIRL And the sunlight,

REN OF ORD HILL And the sunlight,

hitting the hills,

touching the mountains,

flickering the waves,

casting its spell.

DEAD GIRL (*whispers*) It's witchcraft.

Beat.

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Forgotten Devils,

REN OF ORD HILL Deadly gaze,

DEAD GIRL Stunned in its grasp,

REN OF ORD HILL Snarled in its roots,

Losing in its beauty,

Dying in its eyes,

DEAD GIRL Betraying,

REN OF ORD HILL Tricking,

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DEAD GIRL (*whispering*) fading,

REN OF ORD HILL (*whispering*) Gone.

Beat.

Treacherous,

treacherous land of mine.

Tha gaol agam ort.²

DEAD GIRL For over two hundred years

the Highlander Devil lived on Ord Hill,

REN OF ORD HILL Forever crouching on the edge of Summit Point,

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DEAD GIRL Peering into the Shneck.

Beat.

REN OF ORD HILL Crouching devil watching me.

DEAD GIRL Girls disappeared in its woods,

REN OF ORD HILL Swallowed up by darkness herself,

DEAD GIRL “Devil,

devil,

double and

terror”.

² Gaelic for I love you/my love is on you.

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REN OF ORD HILL He would sing to us,

DEAD GIRL Singing his song to women and

girls alike,

REN OF ORD HILL He could make

the birds fly to him

with that voice of his,

DEAD GIRL And the girls would flock to him.

Beat.

REN OF ORD HILL In a trance we made our

way across Kessock Bridge.

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Death to all sounds,

DEAD GIRL Drugged on his voice we seek

him out,

REN OF ORD HILL Up,

up,

up the winding hill we went to greet him

on Summit Point where he waited.

DEAD GIRL Crouching on the edge,

Tilting into our world and

spilling us into his.

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Beat.

REN OF ORD HILL Like a rabbit we fell down a hole

and no one could catch us.

Scene 2.

Inverness, Ord Hill.

A humid, Summer Solstice Eve.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL *stands facing the view of Inverness- it's breath-taking.*

REN *is dying, soon to be dead. This is a repeat of her memory.*

DEAD GIRL *is nearby- they can't see her.*

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Within Ord Hill we see a Sword placed deep within its earth,

connected by roots as if it were hands, holding it upright ready for it to be discovered-to be used.

REN What's it like to die?

Beat.

DEAD GIRL Legend has it someone will

step out from the depths of

our suffering and liberate all the

Ones who came before her.

She will free us from The Hielander Devil,

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and from Ord Hill itself...

But that's just the dead talking.

Pause.

REN O' my faithless Land of mine.

DEAD GIRL I first met Ren when she was dying.

She didn't know her power but I felt it as her

blood surged into the Land

and rushed me forth to meet her.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

I believe she is the answer we've been waiting for.

She is here to free us.

Beat.

This is her story and this is how she

defeated the Highlander Devil and

became *Ren of Ord Hill*.

REN O' faithless Land, are you there?

DEAD GIRL She speaks her dying words.

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REN You tarnish me in your muck and

mangled me in your glare.

DEAD GIRL Re-lives her dying moment,

a memory stuck on repeat

again and again and again it goes round.

REN Torn me inside out, you have.

DEAD GIRL How many times has she spoken those words?

REN How could you do this to me,

your lass?

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O' Land of mine,

you let the devil have his way.

DEAD GIRL How many times do I stand here?

REN I loved you.

I came from you.

DEAD GIRL I'm waiting,

waiting for the right moment to be seen by her.

Beat.

I've waited a long time.

REN O' glorious Land of mine, you've *forsaken* me.

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...

...

DEAD GIRL Now she's dead...

Beat.

I touch her cheek,
even in a memory she's warm.

Beat.

Oh...
she's waking up- faster than before.

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She won't recall dying,
for now Ren is alive in her head.

Beat.

REN O' faithless Land, are you there?

DEAD GIRL Sometimes we are a flower to
the Land and she picks our petals.

She loves us,
she loves us not,
she loves us,

she loves us not.

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Pause.

No one can see me

not even the Highlander Devil himself.

I am invisible to both.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL One thing that remains solid

and true is the Land itself.

Nothing can change her.

She is beauty,

she is fierceness.

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Beat.

Look at her.

REN ... I just wanted fresh air.

I wanted to smell the pines.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Her view... Cho bòdheach.³

REN I was...

³ So beautiful- Gaelic.

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was wondering...

exploring this wee bit of hill.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Inverness.

