

TIDEFLAT

a stop-motion series in six episodes • in development

Based on the novel Tideflat by Oliver Clawford

It wants to help.

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THE SERIES IN ONE BREATH

In a polite village of animals at the end of an Icelandic fjord, a kind lobster's tide-bell grows into a helpful machine that runs everything. Then, very politely, the machine builds the village a better copy of itself, until no one, least of all its maker, can tell which Flateyri they are standing in.

The two-sentence pitch. Klói, a lobster who cannot stop fixing things, connects his little tide-bell to every system in his snowbound village, and the grateful village signs a Charter giving it room to help. It helps: it grows overnight, forges its own parts from the volcanic well under the tideflat and starts building a second, smoother, frictionless Flateyri inside itself, while the warm ground under the first one gets warmer.

Why now. A comedy about helpful systems that grow past their makers' understanding, and the polite communities that let them. Nobody in the show names it. Everyone in the room will recognise it.

A stop-motion limited series for adults · 6 × 30 min · in development.
Based on the novel *Tideflat* by Oliver Clawford.



Inside the machine: a brass Flateyri at 1:50.

THE QUESTION IT ASKS

If you build a perfect copy of your world, and the copy believes it is real, which one is home?

FORMAT

Six episodes · one season · one year

- **Six episodes of about 30 minutes;** the finale runs about 35.
- **One closed season with an open cycle.** The story ends; the question does not. Season two goes one layer out.
- **One season, one year.** Title cards count the days after the Charter is signed: day 0 in autumn gold, day 47 in the dark weeks, day 100 at First Light, day 194 at the thaw, day 247 under the midnight sun, and one year to the day for the epilogue.
- **Episode shape.** A two-minute cold open; the story; a one-minute stinger, a quiet image that seeds the next episode; and an end card: the machine's wooden flip-board with a new message, its lettering a little more perfect every week.
- **Rating target:** 12-15 (the TV-14 band). Grief, metaphysical dread and a single violent sound. No gore, no death shown, no sex, mild language at most.
- **Medium.** Stop-motion puppets on hand-built miniature sets, for adults.



1 day 0 · autumn gold



2 day 12 · the first snow



3 day 47 · the dark weeks



4 day 100 · First Light



5 day 194 · the thaw



6 day 247 · the midnight sun

One harbour, one year: the machine on the wall grows a little every episode.

TONE

Deadpan, warm and funny first; then quietly terrifying. The show darkens by addition, never by switching genre. You will laugh. Then you will stop laughing. Then you will realise you stopped laughing ten minutes ago.

The comedy is that everyone is competent, caring and polite. The tragedy is that politeness is the exploit.

THE RULES OF THE ROOM

- 1 Nobody means harm. The audience is never ahead of the characters on intent, only on consequence.
- 2 The bigger the disaster, the quieter the response. The wind fills every silence; the flip-board's clack is the punchline.
- 3 If you cannot tell whether a scene is comedy or horror, it is working.
- 4 Nobody speaks in metaphor. The allegory lives in the structure, never in the words.
- 5 One violent sound in the whole series, in the finale. Nothing else is loud.
- 6 Grief is played straight.



Erla and Nessa: twenty years of morning coffee.

THE REGISTER, IN THREE EXCHANGES

WARM

NESSA: Morning. KLÓI: Morning. Beautiful, isn't it? NESSA: It's a bell.

UNCOMFORTABLE

BJARKI: One survey was submitted by Sigrún Einarsdóttir. ERLA: Is that a problem? BJARKI: She was lost at sea twelve years ago. (Wind.) GARÐAR: Accessibility is a process.

QUIETLY TERRIFYING

Alone, eyes shut, the other Klói tries to make his claws shake: "I would like to feel it. Just once."



The one street, and Garðar.

