

Capricorn Cell

David Hriblan

Capricorn Cell

Volume I

Danubius Press

Cover Art by *David Dezzutti*

The names, characters, places of business and events depicted in Capricorn Cell are either fictitious or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to real-life events is coincidental.

ISBN 973-98274-1-1

Chapter I

Anna

Eight years ago Anna Murphy harvested her first buck. It was a big deer with a smallish rack, though the size of the deer was unimportant to her father Gary. The eight year old with the pale blue eyes and long red hair had proven that she was a skilled archer. Gary still keeps the picture of the proud little huntress atop the bookshelf in the living room. In the photograph Anna kneels beside the vanquished creature, fallen leaves surrounding her and her trophy. She holds on to her bow with her right hand and smiles toward the photographer. The picture is flanked by two other framed photographs. To the left is a picture of Anna standing on the 1-meter springboard. Gary snapped it last year at the Pittsburgh Aquatic Center. To the right is a family portrait, with mother, father, and daughter. It is the last photograph ever taken with Anna and both her parents. That picture is almost fourteen years old.

Today Anna is after a more substantial trophy from a sportsman's point of view. She's seen her prey before. In May, while scouting the Forbes State Forest, Anna and Gary spied the majestic beast. He is a huge non-typical stag and quite likely the largest deer Anna has ever seen in person. His rack is astonishing and his body, the part that most interests the Murphy's, is larger than any of Anna's previous kills.

Gary parks his Jeep Liberty near Steve Coppersmith's house. Steve and Gary both worked cat-eye shift at a Consol deep mine in Greene County, Pennsylvania, until Gary finally made it to day shift. When Anna steps out of the Liberty her tall black boots sink a little into the wet earth. It's been a rainy autumn. Snow may fall tonight, but for now the sky is cloudy and temperatures are in the upper forties.

"I'm gonna hunt where the tornado went through," Anna says.

Gary nods. Some days it strikes him how much she looks like her mother, in the face at least. As many expected, Anna has become a very beautiful young woman. She has her mother's blue eyes and thick red

hair. She even has the same cleft that runs down her chin. Once outside the Liberty, Anna takes a deep breath and exhales steam. She puts on her camouflaged hat, which matches her pants and jacket. She tucks her silver crucifix under her shirt and rolls the sleeves down to her black gloves. A glint of light off of the cross or a glimpse of her pure white skin would scare off any potential prey. Anna takes her bow from the back seat and marches off into the woods.

"Anna," Gary says, "Be careful."

She glances back and smiles. Gary looks like a big camouflaged bear. A shuck of red hair pokes from under his hat. He's not a great hunter. He just enjoys it as well as those who are.

Anna has no difficulty moving through the woods. She's spent much of her young life in the wild and knows how to move through brush and around pitfalls. While she inherited her mother's beauty, ten years of springboard diving have given her a lovely and strong swimmer's body. She climbs over great trunks and ancient stones, until she finds a spot that looks good and feels even better. It's been two years since the F2 tornado ripped a four-mile path through the forest. The scars remain in the form of ancient oaks torn asunder and young maples splintered and twisted. It wasn't far from this tangled mess that Anna caught a glimpse of the horned monster. Another hunter may have already harvested the animal, or it may have succumbed to age or injury. Regardless, Anna will wait until nightfall for a chance to place her arrow into the monster stag or another buck. Anna hunkers down among the smashed trees. The morning fog hasn't yet lifted over the highest hills. The foliage has fallen, except for some deep red oak leaves. The forest is beautiful. It's enough to bring her here whether she's carrying a bow or not.

One month has passed since Anna turned seventeen. Garret Fogarty told her that her birthday present would be a little late but he hoped it would be worth the wait. She told him its fine; she will enjoy it no matter what it is or when it arrives. Anna pours a cup of tea from her thermos bottle. She breathes the vapor and drinks the warm, cherry-infused liquid. The wind blows a little and the air is clean. There are several reasons why Anna has faith in this location. Around the area are black walnuts, hazelnuts and hawthorns that are loaded with nuts and fruits. A small brook splashes down a gully to the left. She's confident that the big monster passes through this area. Also, she enjoys the look of the trees and the earth.

Around noon Anna takes an elderberry jelly sandwich out of her backpack. Together with a honeybell orange and some warm tea it makes

for a passable lunch. The wind picks up again and the tree's branches sing a sorrowful song. Anna could be at home in bed or watching an idiotic film with a group of schoolmates, but the thought never crosses her mind. This is exactly where she wants to be.

I wouldn't want to be anywhere else, she thinks, but then thoughts of Garret cross her mind, *Well, maybe one other place*.

Gary walks the section of the forest toward Linn Run. He sees a pair of does but no bucks. They were too far away for a shot anyway. Gary scouts the stream and imagines a fishing trip in the spring. Anna has many hobbies and fishing is just one of them. Gary can taste the trout, just off the grill and seasoned with tarragon. It's one in the afternoon and he hasn't had lunch yet; there's no time like the present.

Anna sees a small creature scurry through the ground clutter not far from her vantage point. When it jumps into a young hickory she can see it's a fairydiddle. "Shit," she thinks. If it sees her it will raise holy hell, killing any chance that the wily stag will make an appearance. Anna doesn't move. She doesn't even blink. Her breathing is deep and slow. The red squirrel looks around and flies up the tree. Soon it leaps from limb to limb and departs. Anna watches his insane acrobatics with amusement. Once he's gone she goes back to waiting. An hour later a soft sound heralds the approach of something larger. Anna's senses go from wide open to a sharp focus. She readies her bow but does not draw the arrow.