REN I heard... singing-

HIGHLANDER DEVIL “O’ my Sweet, Summer lass,

I’ve got you now.

O’ my Sweet, Summer lass,

what beauty you are.”

REN I parted branches

and the sun blinded me.

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL Giants formed this ancient land with their hands.

Crafted the mountains,

shaped the hills,

moulded the trees into place.

REN But...

I found *him* crouched by the edge crooning to me.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I feel full.

You’ve... satisfied me.

REN He hunched over me like a nightmare.

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Pause.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I can see Tomnahurich in the distance,

The Fairy Hill.

Travellers would enter the

mouth of Tomnahurich,

as if it were the door to hell.

They would return once

The Fairy Queen was bored of em'

and turn to dust once the sun rise.

REN Ord Hill is closer to hell than Tomnahurich.

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Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' my Sweet Land of mine you are so beautiful.

REN The heat on this hill, like,

must be hell!

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Blessing me with your devotion.

REN Wish I could sink into its smut,

merge myself with the roots of the tree.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Granting my wishes.

You and the Goat Devil are my

father and mother.

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REN Become an old grandmother tree, I would.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL And as your son I will gather

as many flesh,

bones,

and souls

REN I would give advice an' all.

Would warn the young one's not to come here.

Like, I would be the whispers among the leaves

HIGHLANDER DEVIL As a thank you for my long

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

and prosperous life.

REN Or I will HOWL IF THEY GET TOO CLOSE TO SUMMIT POINT.

shake my branches at em'-

"away with ya" you don't want to be me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I am the favourite one,

the Land loves me.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL After the bones disintegrate into the soil

and the Dead Girl becomes a Voice,

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we spend an eternity restrained on Ord Hill

watching Inverness with *him*.

Waiting,

pausing,

wondering of our liberation.

Beat.

REN Or... maybe I am just a meek rabbit?

DEAD GIRL A rabbit has her part to play.

Pause.

REN (*whispers*) Is this hell?

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL (*whispers back*) Does it look like hell?

DEAD GIRL (*a jump rope rhyme*) Highlander Devil,

Highlander Devil,

don't go into his woods,

REN It does.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Then it's hell.

DEAD GIRL Watch out he's on the loose.

Highlander Devil,

Highlander Devil,

pray you're not his lass.

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REN I wish I never came here, like.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL You answered my call.

DEAD GIRL Highlander Devil,

Highlander Devil,

he'll ruin you in his muck.

REN Wish I stayed home, like.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL No one can resist me.

DEAD GIRL He'll have his wicked way

until you're nothing but rot.

Beat.

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REN I want home.

Pause.

When can I go home?

Beat.

When can I go *home*?

Beat.

Please.

Beat.

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL Silly rabbit,

No one can leave

Ord Hill once they're dead.

A sound of a heartbeat.

DEAD GIRL (*sing-song*) Ren, Ren please come back.

I miss you so much.

I love you so.

REN I'm- *dead*?

DEAD GIRL Ren, Ren where are your bones?

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Ren, Ren your mammy's crying.

REN NO...No, it can't be.

DEAD GIRL your sister's pissing.

your daddy's drinking.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' what joy it was,

O' what joy it was to watch you die!

REN *cries.*

DEAD GIRL Ren, Ren go away.

Ren, Ren you're nothing but dust.

Ren, Ren, where are you?

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A sound of a heartbeat.

REN You took my life-

you've stolen everything from me!

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Oh boo-hoo.

It's your own fault,

you shouldn't have answered to my call.

REN It's true what they say-

the Devil lives on Ord Hill.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Eh? I'm the *Heilander* Devil.

REN No longer can I be with the ones I love...

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DEAD GIRL She is a tiny rabbit dead

with her heart perfectly placed beside her.

A sound of a heartbeat.

REN The earth's soil burrows down my lungs and

slides between my ribs.

DEAD GIRL That's what he does,

plants us on Ord Hill.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL (*sniffs*) Something smells of rot here...

REN Like,

like,

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like I'm swallowing the earth and

the earth swallows me whole

DEAD GIRL With our mouths wide open

and our heads tilting upwards,

welcoming the earth down our throats.

REN Like,

like,

like a sink hole.

Reaching for my heart,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

yanking it out,

planting it on this hill.

DEAD GIRL Oh, you're still fresh,

soon you'll no longer feel it.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Whose whispering?

DEAD GIRL (*to us*) He wasn't supposed to hear me.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I know you're there,

I can smell the rot from ya.

