

The Christian Ethics Committee  
By Jerico Bleu

## Imaginary Species

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Character

Thelma- (40s/50s)- The leader of the group

Tammy- (late 30s-40s)- Second in command

June- (50s-60s)- Easily affect and fearful

Heather- (30s)- Vocal and questioning

Carly- An outsider from New England

*A dark room surrounded by candles. There is a gothic quality to the darkness. A little mist fills the room. As the room brightens you can see a group of hooded figures. They are each holding a lit candle that they place in the center of the room. We hear the sounds of a dramatic choir underscore the figures as they create a circle formation around the cluster of candles. Each of the figures begins to kneel. The center figure rises with an animal-like creature in its hands. As the music starts to climax the center figure produces a knife and slowly raises over the animal's head. Just as the figure goes to stab the creature a beeper sound is heard. The center figure shrugs it off and resets the action. Again, just as the dagger is about to pierce the animal the beeper is heard again. The center figure pauses for a moment to confirm the sound. As the beeper is heard for the third time the center figure drops the act completely*

**THELMA**

OK.

*She turns the lights on to reveal an outdated southern living room. The furniture reeks of the early 80s. There is an old hand held video camera set up in the corner of the room recording their activity. Frustrated, she goes over and hits stop on an old CD player. The dramatic choir is abruptly cut off. The hood is thrown back to reveal THELMA. A brassy, big hair southern woman who is the leader of the Christain ethics committee Leading Ladies. THELMA wears way too much eye shadow and her foundation is always a few shades too light.*

**THELMA CONT**

Hoods off..... Let's go.

*The figures bring their hoods down to reveal four women.*

**THELMA CONT**

Who's beeper is that? Y'all I've got to have this camera back to the Rent-A-Center at 5:30. I don't have time for guessing games, now who was it?

*After a moment JUNE raises her hand. JUNE is meeker compared to THELMA and is easily influenced.*

**THELMA CONT**

I should have known from that goofy ringtone.

**JUNE**

It's supposed to sound like Joy to The World

**THELMA**

Honey, don't care if it was Dolly's 9 to 5. I told you to turn it off. We only have a few hours while the kids are at 4H and we can't have these kinds of interruptions.

**JUNE**

I know you did and I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ruin the...What is it we're calling this?

**THELMA**

A ritual sacrifice

**JUNE**

Right, but I just got one of these few gadgets and I'm figuring out how it works.

**HEATHER**

What kind is it?

*Heather is a little more laid back and sure of herself. Certainly the youngest of the group*

**JUNE**

It's a pager

**HEATHER**

Hit the little button on the side

**JUNE**

Right here?

**HEATHER**

No, that's your volume. The button on the other side. Yah, hit that and you'll be good to go

**JUNE**

But how do I get it back to..

**THELMA** *Interrupting*

If you have any other technical questions you can go down to the Circuit City when Heather's working. Until then can we finish what we started here?

**TAMMY**

Thelma, take it easy. Everything is fine

**THELMA** *Indicating robes*

No, everything is not fine. First you bring in this floral pattern instead of solid black

**TAMMY**

I told you they were out of solid black

**THELMA**

I don't believe Joanne's Fabric ran out of solid black fabric. Then, June waltzes in here with a pack of assorted Yankee candles

**JUNE**

I thought you wanted something festive

**THELMA**

It's a ritual sacrifice not a fall festival. You've got my living room smelling the back of a cab.

**HEATHER**

Don't you think you're being a bit ridiculous?

**THELMA**

Ridiculous?

**HEATHER**

Yes

**THELMA**

Me?

**HEATHER**

Yes

**THELMA**

Well I don't know Heather, is a dedication to my beliefs ridiculous? How about my concern for our community? When I was appointed the head of The Leading Ladies Christian Ethics Committee I made a vow to uphold...

**TAMMY**

Ok, let's take a breath and calm down

**HEATHER**

I'm just saying you're investing way too much into this

**THELMA**

There is a serpent in our garden and we are the only ones who can cast it out. If these people are allowed to influence others the very fabric of morality starts to unravel. The future of our community and the minds of our children are at stake.

**TAMMY to HEATHER**

You're lucky you don't have kids

**JUNE**

Tammy, don't say that.