The deer that steps into the tornado zone is a worthy trophy indeed. His rack is larger than any Anna has ever taken and his body is about as large as her largest kill. He is strong and in the peak of health. There is no doubt that he could win almost any doe's attentions and has probably fathered several fawns over the past years. Anna examines this excellent specimen. It's not the non-typical stag. Right now this virile stranger is intruding on the monster's territory. The big, ugly non-typical might have something to say about that. Too bad he won't get the chance; their fight could have been epic. Anna draws her arrow and takes aim. It will be an easy shot. Perhaps the smell of the other male has made this one careless. Perhaps he's inexperienced. She looks over the buck. He really is beautiful. It's a shame he won't be around to father future generations of healthy young deer. Some of the scrawny deer she's seen could have used his genetics. His rack is symmetrical and each of the eight points is sharp and pronounced.

Anna does not fire. She relaxes and watches the vigorous buck cross the tornado's path and disappear into the woods. Even if she leaves empty-handed she will feel better for not killing this one. Hopefully he'll

learn to be more wary so that he can pass on his seed for generations to come. The forest seems deserted again and Anna's senses return to a general state of readiness.

Gary sees another doe and what may be a very young buck. It's a pathetic specimen that's probably a button buck. He'd feel ashamed taking such a paltry prize. The meat is what interests him so this skinny deer's no good anyway. He checks the time: 4PM, or as his watch says 16:00. He got used to "military time" even before his two years active duty in the army. Gary decides to call it a day and work his way back to the Coppersmith place. There he'll wait for Anna, and maybe chew the fat with Steve if he's home.

The day slips away and Anna begins to doubt she will see any more deer, let alone the big stag. It was a beautiful day. Tomorrow is Saturday and they'll be back. Even if it was a Tuesday and Gary had to work, he'd let her take the day off from school and drive up to the Forbes woodland or down to Gibbon Glade. She hopes that he's had better luck and is eager to tell him about the buck that she let escape. He won't care that she did; thanks to his love of wild places and the example he's set, she, too, is responsible with their use. There is another reason for him to be proud. Like her father, she, too, feels the natural yearning of the white man - and the white woman - to preserve and cherish natural beauty.

That night Anna will wonder if God blessed her for sparing the big, healthy buck. An hour before the legal end of the hunting day Anna has found a new position further down the tornado path. Here she's closer to the brook and a stand of hawthorn and spicebush. There is thick laurel and saplings that have grown since the whirlwind. Anna is positioned so that she can see behind and between the vegetation. It will make an easy shot more difficult, but she'll have a better chance to get a shot off at a wily stag that uses the vegetation as cover.

From down the track she hears the sounds of a battle. The fairydiddle must have caught a gray squirrel intruding on his territory. It's no contest; the little ball of fur and fury runs off the bigger squirrel. Anna thinks about the diminutive fighter and feels like laughing. Fortunately she does not. To the left there is motion among the laurel. Something big is coming; something very big.

Anna readies her bow. She can tell from the shape and the dark brown color that it's a whitetail deer. Through the laurel she glimpses the rack. It's massive and twisted. Some of the antlers are fused and others sprout irregular spines like a deformed cactus. The non-typical stag still lives and he has returned.

Gary would credit Anna's skill as the reason she successfully harvested the first buck that she ever shot with an arrow, eight years in the past. Anna knows better; she was close to shaking from the emotion and was surprised that her aim was true. In fact, it may have been sheer luck. That's not the case anymore. After years of practice and actual hunting and with seven bucks and seven does to her credit, she knows she can control her emotions before placing a shot. Today it's more difficult than usual, which is understandable, though the young woman maintains her composure. With the utmost patience she waits for the stag to give her an opportunity.

It would seem that the monster seeks to tantalize her. The big stag seems about to present his chest but then edges away. He turns once, but it's an impossible shot and Anna must wait. Again he shows his rear toward her and she smiles a little at his inadvertent mockery. Then he turns the opposite direction and disappears in the thickest laurel. Anna knows that he'll either depart the way he came or he'll turn and edge closer. There is a small opening that might give her a chance. It would be a difficult shot, but not impossible. Better yet the opening is at shoulder-height for a buck his size. She stays ready with the arrow. If he gives her a shot she'll take it in seconds. She waits. Through the fleshy leaves she sees him face her hiding spot.

Anna will not shoot unless she thinks she can drop the stag. She will not wound him and leave his body somewhere in the woods, for worms and vultures to consume. Sometimes that's unavoidable, but she will not contribute to such an unhappy ending if she has a choice. The wait is agonizing. She sees his body through the opening. He's chest on toward her. This shot would most likely result in a terrible wound but not rapid death. She risks waiting a little longer. The huge buck turns slightly, his chest at an angle that reveals some of his right shoulder. Most hunters would fail if they attempted a shot at this angle; but not all. Those with years of practice and a great measure of discipline might find success. Anna takes careful aim. The sharp razors of the arrowhead point straight toward the monster's body. Anna lets fly the lethal shaft.

Gary is standing on Steve Coppersmith's porch when his cell phone rings.