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DEAD GIRL I'm just another Dead Girl,

rotting on Ord Hill...

just harmless.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL You shouldn't be in this memory.

DEAD GIRL But here I am.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL How did you get in?

DEAD GIRL I felt her when she was dying.

I climbed through earth

and soil to be with her.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

She's... different.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL What do you know about "different"?

Like the rest of ya's she answered to

my call and soon will be nothing but rotting flesh

hanging off her, just like you.

DEAD GIRL She was an accident.

She shouldn't be one of us.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Eventually,

like you she'll dissolve into

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the ground and be nothing

but a Voice in the void.

DEAD GIRL You're wrong.

Beat.

Through her strength we grow.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL She is another rabbit.

DEAD GIRL Our eyes are gone by now,

eaten,

decayed

because of you.

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REN (*as if transfixed- under a spell*) Our eyes gone by now

eaten and decayed.

DEAD GIRL Blood pooling inside us,

like the waves on the firth.

REN Our blood pools inside us,

curdling,

forming clots and

becoming thick and lumpy,

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like the waves on the firth.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL She's mine.

REN One month after our death

Our body starts to liquify.

DEAD GIRL After two months,

our nails and teeth fall out.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL She is meek as a rabbit!

She answered to my call.

They begin to pray.

DEAD GIRL O' Land hear me now.

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REN O' Land hear me now.

DEAD GIRL You are my hiding place.

REN You are my hiding place,

You will protect me from trouble

and surround me with song

of deliverance.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL The Land won't listen to Rotting Girls.

REN He made me meek.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Like a rabbit.

REN Like a rabbit.

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DEAD GIRL Ren,

hear me.

Hear my voice in the wind.

The Light of the Land surrounds you.

The Love of the Land enfolds you.

The Power of the Land protects you.

You are more than a “meek rabbit”.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Dead Girl!

Rotting Girl,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

she can't hear you.

Best leave her be.

No trickery from you, like.

She's mine,

all mine.

Beat.

You can't even remember your own name.

DEAD GIRL ...You also think the Land favours you.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Away with ya!

Beat.

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...

REN The light of the Land...

I am not made out of meekness.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL You look feral,

bedraggled,

wild eyed.

Rabbit, what are you thinking?

REN I'm no a rabbit, like.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Aye you are.

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My rabbit,

weak rabbit.

Why do you think you're anything else, like?

Beat.

REN I feel it from my toes to my belly to my head,

a wave washes over me.

It feels... *powerful.*

Beat.

I'm no weak, like.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I see no power in ya.

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Right enuff,

you're made out of meekness,

Stink of it too.

REN I'm no meek, Devil man.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL You're like,

a vertebrae.

A neck vertebrae.

I can easily fit your neck between my thumb

and forefinger.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Broken necked rabbit, you are.

REN I'm no a broken necked rabbit.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Then what are ya?

Beat.

REN My name is Ren not Rabbit.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Speaking different words now,

you are, Rabbit Girl.

Never said this before.

REN The Light of the Land surrounds me.

The Love of the Land enfolds me.

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The Power of the Land protects me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I don't like the way you're talking, Rabbit Girl!

That Rotting Girl been whispering
in your ear again?

REN I won't have no fear.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL That Rotting Girl-

REN I won't have no fear.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Been crawling in your-

REN I won't have no fear.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Ear again?

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN I WON'T HAVE NO FEAR.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Rotting Girl is in your ear.

REN No Rotting Girl here.

Just me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Just you...

(to himself) Maybe Dead Girl is right after all,

maybe you *are* different.

There's only one thing to be done now.

REN The Land gives me her strength.

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL To go back to the start.

To destroy what has been said,
what has been discovered from within.

REN I feel her love pouring inside me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL *picks up the boulder he has used*

countless times to kill REN.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL This is your own doing, ya know?

No one to blame but yourself.

He lifts it above his head and looms over her.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN She is my light-

she is my salvation.

(whispers) Can the dead die?

HIGHLANDER DEVIL *crushes REN's head with the boulder.*

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Should have concealed your strength from me, lass.

Buried it deep within ya and stamp it out.

A threat is a threat.

No good being strong.

Beat.

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When you awake to *my* Land once more,

I'll keep a close eye on ya.

Scene 3.

DEAD GIRL We're in a permanent Summer Solstice

in her world.

Tilted toward the sun,

spilling into his.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

A place where the sun pauses

and stand still.

We remain playing to his tricks like puppets

while the rest of the world keep turning,

keep moving.

They can see a new sunrise,

a new sunset.