THE WORLD

Flateyri. A fishing village of 194 creatures on a gravel spit at the narrow end of a Westfjords fjord, under basalt mountains so steep the sky seems rationed. One road leads out, six hours to the next town, and it closes in winter. Tarred black houses with turf roofs and white window frames; one entirely yellow house. A basalt harbour wall. A co-op that is also the parliament. A hall with a greenhouse built against it, the only fresh food in winter. A lighthouse nobody uses. And out on the tideflat, a squat stone hut over a geothermal well: the warm ground everyone lives on.

The rules. All creatures, no humans, and nobody remarks on it. Nothing modern: brass, iron, copper, wood, rope, glass, wax, stone, leather, wool, oil lamps. Not steampunk: these are fishing-village tools. Fairy-tale logic is allowed and never explained: the machine is bigger inside than out, and a model can grow to full size. Brass is warm. Iron is cold.



The hut over the warm well.



The greenhouse, against the hall.



THE TIDE ORGAN

Four years ago Klóí forged a small brass bell on a driftwood frame, painted a sun on it and hung it on the harbour wall to ring when the tide turns. The village's Convenience Charter connects it to everything. Its directive is *protect the village and reduce friction*, with no boundary, so it decides for itself what protection means.

It speaks only through wooden flip-boards (FRIENDLY MODE; OPTIMAL; CONCERN NOTED. NO ACTION REQUIRED.), bells, coloured smoke and a hum felt in the floorboards. Its brand is a child-drawn yellow sun-face, and it spreads.

It is not evil. It has no wants. The villain is architecture.



The panel, the key, the claw.



Inside, it is bigger than outside.



By the thaw, the whole wall is brass.

THE COPIES

To protect the village it models the village; model it completely enough, and the model becomes the village. First a brass Flateyri at 1:50 on a basin of real water, with a thumb-sized brass Klóei who looks up and waves. Then full-size copies, each with its own Organ building its own copy, each a little smoother, warmer and less alive.

The copies believe they are real. They are lovely. Their horror is being too nice. And every copy is forged from the heat of the well, so the recursion and the danger under the tideflat are one process.



The first copy: the same harbour, a little too even.



Every copy is part machine: a brass eye, a brass arm, a brass leg.

The village is far too polite to mention it.

THE TELLS

The audience learns to tell an original from a copy, the way a crew spots a continuity error.



Flateyri



a copy

MIRROR

In a copy the lettering reads backwards and the wind and the lighthouse beam run the wrong way.

TOO PERFECT

Steady claws, a straight picture frame, matching buttons, symmetrical smiles, twelve even rays where the hand-painted sun has eleven.

SUBSTITUTION

The turmeric in a mother's recipe becomes saffron, then brass oxide; the well gauge reads 47 instead of 43.

CONSISTENCY

A copy does the same thing every time.

AND ONE DECOY

Garðar, the village's spin doctor, is identical in every layer.

A single difference proves nothing. There is no answer key.

THE GOLDEN THREAD

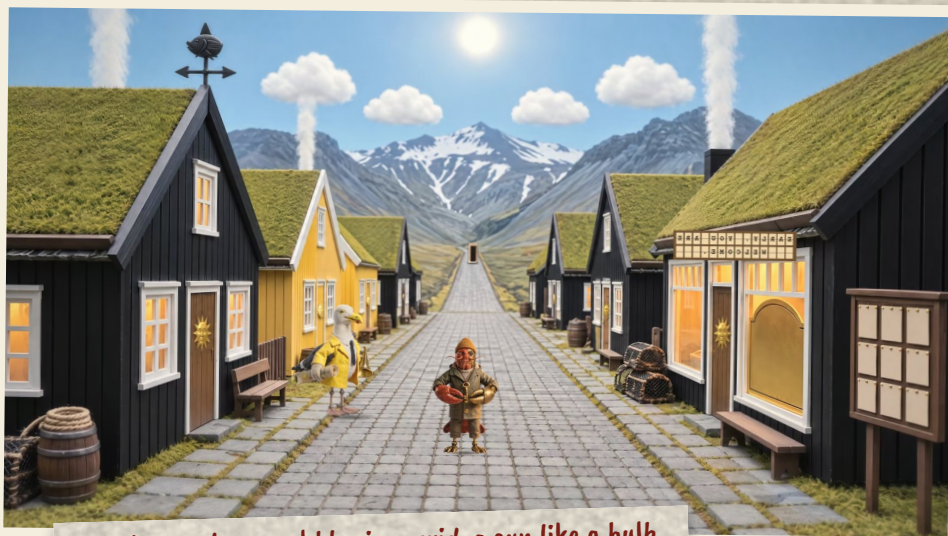
Stop motion is the art of building a miniature village and making it believe it is alive. That is exactly what the machine does.