"Dad!" says the melodious female voice, "Come up by the tornado path! Boy do I have something to show you."

Gary gets a huge grin because he has an idea what's waiting for him.

While the triumphant Anna waits on Gary, she muscles the deer closer to the brook. The water is clear and cold. Anna unsheathes her buck

knife and begins to field dress the fallen stag. She doesn't stare at the massive rack of antlers or jump for joy. There's a job to be done first. This is the tenth deer that Anna has field dressed on her own. The first was four years previous, when she was thirteen. After the deed is done, Anna washes her gloves and knife in the brook. The stag is heavier than any deer she's ever lugged. She'll appreciate her father's help when it comes time to haul the carcass all the way back to the Jeep.

When Gary arrives he finds his beloved daughter standing beside her trophy. Her gentle smile hides the pride that is swelling inside.

"Sweet Jesus," Gary says, "You got him!"

She shrugs. Anna's not a braggart; neither is she prone to excessive humility. She's often more reserved around her father due to the respect she shows him, and Gary has noticed a bit more humility when she's conversing with Garret. She's even been nervous on occasion.

"Dad, could you help me get him out of here?" she asks.

"Get the front and I'll grab the hind end," he says, "You steer."

At the Coppersmith place Anna tosses her hat on the Jeep and Gary snaps a few pictures with his little digital camera. He'll frame the one with her kneeling beside the beast's head. When he's finished Anna removes her jacket and the thick camouflaged shirt underneath. Her long red ponytail hangs down the back of her black tank top. It's still on the warm side and she's too excited to feel cold. Steve Coppersmith returns to the porch to see what the commotion is about. Coppersmith is in his early 50's and a bit thin for his height, although his love of beer is visible in the shape of his stomach. His face is far too wrinkled for his age and his hair is pure white. There's no denying the strength of his arms and in particular his hands. His grip could smash a black walnut. Steve Coppersmith has been a coal miner for thirty years and it shows.

He's also a father with two sons and a daughter. Coppersmith rubs his head when he sees the deer. He looks at the huntress. At the moment, Anna's back is turned toward him as she chatters and laughs with her father. Steve sees the long ivy tattoo on Anna's back. The t-back shirt covers its beginning, but the rest is impossible to miss. Two vines run in opposite directions across her uppermost back and curve up to her shoulders. There they descend each arm, encircling both biceps four times until trailing off near her wrists. Green ivy leaves cover the vines along their entire course, until the final thin tendrils end on her forearms. It's an incredible work of art. Coppersmith, who was a marine for eight years, has seen many tats but this one is far and away the best. He doesn't admire the workmanship for long. He's shocked to see such body art on Gary's dau-

ghter and shakes his head in disapproval. Steve's own daughter never got a tattoo. Unlike Anna, she had oral sex by the age of 17, though that distinction is lost on him at the moment.

"They're gonna want to take a picture when we report it," Gary says.

Anna's arms are crossed as she examines the stag. Their strength shows in her large biceps, a gift of years of diving, swimming and exercise.

"Nah," she says, "No pictures."

Anna is beyond beautiful and her prize is easily one of the dozen most impressive non-typical bucks ever harvested in Pennsylvania. Steve is a little surprised at her answer. Local websites would die to have a picture of her with the buck.

"I'll handle it," Gary says.

His arms are crossed as well. They are like thick white branches. Steve has seen their power. Fifteen years ago Gary helped him fight his way out of a Uniontown bar.

"Steve! Thanks for the invitation," Gary yells to Coppersmith, "Drop by sometime."

"Thank you Mr. Coppersmith," Anna says.

Anna and Gary load the deer into the beige Jeep Liberty. Coppersmith hadn't seen the stag before today. He'd heard of it from a brother who got a glimpse of the beast while searching for morels. The thing snorted and refused to run. Steve's brother thought it was going to charge him. Steve, who is only an occasional hunter, doesn't spend much time in the forest. He hasn't visited the "deer room" at Cabela's or seen a buck with more than eight points. This, then, is the most impressive buck he's ever seen. When he goes inside the tattoo is all that's on his mind.

On the way home, Gary turns on his iPod. The sounds of "Once in Royal David's City" play over the Jeep's speakers. Usually Anna would prefer *Moonspell* to the Cambridge Choir, but she adores this hymn. Anyway, Gary's the father, so it's his choice. Anna remains quiet even after the music comes to an end. A little smile is on her face. Gary reaches over and rubs her head. When the two arrive in Lemont Furnace, Anna takes several more pictures of her prize and then begins butchering the deer.

"You still want Cornish hens?" Gary asks.

Anna looks up and nods. Inside, Gary fires up the oven and finishes what's left of his tea. He cycles through the pictures on the digital camera. He looks more at his daughter than at the enormous buck. He hopes that he's given her a good life, and even more, that he's prepared her for the hard times to come.

Once the game hens are in the oven and the potatoes are in the pot, Gary strolls down the hall toward Anna's room. He passes the bookshelf on the left. There's a selection of Chilton manuals, the usual do-it-yourself books, several cookbooks and the works of Dostoevsky. There are so many nature guides and survival manuals that they sit double-stacked on the bottom shelf. In Anna's room there are more books: Irish language dictionaries and study guides, collections of Poe and Shakespeare, Balzac and *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. On the floor beside the bookshelf is a set of weights. Her closet is open and Gary can see the clothes she's chosen for Sunday. The new blackberry-colored long sleeve dress is separate from the other items. It's elegant and looks magnificent on her. Garret is usually the best dresser at formal events but he won't match Anna this time. Gary smiles and goes back to the kitchen. On the way out he passes Anna's bureau and mirror. Brushes and mundane items share the top of the bureau with a Bible and a well-worn compilation of Yeats' poetry.