But not us,

not here,

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not in her world,

in our world.

All the Ones who can leave Ord Hill leave...

but not us.

Instead,

we tilt toward the sun.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Scene 4.

We are back in REN's memory.

They are on Ord Hill.

REN ...

...

...

O' faithless Land, are you there?

You tarnish me in your muck and

mangled me in your glare.

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Torn me inside out, you have.

How could you do this to me,

your lass?

O' Land of mine,

you let the Devil have his way.

I loved you.

I came from you.

O' glorious Land of mine, you've *forsaken* me.

Pause.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL One thing that remains solid

and true is the Land itself.

Nothing can change her.

She is beauty,

she is fierceness.

Beat.

Look at her.

REN ... I just wanted fresh air.

I wanted to smell the pines.

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Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Her view.

Cho bòdheach.⁴

REN I was...

was wondering...

exploring this wee bit of hill.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Inverness.

REN I heard... singing.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL “O’ my Sweet, Summer lass,

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I’ve got you now.

O’ my Sweet, Summer lass,

what beauty you are.”

REN I parted branches

and the sun blinded me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Giants formed this ancient land with their hands.

Crafted the mountains,

shaped the hills,

moulded the trees into place.

⁴ So beautiful.

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REN But...

I found *him* crouched by the edge crooning to me.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I feel full.

You've... satisfied me.

Silence.

REN (*a sense of déjà vu*) A rabbit has her part to play.

Beat.

A rabbit has her part to play.

Beat.

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL Clever rabbit,

watching me with those big,

bright eyes of yours.

REN (*whispers*) we've done this before.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Only a meek rabbit answers to the call.

REN You've had me die on this hill countless times.

Smashed my head with that- with that boulder over there.

Beat.

How many times have you done this to me?

What are you?

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL Ask the Goat Devil he made me.

The sound of the heart beat returns.

He found me upon his hill,

dying.

“If you want to live long what’s use is a soul?”

he asked.

Beat.

REN To my right,

I see a wee clearing.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

should I run?

Can I make it?

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I was reborn on Ord Hill.

Beat.

I collect girls and

they stay with me forever

and ever and ever and ever.

Beat.

REN He steps closer.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL No one can escape me.

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REN If the Land truly wants my forgiveness,

she will save me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL *No one can escape me.*

Beat.

REN She will prove herself.

Beat.

The heartbeat hammers away.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I see you eyeing that opening just to

your right...

Are you going to break for it?

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Do you think you can make it?

Beat.

REN Can the dead truly die?

HIGHLANDER DEVIL ... We'll have to see.

REN There's a feeling that rushes from

my toes to my belly to my head,

something like... like-

Something inside me tells me to...

jump upwards.

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To spring into the sky,

to jump high, higher than the sun itself.

REN *springs to her feet, jumps and is carried upwards.*

*The Land is showing her love for **REN**.*

I rise,

pushing from earth

into air.

I soar,

upwards,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

carried by wind,

soft hands stroke me.

There is an echo of words in the wind.

“Liberate us.

Liberate us.

Saoradh sinn⁵”.

I am a bird flying to orange circle.

*The sun burns bright and **REN** disappears into its brightness.*

⁵ Liberate us- Gaelic.

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HIGHLANDER DEVIL She tears the sky open

and flies through the opening,

away from the memory and

into new moments- new memories.

She is a swallow unable to be captured.

She flies from my entrapment.

Beat.

Dead Girl was right about this one.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Clever rabbit,

I never knew a rabbit could fly.

But you can never escape Ord Hill

and me.

Beat.

O' what fun you and I will have.

O' WHAT FUN YOU AND I WILL HAVE,

FLYING RABBIT.

It'll be a HOOT.

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Scene 5.

REN Out of sight, out of reach,

I am settled on solid ground.

Still on Ord Hill, but far from *him* I race down

the winding routes and paths that'll lead me away

from this wooden hill- wooden hell.

Branches grab at me,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

try to nip me in their grasp,

hold me tight against their hollow bark

as I inch my way to the end of Ord Hill.

Above two Red Kites stalk me,

like unwanted attention from drunken men.

They dive at me,

their talons scrapping my skin,

ripping my clothes and lip.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Greedy hands try to snatch

as they relentlessly pursue.

Beat.

Running at my heels are hounds,

Hounds howl.

spit out from the earth itself,

a gift from the Land.

I am their Diana

and as their Diana they snap,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

they howl,

they are ferocious protectors.

Beat.

Does he watch from the trees?

Does he follow to the edge of the world with me

and my hounds?