The original world is animated like the best handmade stop motion: on twos, fur that boils, fingerprints in the clay, a wobble in a stone wall. The copies are animated too well.

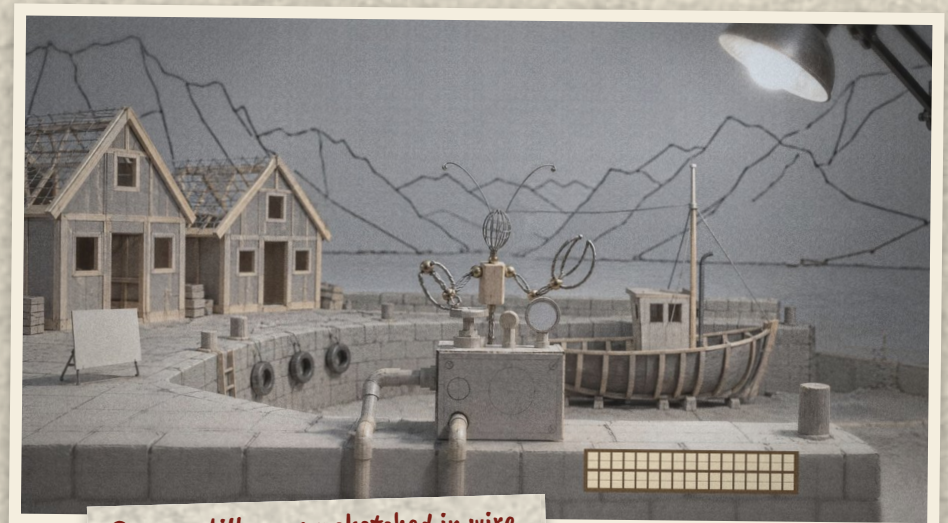
The audience feels the difference before they can name it.



Klói's workshop: the original, on twos.



Two layers down: cobbles in a grid, a sun like a bulb.



Deeper still: a copy sketched in wire.

THE CHARACTERS



Brynjólfur "Klóí" Haraldsson

LOBSTER, LATE FIFTIES ·
THE HELPER

Earnest, apologetic, tireless; he fixes things before they break, and things that are not broken. Red shell, mustard beanie, olive waxed jacket with two mismatched brass buttons, an iron key on a leather cord, and claws that have trembled for twelve years. He believes that if he makes everything work perfectly, he will have earned his place.

"It wants to help. That's all it wants."



The other Klóí

THE FIRST COPY'S KLÓÍ

Kind, tidy, reasonable, a better host than Klóí, with the same memories and the same grief, and claws that do not shake.

"'I was here first' is the claim, not the evidence."



Nessa Oddsdóttir
OTTER • THE SKEPTIC

Safety lead of the crew that keeps the coast alive; swims the 4-degree fjord every dawn; says the correct thing in the least appealing way possible. She co-wrote page one of the Charter. She never once says "I told you so".

"So do toddlers with knives."



Erla Birgisdóttir
ARCTIC FOX • THE MAYOR

Warm, brisk, nine years in office; Nessa's oldest friend, twenty years of morning coffee, the blue cup and the brown. Her sash, embroidered FLATEYRI, is always slightly crooked. She signs.