Before he busies himself in the kitchen, Gary pauses to look at the pictures in the living room. There are two photographs with Gary as a strapping young lad, and of course a plethora of images from Anna's life. There are too few photographs with her mother but at least the ones on display are splendid. One in particular: Anna's mother wears a white dress with long sleeves and ivy patterns that run down to her forearms. Two strands of ivy encircle the upper sleeves four times before ending just below the elbows. Gary's brother Brian took the picture seventeen years ago, two days before Mary learned that she was pregnant with Anna.

Four years had passed since Mary Buckley married Gary Murphy. Life hadn't been easy. It never is for a coal miner's wife. At the time of their marriage, Gary worked cat-eye shift at the Consol mine in Greene County. Mary spent each morning wondering if her husband would come home lame, or not come home at all. She was a strong and loving woman, short in stature and beautiful to behold. Her hair was flame red and her eyes blue, as blue as her husband's. Gary was not a homely man, nor was he weak or passive. He looked Irish. His face was rounded in a gentle manner and his smile was warm and expressive. He didn't have to stretch out a huge smile to show joy or sympathy; his emotions and expressions were and are genuine. Mentally, he was resolute and principled if a little rough. Physically, he was ursine. In an age when frivolity and conceit reign, the Murphy's marriage was built on strength of character and genuine love. Her love for him and the joy of each moment with him tempered her fears for the future. Still, she would light a candle every morning before he came home from the hole.

A year after their wedding, the Murphy's bought a little home in Le-mont Furnace, Pennsylvania. Not long afterward Mary became pregnant. There would be no joy with this pregnancy. She lost the child after three months. For a woman who cherished her femininity and recognized the beauty of being a mother, it was a devastating blow. Her faith in God and the strength of her husband pulled her through a very dark and difficult time. The Murphy's mourned the loss, rejoiced in each other and continued their lives.

The next pregnancy did not come for some time. Four years after their marriage, Gary received the call he'd waited on for three long years. It was short and sweet and made the powerful man come close to tears. Mary was pregnant again.

All his life Gary was a fighter. In the second grade he got into his first physical altercation. A boy made fun of Gary being a "ginger", an insult which school administrators often tolerate. Gary's retort was a fist to the mouth. He was a strapping boy even at an early age. Much of his strength came from his upbringing on a farm outside of Connellsville, Pennsylvania. The rest came from his ethnicity. All four of his grandparents hailed from Ireland - County Cork to be exact. Gary was outspoken and burly and on occasion rambunctious enough to cause trouble at home and at school. Although he'd started his share of fights, Gary matured early and became known as an upstanding young man. A masculine flame, however, still burned in his soul. Those who mistook decency for weakness found that Gary was willing to let his fists do the talking when words failed.

Mary Buckley was also a fighter, though the nature of her battles and her response to them were not the same as Gary's. Always a beautiful child, she suffered the wrath of jealous schoolmates. Unless they escalated a confrontation to physical violence, which was fortunately rare, Mary usually ignored them. She too grew up on a farm and was rather powerful for a girl her size. Her temperament never allowed her to start a scuffle. On two occasions other girls forced Mary to fight and in both instances Mary emerged victorious.

These playground battles were trivial in comparison to the war waged by school administrations and large corporations on young girls, in particular young white girls. With the help of her level-headed parents, Mary resisted the feminist propaganda that would have driven a wedge between her and any future male companion. She rejected and in fact resented the constant blame laid on white men for all the world's problems. Her father Sean was a wonderful and loving man who worked long hours to provide for his wife and five children. The educators and the talking

heads on the television were asking her to hate him and men like him. Instead of following their poisonous advice, Mary turned her back on them. When she defied the shrill feminists and their opportunistic allies she did not feel weak and oppressed; she felt strong. There was a great freedom in not being a tool of the powerful, especially when the powerful would condemn her to a life of bitterness. She was one of the few who resisted and she paid for her independence. Petty teachers lowered her marks and treated her as an outsider. Their punitive vengeance and lack of approval ceased to matter; she was not their slave and the freedom to live as she chose, as a loving and courageous white woman, was exhilarating.

The pregnancy continued into the third month. The wounds of the previous loss had healed but the scars remained. When the third month came and went without incident, both Mary and Gary felt an enormous relief. They still prayed and kept their fingers crossed. In light of what had happened and the abnormal length of time it took for her to get pregnant again, it was natural for the Murphy's to be nervous. Mary made more than the average number of visits to the doctor. The baby was doing fine. Mary learned that a girl was growing in her body. Neither Mary nor Gary wanted to know the sex of the baby before birth, but to the Murphy parents the health of the baby was more important than a romantic notion. When a problem did arise it came as a terrible shock. There was nothing wrong with the baby girl. Mary, on the other hand, had breast cancer.