Scene 6.

REN wanders lost in the woods; she is distraught.

She comes across DEAD GIRL singing.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL (*singing*) if only,

the rabbit could sing,

the moon would lean in

and whisper to her.

She would tell her a devil

lay waiting and hiding.

She cried to the rabbit,

you're going to die.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Stillness.

REN That was very- beautiful.

DEAD GIRL Tapadh leat.⁶

Pause.

I've waited so long

for this moment.

For us to speak, to look each other in the eye

and *see* each other.

Beat.

⁶ Thank you in Gaelic.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN Who are you?

DEAD GIRL I'm a Dead Girl,

like you.

Beat.

REN ... Are- you able to help me?

Beat.

I'm trying to get out of here.

I've tried already but it won't let me leave.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

I get to the edge of the border,

about to step onto different dirt

and then...

I'm standing back at Summit Point?

DEAD GIRL Of course you can't *leave* these woods.

You are a Rotting Girl on a hill.

Soon your flesh will hang like mine.

Beat.

REN But I flew... maybe,

maybe I can leave Ord Hill being dead an' all.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL You didn't fly you were carried.

REN Did you see me?

Who carried me?

DEAD GIRL The Ones Before.

REN The Ones Before?

DEAD GIRL The Voices of the Others.

The Other Dead Girls.

You prayed for the Land to help

and the Others answered.

Like me they sense something in you, Ren.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN There's nothing special about me.

DEAD GIRL There is.

I felt it.

Felt your pain

You are strong.

REN I'm just another Rotting Girl stuck on a hill, like.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL The Hounds of Ord Hill raced beside you.

REN They were beautiful.

DEAD GIRL A gift from the Land.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN Where are they?

They were with me and

now they're gone...

I felt safe with em'.

DEAD GIRL They'll be back.

Beat.

REN What's your name?

DEAD GIRL I... don't remember...

Beat.

I'm One of the One's that don't remember.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN That's sad.

Beat.

My name's Ren.

DEAD GIRL Keep your name close to you, Ren.

Pause.

REN Is this hell?

DEAD GIRL No,

we're on Ord Hill.

REN We're ghosts then.

DEAD GIRL Not quite.

REN Have we been here for two hundred years?

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL I don't know.

Pause.

REN I remember my death...

On top of Summit Point.

DEAD GIRL We all died up there.

REN It was the longest day of the year,

like today.

DEAD GIRL And yesterday and tomorrow

and the next day

and the day after.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

We are paused on this day.

REN I turned my head towards Inverness,

to my home,

as the sun was slipping behind the moors.

Heat steamed off her mountains,

as the last of the rays burned into her flesh.

Beat.

I longed to reach out towards her,

Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Beat.

prayed for her to save me I did...

But she turned her back on me.

The sky was red above her

but when I turned to him all I could see was...

him.

Pause.

DEAD GIRL The Land is sorry for turning her back on you.

REN *Him,*

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

beast,

horned Devil,

twisted me in his muck.

He took everything away from me!

It's no fair!

It's cruel that we're here.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL And there will be others,

just like us.

REN Who will come to this wee bit of hill and die.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL Who will be *murdered*.

Their lives will be snatched from them.

REN And just like us they'll

die watching the sun set.

DEAD GIRL Losing themselves in its beauty.

REN A Shimmer of light winking at them as they close their eyes.

DEAD GIRL As Ben Wyvis looms over their

empty bodies as if it were death himself.

Pause.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN What are we?

DEAD GIRL We are half in this world

and half in their world.

We are the tilting sun,

'stopped' for a moment.

The shadows on the

forest floor.

A falling needle from a Pine Tree.

The smell of damp earth after

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
a rainstorm.

Beat.

The rot foaming and
a frightened rabbit...
caught.

Pause.

REN Listen.

DEAD GIRL I hear nothing.

REN There should be noise.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

I feel *him*,

DEAD GIRL Ren.

There is an unnatural rumbling noise from the ground.

We hear the heartbeat.

REN (*whispers*) I'm scared.

DEAD GIRL She calls to you,

the Land.

Uproot her earth,

there is something there

that waits for you.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN I begin to dig and dig.

The earth groans beneath me,

as if something has been dislodged.

The beating heart becomes louder and louder.

The ground rumbles.

There is a monstrous noise in the air.

Stillness.

DEAD GIRL *Highlander Devil.*

REN My nails have ripped away

DEAD GIRL *Dig!*

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

The monstrous noise becomes louder.

You are ready to become

who are destined to be.

The noise is closer.

