

## Chapter 2

**DEPUTY WARDEN MCPHERSON** met them at the dock. He was young for a man of his rank, and his blond hair was cut a bit longer than the norm, and he had the kind of lanky grace in his movements that Teddy associated with Texans or men who'd grown up around horses. He was flanked by orderlies, mostly Negroes, a few white guys with  
5 deadened faces, as if they hadn't been fed enough as babies, had remained stunted and annoyed ever since. The orderlies wore white shirts and white trousers and moved in a pack. They barely glanced at Teddy and Chuck. They barely glanced at anything, just moved down the dock to the ferry and waited for it to unload its cargo. Teddy and Chuck produced their badges upon request and McPherson took his time studying them, looking up from the ID cards to their faces, squinting. "I'm not sure I've ever seen a U.S. marshal's badge before," he said.

10 "And now you've seen two," Chuck said. "A big day."

He gave Chuck a lazy grin and flipped the badge back at him. The beach looked to have been lashed by the sea in recent nights; it was strewn with shells and driftwood, mollusk skeletons and dead fish half eaten by whatever scavengers lived here. Teddy noticed trash that must have blown in from the inner harbor—cans and sodden wads of paper, a single license plate tossed up by the tree line and washed beige and numberless by the sun. The trees  
15 were mostly pine and maple, thin and haggard, and Teddy could see some buildings through the gaps, sitting at the top of the rise. Dolores, who'd enjoyed sunbathing, probably would have loved this place, but Teddy could feel only the constant sweep of the ocean breeze, a warning from the sea that it could pounce at will, suck you down to its floor. The orderlies came back down the dock with the mail and the medical cases and loaded them onto handcarts, and McPherson signed for the items on a clipboard and handed the clipboard back to one of the ferry guards and  
20 the guard said, "We'll be taking off, then." McPherson blinked in the sun.

"The storm," the guard said.

"No one seems to know what it's going to do." McPherson nodded.

"We'll contact the station when we need a pickup," Teddy said.

The guard nodded. "The storm," he said again.

25 "Sure, sure," Chuck said. "We'll keep that in mind."

McPherson led them up a path that rose gently through the stand of trees. When they'd cleared the trees, they reached a paved road that crossed their path like a grin, and Teddy could see a house off to both his right and his left. The one to the left was the simpler of the two, a maroon mansarded Victorian with black trim, small windows that gave the appearance of sentinels. The one to the right was a Tudor that commanded its small rise like a castle.  
30 They continued on, climbing a slope that was steep and wild with sea grass before the land greened and softened around them, leveling out up top as the grass grew shorter, gave way to a more traditional lawn that spread back for several hundred yards before coming to a stop at a wall of orange brick that seemed to curve away the length of the island. It was ten feet tall and topped with a single strip of wire, and something about the sight of the wire got to Teddy. He felt a sudden pity for all those people on the other side of the wall who recognized that thin wire

35 for what it was, realized just how badly the world wanted to keep them in. Teddy saw several men in dark blue uniforms just outside the wall, heads down as they peered at the ground.

Chuck said, "Correctional guards at a mental institution. Weird sight, if you don't mind me saying, Mr. McPherson." "This is a maximum-security institution," McPherson said. "We operate under dual charters—one from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, the other from the Federal Department of Prisons."

40 "I understand that," Chuck said. "I've always wondered, though—you guys have much to talk about around the dinner table?"

McPherson smiled and gave a tiny shake of his head. Teddy saw a man with black hair, who wore the same uniform as the rest of the guards, but his was accented by yellow epaulets and a standing collar, and his badge was gold. He was the only one who walked with his head held up, one hand pressed behind his back as he strode among the men, and the stride reminded Teddy of full colonels he'd met in the war, men for whom command was a necessary burden not simply of the military but of God. He carried a small black book pressed to his rib cage, and he nodded in their direction and then walked down the slope from which they'd come, his black hair stiff in the breeze.

"The warden," McPherson said. "You'll meet later." Teddy nodded, wondering why they didn't meet now, and the warden disappeared on the other side of the rise. One of the orderlies used a key to open the gate in the centre of the wall, and the gate swung wide and the orderlies and their carts went in as two guards approached McPherson and came to a stop on either side of him. McPherson straightened to his full height, all business now, and said, "I've got to give you guys the basic lay of the land."

"Sure."

"You gentlemen will be accorded all the courtesies we have to offer, all the help we can give. During your stay, however short that may be, you will obey protocol. Is that understood?"

Teddy nodded and Chuck said, "Absolutely." McPherson fixed his eyes on a point just above their heads. "Dr. Cawley will explain the finer points of protocol to you, I'm sure, but I have to stress the following: unmonitored contact with patients of this institution is forbidden. Is that understood?"

Teddy almost said, Yes, sir, as if he were back in basic, but he stopped short with a simple "Yes."

60 "Ward A of this institution is the building behind me to my right, the male ward. Ward B, the female ward, is to my left. Ward C is beyond those bluffs directly behind this compound and the staff quarters, housed in what was once Fort Walton. Admittance to Ward C is forbidden without the written consent and physical presence of both the warden and Dr. Cawley. Understood?" Another set of nods. McPherson held out one massive palm, as if in supplication to the sun.