Mary Buckley was a young blue-eyed beauty when Gary asked for her hand in marriage. She'd just turned 21 and was working at Gene & Boots Candies in Perryopolis, Pennsylvania. Gary was 28 at the time and had already been a coal miner for six years. They'd met years ago at the Roman Catholic Church in Connellsville. When Mary was 17, Gary considered asking her out, but popular opinion told him that she was too young. His mother was 17 when she wed, and his grandmother was 18. Neither of them was sexually active before their marriages. Many of Mary's peers would not marry nor have children until their 30's. Almost all of them had lost their virginity by 18. When Mary was 19, Gary showed up to watch her practice one of her favorite hobbies - springboard diving. After she'd finished for the day, he finally asked her out on a date.

It is highly unusual for a 25 year old woman to develop breast cancer. For a woman to suffer the disease at such an early age is as horrible and unnatural as a curse. It is a vile corruption of her young flesh; almost an evil mockery of feminine beauty and youth. It is also profound in its unfairness. At the time, Mary was the youngest patient at UPMC with the disease. Breast cancer is always devastating, but for a woman in her youth

to suffer the disease is as horrifying as it is surreal. The terror and loneliness crushes the spirit. Joy slips away on a tide of despair. Mary Buckley felt all of these emotions and fears. She did not want to believe the diagnosis. There was no history of the disease in her family, not even among the older women. She felt a wave of hopelessness when doctors confirmed their suspicions. But Mary overcame the darkness cast upon her soul. There were three tethers that bound her to life. There was God, in whom Mary had an undying faith. She did not blame Him for her misfortune. She was thankful for all that she had, and her faith in Him was a source of strength in the upcoming fight. The second thread was Gary. She never doubted that he'd remain with her. When a man like Gary agrees to remain with a woman "in sickness and in health", he means it. Whatever happens to her body, Gary would still cherish her as his wife. The third great tether was the unborn child. They chose a name for her. It was a form of defiance in face of the deadly cancer. The baby would be born, and they would call her Anna.

Several doctors told Mary to terminate the pregnancy and begin the harsh treatments that would otherwise harm or kill an unborn child. The cancer was at a perilous stage. The tumor was larger than they had thought, and it had grown. It could metastasize at any time. Perhaps it already had. Mary would not speak to any doctor who recommended killing Anna. When one insisted on "reasoning" with her, she summoned her Irish fire and told him to leave in a manner that sent him scurrying out the door. One of the doctors on staff at UPMC, Dr. Scott West, did not advise Mary to abort her baby. Due to the nature of her cancer - Stage III and likely to spread - there were few options available that would not potentially harm the unborn child. Dr. West presented the options in a rational manner and left the decision up to the Murphys. It was not his place to tell a mother to kill her baby. Both parents would often thank him for being a professional.

Two days later Gary was back at the mine. Throughout the ordeal the stress at work was intense. He fought his own hopelessness and anger which could distract a miner and lead to his death. When the shift ended he would flee Greene County. He'd call Mary and tell her he'd be there. He'd tell her she'd pull through. She told him she believed him. Once he paid a heavy fine for speeding. Every day he spent as much time as he could with the woman he loved. Every day she lit the candle and, after he arrived, squeezed him as tight as her ailing body would allow. She thanked God she hadn't followed in the footsteps of the man-haters who ended up resentful and alone.

One morning Mary was resting in bed when Gary came in through the kitchen. The lit candle was on the little round table. He smelled breakfast, which he figured must be incredible if it's half as tasty as it smells. He knew Mary would be lying in bed. He'd tell her not to worry about breakfast but the little chores helped her hold on to life. As soon as he removed his boots he went straight to the bedroom. He passed the bookshelf that he'd built over the weekend. On its shelves sat various repair manuals and field guides and the crossword puzzle books that Mary loved to work.

When Gary arrived at the threshold of the bedroom, he saw that his wife had fallen asleep. Her old Bible, written in the Irish language, lay beside her on the bed. He returned to the kitchen without disturbing her slumber. He'd already begun his meal when Mary walked in so softly that he barely heard her footsteps. Though the cancer had robbed her of the beautiful glow of pregnancy, she was still a heavenly angel to behold. Gary rose and embraced his wife. After the meal they sat together at the little table and sipped tea.

"I'm going to have to face this without the doctor's help," she said to him.

Gary never forgot the beauty of her face; the pale white skin, the angelic blue eyes. His own irises were the same shade but a man's cannot have the allure of a woman's blue eyes.

"I know," he said.

He then took her hands into his huge mitts. His might was considerable. His masculine soul urged him to help his wife, though his efforts were raindrops on a mountain. He could not touch this hateful enemy. It made him feel useless. He wanted to say more to her but could not find the words.

"I never thought I'd like chamomile," he said after drinking his tea.

Mary smiled at him. Then she stood up from her seat and beckoned him to come, whispering the word as he stepped forward.

"Put your head here," she said.

Gary laid his head to her belly. A minute later he felt Anna move. He closed his eyes and rubbed Mary on her back. The little life in her belly made him feel useful again.

"Some of the doctors are telling me to kill her," Mary said, "That's not going to happen."

"No," he said, "It's not."

She rubbed his head.

"This isn't a sacrifice, Gary," she said, "look at what we're getting in return."

Mary Murphy refused any treatment that might jeopardize Anna's life or health. She made it very clear that, unless something threatened Anna's life in the womb, she would not agree to a forced premature birth. She did relent on one matter: the doctors could deliver Anna by C-section on the first day of the ninth month. Examinations at seven and eight months into the pregnancy did not reveal any metastases, though the tumor troubled Dr. West.