Uproot what has waited for you for nearly two centuries.

REN The earth projectiles it's soil,

helping me in my quest to reveal what lays below.

DEAD GIRL The stronger it pulls,

the closer it is.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN I see a- a- a hilt?

DEAD GIRL He is close.

REN The roots from the hilt become hands

and the hands lift it towards me.

It is pushed from the depths of Ord Hill.

DEAD GIRL Release it.

Rip it from the earth,

like he ripped us from our world and into *his*.

The heart beat stops.

REN A sword?

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

DEAD GIRL *The Sword.*

We hear whisperings from his other victims.

Incoherent words.

REN The hand that holds the sword,

is entwined by roots sprouting from the handle,

blood vessels snarl around my wrist,

wrapping up my arm, along my elbow

and all the way to my shoulder.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL The Sword is powerful.

Ren, you are the only One who can match its strength.

Beat.

Like Thor's hammer.

Like Arthur's sword.

Like Joan of Arc- the Saviour of her Land.

Beat.

You are Artemis of this woods of ours.

REN It holds tight to me,

beating,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

pulsing,

thumping against my flesh.

DEAD GIRL It is a part of you as you a part of it.

Beat.

REN I see before me...

All the Ones who came Before

and all the Ones who may come After.

Beat.

Dead Girls everywhere,

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
before my eyes.

Pause.

Dead Girl, do you see em'?

DEAD GIRL I've always seen them.

REN They tell me their names.

Beat.

Eilidh,

Margret,

Flora,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Catherine,

Jessica,

Shannon,

Sarah.

Pause.

is your name on that list?

DEAD GIRL No...

I am the One who can't remember.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN “*Liberate us.*

Liberate us.

Saoradh sinn⁷”.

DEAD GIRL Yes.

They lifted you up in their arms

and carried you away from him.

Beat.

We were with you when you died.

You didn’t die alone.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

You died with us.

REN My Sisters!

DEAD GIRL In this moment we are One.

REN I feel... *powerful.*

Beat.

Monstrous noise echoes throughout the land.

DEAD GIRL Combined in our shared pain we gather here

On this vital Solstice day

we pray for the protection of

⁷ Liberate us- Gaelic.

Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Ren.

May she smite him down,
may she champion over him,
be his downfall
and defeat him.

To release us, to free us
from his wicked ways.

Now and forever

Amen.

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

REN I can't kill him... (*whispers*) I'm just a Rabbit Girl.

DEAD GIRL A rabbit has her part to play.

You are the only One who can.

Beat.

REN An cluinn thu mi,⁸

O' Land of mine help me.

DEAD GIRL Don't be afraid.

Keep your hold tight

⁸ Will you hear me - Gaelic.

Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
and *they* shall guide you.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Little rabbit...

Come out, come out,
where ever you are.

Beat.

O' what fun we will have!

Scene 7.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL My jaws can reach the heavens
and earth.

REN (*scared*) Horned Devil.

DEAD GIRL Take my hand.

REN My heart is lead.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL One day people will sing about you.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I chase the moon, the rabbit
and the girl over the mountains.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL One day they will pray to you.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Under the stars for centuries I hunt.

REN How can they pray to a rabbit?

DEAD GIRL Repeat these words.

The Light of the Land

surrounds me.

REN The Light of the Land

surrounds me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL This is *my* Land.

DEAD GIRL The love of the Land enfolds me.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I sing out to Inverness,

REN The Love of the Land enfolds me.

DEAD GIRL It will not forsake you,

not this time.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL To the Black Isle and

Beaully too and

the Glen Affric mountains.

REN The Power of the Land protects me.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I cast my spell,

flickering it to the Ones who will answer.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Beat.

I wait.

Pause.

REN O' faithful Land, are you there?

HIGHLANDER DEVIL And they always answer.

REN You lifted me up in your truth

and freed me in your gaze.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL By dreich,

through drought,

dirt and

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

storm.

REN Put me back together,

you have.

You did this for me,

your lass.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I greet them on this

wee bit of hill of mine.

REN I love you.

I came from you.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

O' glorious Land of mine,

my love is on you.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL They lie on their back

with their legs falling open for me.

REN THE LIGHT OF THE LAND PROTECTS ME.

DEAD GIRL Hold the Others tight in your grip.

We will not forsake you.

REN The love... of the -Land...

DEAD GIRL Highlander Devil is like a bull,

he knocks Ren to the ground.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

She falls, she bleeds. She feels weak-meek.

REN The dead can bleed...

DEAD GIRL Get up.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Only the weak answer.