**TAMMY**

I adore being a mother, but there are times when I lay awake at night wondering who they will meet. As the sun rises on the next day I wonder, is there someone about to walk into my child's life who is a gardener. A gardener who wants to plant seeds of doubt, and makes my child question everything I know to be holy. I worry they will succeed in producing a forest in my child's mind. Thick with conspiracies and fabrications that the brightest ray of light cannot reach them. How could I ever clean such a brush if it is permitted to grow? Their son is in my child's homeroom class. Maybe he doesn't share the same views as his parents, but I can't take that risk. All I can do is spray the holy word as pesticide and keep my garden mended.

**JUNE**

Tammy that was beautiful

**TAMMY**

Thank you. I've been taking this creative writing course down at the learning annex and sometimes I just feel the words flowing out of me.

**THELMA**

The point being, these "agnostics" have weaseled their way into our Christian community and we are unable to know their true intentions.

**JUNE** *Innocently*

My Daddy used to say you can never trust agnostics. "They're the bisexuals of spirituality".

*They all look at June with confusion*

**HEATHER**

I mean, they're allowed to believe whatever they want. Freedom of religion and all

**THELMA**

I told y'all letting a democrat into this organization was a mistake

**TAMMY**

Honey, why did you join the Leading Ladies?

**HEATHER**

Because I want to be a part of guiding others. I want to be a reliable source when they have a lapse in judgment or need compassion.

**THELMA**

And that is what we are attempting to do. We have an opportunity to show our spiritual peers how dangerous these others can be

**HEATHER**

Convincing everyone they do ritual sacrifices in their basements?

**THELMA**

This is based on fact. These types of ceremonies happen every day.

**JUNE**

It's true I saw an entire Barbra Walters special on it. These people are obsessed with witchcraft, moons, and torture. It's all very frightening

**TAMMY**

All over this country there are children going missing, and being used for these sacrifices

**THELMA**

If our congregation needs a little push to see what evils these people are capable of, that's a risk I'm willing to take..... Ok, I was gonna wait to share this till after we filmed

but you've left me no choice. When I said there was a snake in my garden I meant it all too literally. This issue has made its way to my front door.

**TAMMY**

What are you telling us, Thelma?

**THELMA**

These people....Moved into the old Whitmon House

**TAMMY**

You mean they're/

**THELMA**

My neighbors, yes. The gates of hell have opened in front of my azalea bushes. (After a moment. She grabs Tammy and June's hands) I vow here and now: I will do everything in my power to prevent this satanic cult from infiltrating our community. I promise no child will go missing under my watch. Now, let's put the squabbling aside and film.

*They take a moment then put their hoods back on. TAMMY goes around and lights everyone's candles. THELMA turns the lights off. Everyone takes their place in the circle. TAMMY turns the camera on. THELMA holds up the stuffed animal and produces the dagger. TAMMY is now trying to turn on the dramatic choir music but is having a hard time figuring out THELMA'S old player.*

**THELMA** *In character*

I sacrifice this young vermin in the name of our dark lord.

*THELMA stabs the stuffed animal which is filled with halloween blood packets. TAMMY decides to push a random button and the sounds of the local pop radio station come blaring through the speakers. TAMMY scrambles and tries to turn the device to CD mode but she is just too confused. She starts pushing a random button. We hear a mix of radio stations flipping from country to the dramatic choir and back to pop. While this happens the blood from the stuffed animal continues to spray THELMA in the face. As the bloodbath continues the other members try to help TAMMY by calling out phrases like "Turn the switch, you hit the radio button, you almost had it, you hit the wrong switch" Once THELMA can see she walks over to the radio and unplugs it from the wall.*

**THELMA**

Cheese and crackers, It's one button Tammy. All you had to do was turn the camera on and hit the bright blue button



**TAMMY**

It was dark. I couldn't tell which button was which

*Suddenly a knock at the door*

**TAMMY CONT**

Is that the kids already?

**THELMA**

Can't be. Dan doesn't leave the office to get them for another 20 minutes. June honey, go peek out the spy hole

*JUNE awkwardly goes to the door and peeks out the spy hole.*

**JUNE**

It's one of them.

*Everyone gasps*

**THELMA**

Which one?

**JUNE**

The wife

**THELMA**

Of course it is. Silly thing doesn't have a job

**HEATHER**

If you knew she'd be home then why did we do this here?