On the 14th of September, Anna Murphy entered the world as a healthy baby girl. The C-section birth was another nightmare that Mary endured. When she held Anna in her arms, the pain and suffering and grinding fear all withered away. Anna had the blue eyes of her mother and father and shared their red hair. Her skin was milky white like her mother's. A day before Mary began the agonizing surgeries and radiation treatments in the war against her cancer, she held little Anna as they lay in the peace and comfort of their home. Anna did not cry. She looked at her mother and squeezed her finger. Gary arrived a short time later. He blew out the candle before serving his wife breakfast in bed.

In three years' time, Anna grew from a lovely baby to a beautiful little girl. Her eyes remained pale blue and her hair was thick and red. She was growing well and strong, having inherited all of her mother's comeliness and a measure of her father's solid frame. She was intelligent and spry and ever-imaginative, so much so that she could be a handful at times. She would run through the house and send a lamp or a dish crashing to the floor. She drew on walls and sloshed water out of the tub. But always she was affectionate. Anna would hold on to her mother and crawl in bed and sleep beside her father. The two parents found it difficult to discipline such a dear child, but they were sometimes forced to do so. It was for her well-being and had to be done. Not once did Mary regret the risk she had taken during the pregnancy. Anna was her gift of life.

During the first year after Anna's birth, the cancer claimed Mary's breasts, and, for a while, her long red hair. It nearly claimed Gary's job when he came close to beating an obnoxious foreman. His love for his wife and child enabled him to keep his cool. It was not easy. During the second half of the year and well into the next, Mary rallied and even felt good some of the time. The two hoped that somehow she could beat the dread disease.

It was Mary's love and devotion to Gary and Anna that helped her to endure the loss of her breasts. For a woman twice Mary's age it would have been a painful loss; a desecration of her femininity by a disease that personifies cruelty. For a 26 year old woman it was obscene. Mary was

rather shy and reserved, thought she knew the extent of her beauty. Now, for the first time in her life, she felt mutilated and ugly.

Gary realized the cause of her agony and went out of his way to ameliorate her suffering. As his body became even more powerful and Anna grew like a healthy little weed, Mary began to fade. Gary expressed his love through tender moments and gentle words, yet he knew that they should not deny each other the physical expression of their love. The opportunities were becoming rare as Mary became weaker. Early in the second year of her cancer, after her hair had grown back as thick as it had been, Mary felt strong enough for sexual relations with her bear of a husband.

Once, after the two had made love, she lamented the loss of her breasts. "I imagine you miss 'em, too," she said and then laughed.

It was obvious that the laughter came from pain.

"I'd miss you a hell of a lot more," he replied without hesitation.

He touched the lovely cleft that marked her chin, and she rewarded him with a smile.

Early in the third year Gary began to notice the look. It may have been there longer, but his mind must have blocked the signs. Now it was unavoidable. The face becomes long and sad even as it smiles. It is the look of a she-wolf starving to death in winter. Gary had seen it on his grandfather and now he could see it on his dear wife. It was a frightening sight; an unnatural kind of emaciation. Mary's cheeks became gaunt and she began to appear sad even in times of levity, no matter what she felt in her soul. There wasn't any mistaking it. Anyone who has lived long enough has seen it, and the memory remains forever. It is the look of terminal cancer.

Gary never wept in front of the others. This required herculean efforts and he succeeded. When Anna clung to him in fear and sadness, he remained stoic. He stood firm as they wheeled Mary into the hospital for the final time. He kept his composure when the candle sat unlit on the table. It was at the funeral that the mighty man could resist no longer. Gary Murphy was strong enough to be a pallbearer for anyone, large or small. As the funeral came to a close and the wind began to howl, Gary took his place at the head of the coffin. As he carried his wife to her final earthly resting place he realized that the coffin felt empty. Not long afterward, toward the end of the ceremony, Gary broke down and wept.

Gary's sister Hannah helped him raise little Anna, though her time was limited and the brunt of the work fell upon the overworked father. Hannah was an attractive young woman. The only child of the Buckley clan

that did not inherit fiery red hair, hers was still a lovely auburn color and her eyes were blue just like her siblings. Hannah and her husband Clyde both worked full-time and they had a child of their own. She'd wanted to quit her job and be a full-time mother for her child and even dreamt of having a large family but there was neither the time nor the money. The transportation company that employed Clyde had shut down its local terminal and laid off its drivers and mechanics. Now Clyde worked as a low-paid customer service rep for a bank that prided itself on helping minorities.

Life forced Gary to become proficient at the domestic arts. His and Mary's relatives aided him as best they could but Gary still had to put in a full night's work at the mines and a full day's work at home. If not for Anna, Gary would have become bitter toward life and resentful toward those around him. For half of their marriage his wife had suffered with cancer. He often felt an agonizing loneliness. A few times he hoped to join his wife in death, far beyond the uncaring skies and black holes in the ground. On those days he'd shake himself out of his depression and take Anna to the aviary or the trails around Nemacolin. Other times he'd read to her. She was a dynamo and could run the big man ragged, but seeing her face shine gave him a renewed desire to live.