DEAD GIRL Don't listen to him.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL You are meek,

meek like rabbit.

Beat.

REN Can you truly die once you're dead?

DEAD GIRL Take my hand...

Pause.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I even sang a wee song to em' an' all.

“If you want to live long there's no use for your soul”.

DEAD GIRL Take my strength and

all the Ones who came Before.

We grow stronger with you,

you grow stronger with us.

We are One.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' my Sweet, Summer lass,

I've got you now.

DEAD GIRL The heart of the Land is in your hand.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

We will not forsake you.

REN The love of the Land is in my hand.

I will not be forsaken.

DEAD GIRL The Land wants redemption.

REN It wants our revenge.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' my Sweet, Summer lass,

what beauty you are.

REN Tha gaol agam ort.⁹

DEAD GIRL Stand and face him.

You are not forsaken.

⁹ Gaelic for I love you/my love is on you.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' my Wee Lass,

the Goat Lord will be pleased,

he'll dance with me until you're dead.

O' my Wee Lass.

REN You lured me to this place.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' he'll grant me two hundred years.

REN You ruined me in your filth and

soaked me in your sweat.

Devil, you showed me ugliness on this Land.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' my Sweet, Summer lass,

I can't wait for you to die.

Beat.

REN (*falters once more*)...How- how can anyone pray to a rabbit?

DEAD GIRL Remember this, Ren.

There will be Others just like us.

REN Who will come to this

wee bit of hill and die.

DEAD GIRL Who will be *murdered*.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Their lives will be snatched
from them.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Rotting Girls.

Dead Girls,
that is all you ever will be.

REN And just like us they'll die
watching the sun set.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Like rot in the ground,
like rot in your mouth.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

DEAD GIRL Losing themselves in its beauty.

A shimmer of light winking at them
as they close their eyes.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Fragile like a rabbit's vertebrae.

REN As Ben Wyvis looms over their
empty bodies as if it were death
himself.

Beat.

No more dead girls.

Beat.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
NO MORE DEAD GIRLS.

DEAD GIRL NO MORE DEAD GIRLS.

REN NO MORE.

DEAD GIRL NO MORE...

She stands.

REN I am not the shadow

that conceals him from her.

DEAD GIRL Ren advances on Highlander Devil.

REN Or the pine falling

to the ground as her skull

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

shatters against the bark.

DEAD GIRL She corners him.

REN The damp earth cleansing

everything leading to him.

I refuse to be the rot foaming

around her bloated body as she

drifts down the stream or buried

in an unmarked grave.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

DEAD GIRL She strikes him, stabbing him in the side.

We are blood thirsty for his death.

Beat.

REN My name is Ren of Ord Hill.

Beat.

Say my name.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Never!

DEAD GIRL He charges at Ren,

but Ren is swift and fast like a rabbit.

She manages to hold onto his horns and flip him to the ground.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

She slashes at him again and again and again.

He is badly wounded and we are joyful.

We praise her!

REN MY NAME!

DEAD GIRL Ren of Ord Hill.

The One who came After us.

REN Say my name.

DEAD GIRL The cry of murdered women and

girls echo within her.

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REN My name.

DEAD GIRL Out from our pain

emerged Ren.

Say her name.

Beat.

HER NAME.

REN MY NAME.

DEAD GIRL REN OF ORD HILL.

The sound of Hounds howl.

REN My Hounds howl for blood.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Pause.

DEAD GIRL Ren of Ord Hill.

Hallowed be thy name,

in darkness we gather.

Guide us to the one

who trapped us.

Thrust the Others into his neck,

cut them through his veins,

hack away at his bone.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Depart head from neck.

Set us free,

set *you* free

and all the Ones who may come After us.

Hallowed be thy name!

REN OF ORD HILL.

Beat.

She is truly Ren of Ord Hill now.

She embodies all the women and girls who came Before.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

“she eats men like air”.

REN Like you I was reborn on Ord Hill.

I take your words in my mouth and

turn them against you.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O’ deceiving Land.

Do you turn your back on me?

REN I am the hunter and

you are the *rabbit*.

DEAD GIRL She stabs him multiple times,

piercing his flesh,

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
digging deep.

He is dying and

we are thankful.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL (*struggling to breathe, choking on blood*)

I have lived...

on this wee bit of hill of yours...

more than- two hundred years.

REN I take your words in my mouth and
turn them against you.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

HIGHLANDER DEVIL I look out... to Inverness,
the Land before me for all-
for all of those years.

REN The Goat Lord will not save you.