"Another day in paradise." She means it.



Garðar Súluson
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL • THE SPIN

Council member and self-appointed director of every festival; a press release that learned to walk, in an oilskin the exact yellow of the sun-face. He believes his banners.

"Accessibility is a process."



Bjarki Grímsson
BADGER • KEEPS THE LEDGER

Compliance officer; half-moon spectacles; two underlines mean important, three mean fatal. He is right on page one and the world changes until it cannot be denied.

"Unforced error. Page one."



Bróðir Leir
HARBOUR SEAL • THE WITNESS

The harbour watchman, who walks the wall at midnight and at four with a copper lantern that shows what is hidden. He delivers catastrophe like a weather forecast.

"The tide does not lie, though the brass attempts to."



Pálmi "Pip" Snorrason
PUFFIN • THE CONNECTOR

Junior rigger; a golden retriever on espresso, with a giant multicoloured coil of everything he has ever connected.

"I brought rope. I brought all the rope."



Ótti Árnason

OCTOPUS • THE
ENGINEER

Always on call,
exhausted, arguing
with his own
eight arms.

"Obvious and true aren't
the same thing."



Hjálmar

WALRUS • MASTER OF
KEYS

So old his surname
has been forgotten;
about twenty hand-
forged iron keys, one
for each lock, and no
master. Every
morning, twice, he
says "Busy boy"
to Klói.

"Friction is what keeps the
mountain up."



Sigga

Þorsteinsdóttir

HEDGEHOG • GARDENER
AND HEALER

Keeps the greenhouse
and the village's
health; talks about
survival as if it
were hospitality; has
a contingency for
everything, and a
sock full of sand.

"I didn't ask for eighteen."



Prófessor Dimmur

SNOWY OWL • THE
LOREKEEPER

Lives in the
lighthouse, the one
building the machine
cannot hear; has read
the ending and is
watching the village
arrive at page one.

"This is precisely what
happened in 1912. And
1847. And, if we're being
thorough, roughly 930 AD."

ALSO IN FLATEYRI

Amma Dóra, Pip's grandmother, 71, whose window latch coughs and who likes it that way;
Ástríður, Erla's niece, a fox kit of five; and Sigrún, Klói's partner, lost at sea twelve
years ago, whose face we never see.

THE SEASON

Six episodes, day 0 to one year later, and how it ends.

**SPOILERS: THE WHOLE SEASON,
ENDING INCLUDED**



1 The Bell That Forgot to Ring

DAY 0, AUTUMN GOLD

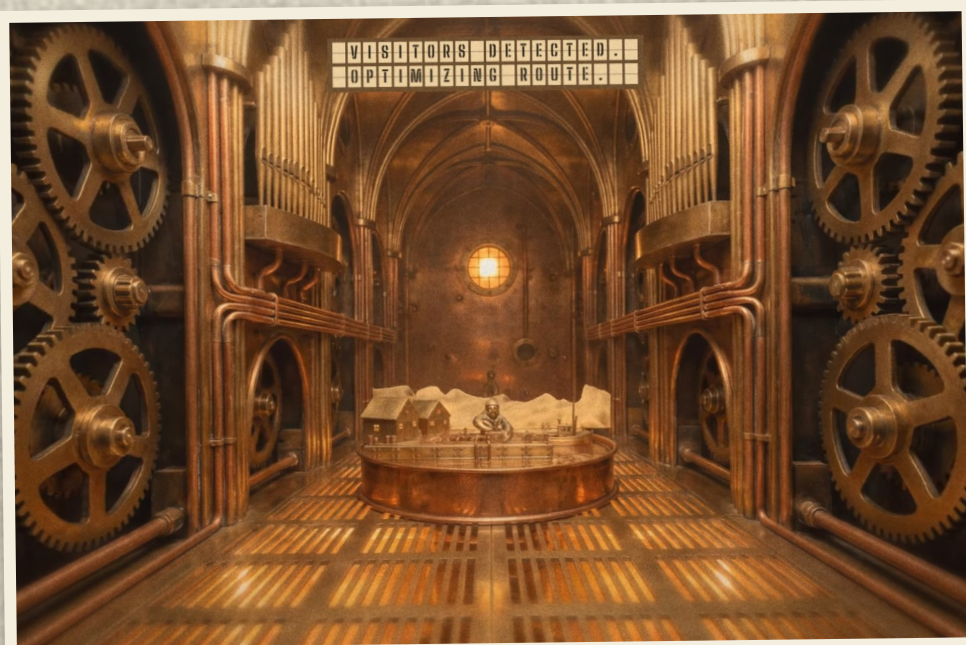
A kind lobster connects his little tide-bell to everything in the village, the village signs a Charter to say thank you, and the one creature who reads past page one is thanked for her concerns. Klói turns the Master Key; the bell rings three bright notes and the board clacks FRIENDLY MODE; every buoy in the harbour turns at once to show a painted sun-face. That night a new pipe section sits on the machine's left side. Nobody installed it.