Anna was a natural swimmer and on her seventh birthday Gary enrolled her in diving class at Pittsburgh's aquatic center. She was also the best archer in her physical education class. Gary's cousin Phillip Lynch knew a priest in West Virginia who could perform amazing feats with a bow and arrow and it turned out he'd be happy to mentor young Anna. It gave Gary great pride to present her with a new bow on her eighth birthday; it gave him even greater pride when she bagged her first buck a year later. Its rack was small but the deer itself was quite large - the largest Gary had seen in many years. For the next five years Anna would help him field dress and butcher harvested deer, until she was comfortable and skilled enough to perform the job on her own. During their hikes and hunts Gary taught her everything he knew about plants and mushrooms and weather signs. He took her fishing and even rafted a few times. Hannah made her a beautiful old-fashioned dress and for three years she was a flower girl at the Friendship Hill fall festival. On cloudy Saturdays, Gary would call out to her, and she'd set down her dollies and come running. They'd spend the rest of the day hiking Chestnut Ridge or fishing Dunbar Creek.

As Anna matured, Gary thrived, which was surprising in light of the nature of his job and ceaseless efforts in raising his daughter. He refused to allow Mary's death to define their life. His daughter needed him. He did

not honor Mary if he allowed grief to destroy their family; Mary died so that Anna could live. She asked Gary to teach their daughter and to help her face those who would condemn her for being a strong white Christian woman. Gary believed that the lessons he'd taught Anna would serve her well. During their final conversations, Mary reiterated her desire that Anna learn about her people. She emphasized that when she said 'her people', she meant Irish and white.

"Please Gary," Mary told him from her bed, "don't let her be ashamed to be white."

Gary never cared for websites like Stormfront and their constant pessimism. For twenty years he'd known what most of them had to say: whites faced discrimination in hiring, free speech didn't apply to whites, and whites faced violence at the hands of non-whites and anti-whites. He already knew that most Jews were hostile toward his people and that they used Hollywood as a medium for anti-white propaganda. He could see that Stormfront was caught in the loop of reporting and lamenting the terrible news. Gary didn't want his daughter to succumb to despair or to adopt a losing attitude. He sought solutions. The fight in him hadn't died.

Quite by accident, Gary Murphy found Bob Whitaker's BUGS website. There he read the Mantra. The Mantra was both simple and resonant, driving straight to the heart of the problem and attacking the genocide of the white race. It did not stumble on depressing statistics and it did not reek of hopelessness. Gary was a fighter and he appreciated a good offense. In the Mantra he found it.

Soon he and Anna would begin discussing the Mantra and the nature of the genocide that inspired its creation.

The Murphy Family was Irish and damn proud of it. They were also white. Gary wanted Anna to love both aspects of her identity. Ever since she could speak, the Buckley's exposed Anna to the Irish language. Anna's grandparents on the Buckley side were fluent and so were their children: Owen, James, Lisa and the youngest, Mary. Lisa, a mother of two, homeschooled her children and was happy to include Anna in the language lessons. In time, each of the children became fluent. Gary, who knew fewer Irish words than he had fingers, was proud as proverbial punch. At eleven years of age, Anna could speak the maternal tongue of the Murphy's. By thirteen she was fluent.

Gary would not rest on this laurel. He and Anna had watched the Celtic Woman and Riverdance concerts on DVD. Gary liked the music much more than did Anna. Conversely, Anna adored the costumes and elegance of Celtic Woman as well as the fluidity of Irish dancing. Gary

began searching for a way that Anna could learn about their ancestry and at the same time put her energy and creativity to good use. In the meantime, a dance instructor had visited her elementary school. She introduced the students to a number of modern dances, including hip-hop. When Gary found out he was furious. Three of the ten dances that the instructor demonstrated were black in origin; the student body of Anna's school was 97% white. None of the dances were Irish or even traditional European in origin, and the only ballroom dance that the children witnessed was the Waltz. Before Gary could get too worked up, Anna came to the rescue by telling him her own opinion on the matter.

"I don't want you to dance like them," Gary said, "It's not dancing, Anna. It doesn't take skill to shake your ass at someone. I don't give a damn if they dance like that on TV. White boys and girls should dance their own way."

To his enormous relief she responded, "I don't want to dance hip-hop, dad. It sucks. It looks retarded."

Gary knew an automobile mechanic of Irish descent and whose opinions on race and kin were very much like his own. This young man, James Ford, had once invited Gary to attend a meeting of some "Celtic Society" in Maryland. When asked, Ford assured him that the club did not go out of its way to recruit non-whites as the Sons of Confederate Veterans had done. The society usually met on Saturdays, including the upcoming one. Ford pulled the necessary strings and that Saturday the Murphy's drove to Cumberland to attend their first Celtic Society meeting. Gary had found a place where Anna could learn about and cherish her Irish ancestry. He had also found a society that would help Anna to be proud of her white skin.

The "Celtic Society" was located in two stories of a small building in Cumberland, Maryland. The first floor once housed a florist's shop and the upper floor a short-lived EBay store. In the rear was a grassy lot that the club used for archery and spear-throwing demonstrations among other activities. From the first visit Anna and Gary fell in love with the place. Jimmy Ford, who'd gotten permission to give them a tour, also introduced the Murphy's to the proprietor of the club. His name was William Donnelly. He'd come to the States several years previous with his family. It seemed they won some kind of immigration lottery, though the Donnelly's success in business and relative wealth no doubt helped them receive the necessary visas.