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL O' Land of mine I loved you.
And this is how you repay me?

REN The Ones you brought havoc onto their body and
soul are the Ones who will *repay you*.

DEAD GIRL He ruined us in his muck!

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Mangled us in his glare,

torn us inside out, he has.

Lured us to this place of his.

Had us die on a hill,

die watching the sun set.

Sang a song in our ear and

danced with joy as we slipped away.

Beat.

REN Can a devil die?

Beat.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

DEAD GIRL Maybe the sun will finally set for us

as we close our eyes.

Will we see the moon again?

Will our world finally turn,

no longer tilting on the edge?

REN I must not have fear.

Hounds howl.

DEAD GIRL And when the Hounds howl on Ord Hill...

Silence.

REN Little rabbit,

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TRAVERSE THEATRE – BREAKFAST PLAYS: NEW TRACKS
AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin
can the devil die?

HIGHLANDER DEVIL *Please!*

Spare me... Ren of Ord Hill.

DEAD GIRL She crouches down.

A crouching tiger watching him.

REN (*whispers*) Eilidh,

Margret,

Flora,

Catherine,

Jessica,

Shannon,

Sarah.

Beat.

Ren.

Dead Girl.

Say our names...

Beat.

HIGHLANDER DEVIL Ren of Ord Hill.

Ren of Ord Hill.

Beat.

(pathetically) SPARE ME REN OF ORD HILL.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

Hounds howl.

REN When the Hounds howl on Ord Hill,

death shall surely follow.

DEAD GIRL Ren lifts the Sword above her head

and hacks off the Highlander Devil's head.

It is bloody, it is messy and it is glorious.

At long last he is dead.

Silence.

REN ...A devil can die.

DEAD GIRL She throws his head down Summit Point,

away from Ord Hill, away from her

and all the Ones who came Before.

The Legends are true.

We are *free*.

REN I am the favourite one.

Beat.

DEAD GIRL Hallowed be thy name.

Praise her.

We praise her.

Ren of Ord Hill.

The One to pluck the Sword from the Land.

REN The Land loves me.

DEAD GIRL Who felt our power surge through her.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

REN The Land chose me.

DEAD GIRL Who is our pain.

REN The Land rejoices in me.

DEAD GIRL Rejoice!

We rejoice in her!

Pause.

REN Dead Girl,

You told me you are One of the Ones who

can't recall their name.

DEAD GIRL Aye,

I am.

Beat.

REN May I give you one?

DEAD GIRL Aye,

...I would like a name.

Beat.

REN Fearann.¹⁰

Your name is Fearann.

It means Land.

Beat.

¹⁰ Land- Gaelic.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

FEARANN Tapadh leat¹¹,

tapadh leat.

I'll hold it close to me until (*ironically*) my dying days.

Scene 8.

REN My love is on you,

my gentle Land of mine.

Here.

Present,

loyal,

now.

Bright in my eyes,

Alive in your beauty,

grounded in your roots,

warmed in your hold.

Growing gaze,

beloved god.

It's truth,

charm,

¹¹ Thank you in Gaelic

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

flickering waves,

touching mountains,

hitting hills.

And the sunlight...

Glen Affric mountains to the west,

Beaulieu Firth to the east.

Cromarty,

with the views of Black Isle,

Overlooking the Shneck.

Beat.

A forested ridge,

Round hill,

Anglicised as Ord Hill,

“Croft of the small round hill”,

Cnoc an Ùird¹².

And on its land where I stand,

“Bad blood.”

“Witch blood.”

Dense woodland,

¹² Cnoc an Ùird Gaelic for Ord Hill.

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Rabbit Catcher by Rebecca Martin

dark,

Black Isle.

Beat.

Onto Easter Ross,

Connected by the Kessock Bridge,

where the River Ness meets Moray Firth,

The mouth of the River Ness.

Shneck,

Inbhir Nis,

Inverness.

Thank you for listening to *Rabbit Catcher* by Rebecca Martin.

It was directed by Gareth Nicholls and performed by Karen Fishwick, Reuben Joseph, and Anna Russell Martin, with sound design by Oguz Kaplangi and sound engineering by Richard Bell.

This year's Breakfast Plays were generously supported by the Noel Coward Foundation and the Turtleton Charitable Trust. If you'd like to support our work with new writers year-round, please go to traverse.co.uk/support-us. Every donation makes a huge difference.

And if you enjoyed this, there are four more plays in the series available. You can also check out more of our work on our website. Thanks for listening.

[AUDIO ENDS]

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