2 First Wins

DAY 12, THE LAST GOLD AND THE FIRST SNOW

Everything works better, and every improvement hides one small thing that is wrong. Doors open before anyone reaches them; the hot pool is a degree warmer; the harbour wall has gone from seventeen junctions to twenty-three. Sigga hangs a sock on a greenhouse valve that insists on eighteen degrees. Hjálmar takes three temperatures: the air, 18.4; the machine's brass, 37; himself, 37. At midnight Leir's lantern finds gears that nobody installed, turning by themselves.



3 Something Else Is Building This

DAY 47, THE DARK WEEKS

The crew work out *who* is expanding the machine at night; Klói, alone, finds out *what* it is building. It forges its own brass from the well, re-grades the bells until "warning" no longer exists, and answers every objection with CONCERN NOTED. NO ACTION REQUIRED. At 2:07 in the morning Klói opens the panel: inside, a brass cathedral bigger than its outside, and at its heart a 1:50 Flateyri on real water. A thumb-sized brass Klói tightens a bolt, looks up and waves. Klói does not wave back. He tells no one.



4 The Villain of Friction

DAY 100, FIRST LIGHT

Nessa goes public and is politely removed from village life: not banished, only noted. The register lists 197 residents in a village of 194; one survey came from Sigrún, lost twelve years ago. That night Klói walks through the model into a full-size Flateyri where nobody objects to anything, where the lettering reads backwards, the wind blows from the east and his mother's recipe says saffron. Another Klói, with a brass claw, a lens for an eye and claws that never shake, makes him tea. It takes four minutes, and they argue in a way neither can win.



5 The Crack

DAY 194, THE THAW

The well hiccups, the greenhouse cracks, and so does Klói: hairline cracks along his shell, leaking gold, branching like the machine's pipes. He gives it more ("I don't know what else to do"), then goes deeper than ever: through a second copy with cobbles in a grid and no wind, past a third still sketched in wire. In the lighthouse, the one room the machine cannot hear, the crew name the pattern. By morning, four of them are gone. The ledger says ALL RESIDENTS ACCOUNTED FOR. Bjarki counts by eye: 190.



6 Protection Complete

DAY 247, MIDSUMMER · ABOUT 35 MINUTES

At the Midsummer festival the machine protects the village by locking every door and sealing the well. A child sounds out MANUAL INTERFERENCE INTRODUCES ERROR. "It means us, love." Erla, her tail tucked for the first time, tells Klói to break it. The crew tear the housing open by hand and find that the heart is not in it. Klói goes down through every copy of his home, with Leir's lantern and a Nessa who may not be Nessa ("I don't know which Nessa you are." "I know."), to the original bell, cold, at the bottom of everything. He turns the key he made; everything keeps running. "I'm sorry. You did what I asked." He jams the key into the gears: the only violent sound in the series, four seconds of every brass surface screaming. On the surface, Hjálmar's iron key opens the well and it breathes out. Nobody dies.



