FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Anchoress of Shere
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> *As soon as he passed the narrow tray through the grille, Marda seized it and began to devour the food. The priest watched her gorge, then said in a clipped voice, 'I have brought you a Bible. I will permit you light for one hour.'*

It is Surrey, England, in the village of Shere, 1967. Father Michael Duval, a mentally deranged priest, is creating his "masterpiece," which he has been writing for years: a story based on historical facts that began in 1329, when a young girl named Christine, following a devastating sexual violation by the lord of the land, witnesses a miraculous vision and makes the decision to become an anchoress in her village of Shere. An anchoress is someone who chooses to live in extreme religious seclusion. A ceremony takes place the day after her eighteenth birthday, in which Christine is entombed in a small cell in the church.

In modern-day England, the priest is struggling to find the right words in which to write his novel. He believes that in order to understand Christine deeply and for others to understand her spiritual calling, he needs to witness a spiritual struggle of the same magnitude that she experienced hundreds of years ago. Toward this end, he kidnaps Marda, a newcomer to Shere. Having made many previous, unsuccessful attempts to convert kidnap victims, he hopes that he has finally found the right girl.

The pace of the book continually shifts with great momentum as the reader is carried between the 1300s and the 1960s. The author intertwines the lives of Marda and Christine, and their two centuries, clearly and easily. The reader will vividly experience life in a cold cell, as this is the setting in both centuries for both women. The author, a former war correspondent and film producer who has written several books, has created two likeable female characters—and one villain who deserves a cell of his own.

While in her small cell, Marda confronts the task of reading the priest's novel and, as a result, becomes connected to Christine on a spiritual level. Through her walled-up torture,

deprived of food, heat, and light, Marda becomes a welcomed heroine, with a twisted ending that will surprise.