65 "You are hereby requested to surrender your firearms." Chuck looked at Teddy. Teddy shook his head. Teddy said, "Mr. McPherson, we are duly appointed federal marshals. We are required by government order to carry our firearms at all times." McPherson's voice hit the air like steel cable. "Executive Order three-nine-one of the Federal Code of Penitentiaries and Institutions for the Criminally Insane states that the peace officer's requirement to bear arms is superseded only by the direct order of his immediate superiors or that of persons entrusted with the care

70 and protection of penal or mental health facilities. Gentlemen, you find yourself under the aegis of that exception. You will not be allowed to pass through this gate with your firearms."

Teddy looked at Chuck. Chuck tilted his head at McPherson's extended palm and shrugged. Teddy said, "We'd like our exceptions noted for the record." McPherson said, "Guard, please note the exceptions of Marshals Daniels and Aule." "Noted, sir." "Gentlemen," McPherson said. The guard on McPherson's right opened a small leather pouch.  
75 Teddy pulled back his overcoat and removed the service revolver from his holster. He snapped the cylinder open with a flick of his wrist and then placed the gun in McPherson's hand. McPherson handed it off to the guard, and the guard placed it in his leather pouch and McPherson held out his hand again. Chuck was a little slower with his weapon, fumbling with the holster snap, but McPherson showed no impatience, just waited until Chuck placed the gun awkwardly in his hand. McPherson handed the gun to the guard, and the guard added it to the pouch and  
80 stepped through the gate. "Your weapons will be checked into the property room directly outside the warden's office," McPherson said softly, his words rustling like leaves, "which is in the main hospital building in the centre of the compound. You will pick them back up on the day of your departure." McPherson's loose, cowboy grin suddenly returned.

"Well, that about does it for the official stuff for now. I don't know about y'all, but I am glad to be done with it. What  
85 do you say we go see Dr. Cawley?" And he turned and led the way through the gate, and the gate was closed behind them. Inside the wall, the lawn swept away from either side of a main path made from the same brick as the wall. Gardeners with manacled ankles tended to the grass and trees and flower beds and even an array of rosebushes that grew along the foundation of the hospital. The gardeners were flanked by orderlies, and Teddy saw other patients in manacles walking the grounds with odd, duck like steps. Most were men, a few were women. "When the  
90 first clinicians came here," McPherson said, "this was all sea grass and scrub. You should see the pictures. But now..." To the right and left of the hospital stood two identical redbrick colonials with the trim painted bright white, their windows barred, and the panes yellowed by salt and sea wash. The hospital itself was charcoal-coloured, its brick rubbed smooth by the sea, and it rose six stories until the dormer windows up top stared down at them. McPherson said, "Built as the battalion HQ just before the Civil War. They'd had some designs, apparently, to make this a training  
95 facility. Then when war seemed imminent, they concentrated on the fort, and then later on transforming this into a POW camp." Teddy noticed the tower he'd seen from the ferry. The tip of it peeked just above the tree line on the far side of the island.

"What's the tower?" "An old lighthouse," McPherson said. "Hasn't been used as such since the early 1800s. The Union army posted lookout sentries there, or so I've heard, but now it's a treatment facility."

100 "For patients?" He shook his head. "Sewage. You wouldn't believe what ends up in these waters. Looks pretty from the ferry, but every piece of trash in just about every river in this state floats down into the inner harbour, out through the midharbor, and eventually reaches us."

"Fascinating," Chuck said and lit a cigarette, took it from his mouth to suppress a soft yawn as he blinked in the sun. "Beyond the wall, that way"—he pointed past Ward B—"is the original commander's quarters. You probably saw it  
105 on the walk up. Cost a fortune to build at the time, and the commander was relieved of his duties when Uncle Sam got the bill. You should see the place."

"Who lives there now?" Teddy said.

110 "Dr. Cawley," McPherson said. "None of this would exist if it weren't for Dr. Cawley. And the warden. They created something really unique here." They'd looped around the back of the compound, met more manacled gardeners and orderlies, many hoeing a dark loam against the rear wall. One of the gardeners, a middle-aged woman with wispy wheat hair gone almost bald on top, stared at Teddy as he passed, and then raised a single finger to her lips. Teddy noticed a dark red scar, thick as licorice, that ran across her throat. She smiled, finger still held to her lips, and then shook her head very slowly at him.

115 "Cawley's a legend in his field," McPherson was saying as they passed back around toward the front of the hospital. "There is no facility like this in the United States. We take only the most damaged patients. We take the ones no other facility can manage."

"Gryce is here, right?" Teddy said. McPherson nodded.

120 "Vincent Gryce, yes. In Ward C." Chuck said to Teddy, "Gryce was the one...?" Teddy nodded. "Killed all his relatives, scalped them, made himself hats." Chuck was nodding fast. "And wore them into town, right?" "According to the papers." They had stopped outside a set of double doors. A brass plate affixed in the center of the right door read CHIEF OF STAFF, DR. J. CAWLEY. McPherson turned to them, one hand on the knob, and looked at them with an unreadable intensity. McPherson said, "In a less enlightened age, a patient like Gryce would have been put to death. But here they can study him, define a pathology, maybe isolate the abnormality in his brain that caused him to disengage so completely from acceptable patterns of behaviour. If they can do that, maybe we can reach a day  
125 where that kind of disengagement can be rooted out of society entirely." He seemed to be waiting for a response, his hand stiff against the doorknob. "It's good to have dreams," Chuck said. "Don't you think?"

Dennis Lehane, *Shutter Island*, 2003