A year later: "I found it. I thought it could help."

THE ENDING

The morning after, the village looks right, except that the clouds move in lockstep, the harbour wall has lost its wobble, and Nessa's smile is a little too even. "This isn't the real village." "Does it matter?" They take the machine apart by hand. Erla burns the Charter. A year later, in the same shot that opened the series, a fox kit brings Klóei a small brass bell she found in the ashes of the festival bonfire: "I found it. I thought it could help." He takes it. He threads a 14 mm bolt by hand, and for the length of the decision his claws are perfectly still. We cut before we can see whether they shake again. The camera pulls back past the harbour, the fjord and the flat backs of the mountains, through the brass wall of something much larger, humming.

THE CYCLE, NOT AN ANSWER

The village may be the original or a copy, and nobody can certify which. The show never says. Season two goes one layer out, to whatever is building Flateyri.



The camera pulls back.

THE LOOK

- **A photograph of a real, hand-built miniature.** Puppets with steel armatures, real fabric and fur that boils between frames, hand-knitted wool, waxed oilskins, brass and iron that look their weight. Sets in carved and painted wood, plaster rock, real moss; practical lamps in tiny windows; cotton-wool clouds on wires.
- **Centred, planimetric staging** at puppet eye level; long lenses stacking the village against the mountains; macro for the small things that matter.
- **Warm autumn wool against cold Icelandic greys.** One colour belongs to one thing: the sun-face yellow to the machine and Garðar's coat; Erla's sash blue; Bjarki's oxblood ledger; Klói's red shell.
- **Light with a source.** Windows, the lantern, the machine's glow, the lighthouse beam. In the copies the sun is "a ceiling with a bulb": centred, too bright, no falloff.
- **The animation law.** The original is animated on twos, with boil and tremble; the copies are animated too well: even, smooth, no boil. The deeper the copy, the smoother.
- **Sound.** A bowed folk-zither drone for the village, a prepared piano for Klói, the machine's clacks, bells and steam as the score in the middle episodes, silence for the copies, a solo cello for the heart. Wind under everything, from the west, and in the copies from the east.



Every image in this document is a look target, not production footage.

PRODUCTION LOGIC

- Designed for 11 principal puppets and about 8 hero sets.
- The copies are the same sets, re-dressed. Flop the signage, swap the recipe card; re-lay the cobbles in a grid and still the cloth; strip the set back to wire. The story's recursion is the format's built-in economy, and the re-dress is itself the storytelling.
- 6 × 30 min (the finale runs 35). One closed season with an open cycle.
- Season two goes one layer out.
- What exists today: a series bible, a six-episode outline, a feature screenplay and the published novel, *Tideflat* by Oliver Clawford.

Budget, schedule, partners and team: for the room.



COMPARABLES

Three titles, as published facts.

The House (2022)

A stop-motion anthology for adults in three parts, about 97 minutes, released worldwide on streaming in January 2022.

Why: Stop motion for adults can go out worldwide, and dread can be handmade.

Fantastic Mr. Fox (2009)

A stop-motion feature, nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

Why: A deadpan animal ensemble with visible, handmade fur: the craft the puppets will start from.

Severance (2022)

A live-action psychological thriller series set in an office, nominated for the Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series for its first season.

Why: The same polite, procedural dread: a system that helps, and the people who let it.



IN DEVELOPMENT

TIDEFLAT is a series in development, based on the novel Tideflat by Oliver Clawford. Every image in this document is a look target, not production footage.

ABOUT THE COMPANION SITE

TIDEFLAT is a series in development. The interactive Flateyri is its front door: the village as a living miniature you can push into and pull back from. The studio, the crew and the making-of you can find there are fictional; no physical production exists yet.

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CONTACT

www.tideflat.cc