**THELMA**

Because I didn't think this would take all day. Plus I'm the only one with a living room big enough to set up the camera. Lets just stay quiet and maybe she'll go away

**JUNE**

Just doesn't feel right to turning someone away

**THELMA**

Do you wanna be the one to explain to her why we're wearing hooded robes, covered in fake blood?

**TAMMY**

She'd probably think it was a home coming

*Another knock at the door*

**THELMA**

Alright everybody, crouch down. If she decides to peek through the windows maybe she'll think we're piles of laundry

*Everyone but HEATHER begins to huddle on the floor. Boldly, she steps over the other ladies and opens the door.*

**CARLY**

Hello....Sorry to barge in on you like this. I'm Harmony. My family and I just moved in next door

**HEATHER**

You bought the old Whitmon House right?

**CARLY**

That's what they tell me. I was hoping to speak with Thelma, but it looks like I caught you at a bad time

**HEATHER**

Come on in.

**TAMMY** *whispering*

What are you doing?

**THELMA** *whispering*

Don't let that woman into my home

**HEATHER**

We were just finishing up

**CARLY**

Are you sure it's not a bad time?

**HEATHER**

It's the perfect time

*CARLY walks in*

**CARLY**

Thank you. I really hope I haven't interrupted your....um wizard home movie

**THELMA**

Hello Carly

**CARLY**

Thelma, you've got the whole congregation here haven't yah?

**THELMA** *glaring at HEATHER*

How nice to have you in my home.

**CARLY**

I was hoping you had a moment to chat

**THELMA**

I'm afraid I don't. You see, you've caught us in the middle of a meeting for the Christian Ethics Committee, and we have a pretty loaded itinerary.

**CARLY**

Then I'll make this quick. Please tell you son to stop ringing my doorbell at all hours of the night to "spread the word of god." I appreciate your dedication to your faith but the force at which you are pushing it onto my family is getting to be too much

**THELMA**

I haven't the slightest idea what you are referring to.

**CARLY**

The constant check-ins, the endless literature in my mailbox, and the numerous mentions of death.

**THELMA**

Where you from dear?

**CARLY**

New Hampshire

**THELMA**

Oh bless your heart. I don't know how it all works with the yanks, but here in the south we praise a differently

**TAMMY**

It's our duty to share the word wherever we can

**CARLY**

Tammy Newton, correct?

**TAMMY**

That's correct

**CARLY**

It's good to finally put a face with the name. Tell your child to leave my son alone. If this harassment doesn't stop I'll be force to take legal action

**TAMMY**

My little boy is an angel

**CARLY**

Your 15 year old is a bully.

**TAMMY**

He may be persistent in spreading the word, but he is in no way a bully

**CARLY**

Telling my gay son that he will die of "that virous" isn't "spreading the word" it descrimination.

**JUNE to CARLY**

You can't have my blood!

*Everyone is taken back by here outburst*

**THELMA**

Now, let's not get our panties in a twist here. I'm sure this is all a misunderstanding

**TAMMY**

Exactly, he was probably just informing your son that his behavior could result in an undesirable after life

**JUNE to HEATHER**

Such a good boy

**CARLY**

“An undesirable afterlife?” That's the excuse you use to justify your child being a giant homophobe?

**TAMMY**

He's entitled to his beliefs

**CARLY**

My child's existence isn't a theory that needs to be proven. He and his sexuality exists whether it aligns with your beliefs or not.

**THELMA**

That's enough. Get out of my house.

*CARLY walks towards the door and opens it. Turning back*

**CARLY**

You'll be hearing from my lawyer.

*She walks out. Slamming the door behind her*

**THELMA**

The persecution continues

**TAMMY**

I'm shaking

**HEATHER**

Tammy, is that true?

**TAMMY** *holding up her hand*

Yes, I'm shaking like a cold Chihuahua

**HEATHER**

Did your son really tell another boy he'd die from...that virus?

**JUNE**

Not you too

**TAMMY**

Can we just drop it?

**THELMA**

I don't want to hear another word about disease, or...."alternative lifestyles" while y'all are in my home.

**HEATHER**

You can say homosexual.

**THELMA**

I don't like that tastes in my mouth

**TAMMY**

Amen

**THELMA**

We have a mission to complete.

**JUNE**

Amen

**THELMA**

A direct order from God himself

**TAMMY/JUNE**

"Hallelujah" "Praise the lord" "Amen that that"

**THELMA**

I hope this has been an eye opening experience.

**HEATHER**

It certainly has.

End