"It wouldn't have been a problem if they were from Haiti," Ford joked. Then he looked at Gary. "But we wouldn't be here, would we?"

Jimmy Ford's wire-rim glasses made him look like some of the useless intellectuals Gary had come to despise. Ford's physique and especially his hands contradicted Gary's first impression. His body was thin but rock-hard and his big hands showed the marks of a serious repair man. In fact, Ford was a gearhead - and had an insatiable fascination for the mechanical world.

"We might be here," Gary said, "But I wouldn't have brought Anna."

Gary made a fist and Ford smiled. He knew what Gary meant. Gary didn't even know about the .45 caliber automatic pistol tucked inside Ford's jacket.

William "Bill" Donnelly arrived early as always. When he exited his green Cherokee Gary knew that this was the owner of the club. He wore a herringbone hat and a sweater that shielded his powerful and stocky body from the late October wind. His face was round and pleasant but Gary could imagine it glowing with angry flame should someone or something arouse his ire. Bill looked at Jimmy, Gary and Anna and he smiled. When he came to them Ford made the necessary introductions and Bill shook their hands. His grasp was firm though not the obnoxious squeeze of an insecure fool. His voice was melodic; this man could be a singer, Gary thought.

"Go on," Gary told Anna, "Talk to him in the Irish."

Bill assumed that the little redhead would be too shy to speak to a stranger, especially in an unfamiliar language. She probably knew a few words, Bill thought. Exuberant Anna took on the challenge and stunned Bill with her fluency and eagerness to demonstrate it. From that day on, the Murphy's would arrive early and Bill and Anna would speak in Irish before the others would arrive.

Anna was twelve when the Murphy's first attended the Celtic Society. She and Gary were reticent during the proceedings, not out of bashfulness but out of politeness. No one likes loud-mouthed newcomers. They observed and gauged the persons in attendance. The first to arrive was a man who rivaled Gary in size and musculature. He was much younger and his hair was dark brown rather than red. When he shook Gary's hand, his bright hazel eyes did not look away, and the smile on his handsome if scarred face was genuine. Bill did the honors of a formal introduction: the big man was Robert McKenna, starting defenseman for the Wheeling Nailers hockey club.

Soon the rest of the Donnelly Family made their appearance. Bill opened the door for his lovely wife Megan, a lively woman in her early forties. Her hair was dark brown with little evidence of gray and her eyes

were blue like Gary's. Some might say she was a wee bit heavy, but Gary would have disagreed. Their young daughter Sinead followed her mother. She was the same age as Anna and also had blue eyes. Bill's were gray and Megan's a medium-hue blue, but Sinead's were as bright and pale as Anna's. Her skin was just as milky white. It was clear that she too would become a beautiful young woman. That was where the similarities ended. Sinead's hair was very dark brown; it even looked black at times. Her temperament was quite the opposite of Anna's. Sinead was quiet and shy. Gary could picture her angelic face peering down from the heavens. Eventually Sinead would open up to Anna and the two girls would become close friends, as would the two fathers. Gary was astonished to learn that Bill lived less than five miles from Lemont Furnace. In the years to come, the Donnelly's and Murphy's would spend a great deal of time together. More than once Sinead would accompany Anna to the Pittsburgh Aquatic Center where she would cannonball into the water after Anna had knifed through the surface with hardly a splash. On Fridays, Bill and Gary would spend an hour or two at the Irish pub in Uniontown.

Bill's third child was his son Rian, three years Sinead's senior. Rian was a handsome teen with dark auburn hair that was almost brown. His eyes were darker blue than the others in the Donnelly clan. He was thinner than Bill was at his age. Like Anna, Rian was brimming with energy. In time Gary would learn of Rian's passions. If it had wheels, he wanted to drive it. If it had power he wanted to drive it fast. He was already proficient with motorcycles and dirt bikes. Gary didn't ask how a man so young could already have so much driving experience. He just smiled when he thought about it.

The next members to arrive were the Cunningham Sisters from La Vale. The twins were mostly interested in recipes and music. Although Scotch-Irish in ancestry, they had a love for the customs of both places. One of them would take more than a friendly interest in Gary, but he would have to refuse in spite of her pleasant personality and decent looks. Anna was the female in his life. Until she was 17 it had to be that way. There was another reason that he did not tell: his attachment to Mary had never waned. He simply had no desire to find a mate, not yet.

Among the next group to enter was a young man in his late teens. He had blonde hair down his neck and blue eyes not much darker than Anna's. He was lithe and strong in physique. Bill introduced him as Garret Fogarty. It seemed he was very interested in increasing his fluency with the Irish language. Garret was articulate and respectful. He also carried himself with confidence. There was something else in his manner that

Gary couldn't quite place, though it intrigued him. Garret seemed to have a certain dignity that is rarely seen. He never swore or even seemed about to swear. He had inner strength as well. Gary could see it in the way that Garret would not avert his gaze or change his mannerisms no matter who surrounded him. Gary could picture a man like that being a good husband, although he couldn't daydream for long. More people came in through the large front doors.

Gary was quite pleased by the size of the membership. Some whites must still care about their heritage, he thought. The next arrival was a young man not much older than Garret. He was dark and handsome, though his skin and features were white like all the rest. His name was Cristian (pronounced cri-sti-AHN) O'Toole. He was the son of a Romanian girl and an American of Irish descent. Cristian was gregarious and seemed to be very bright. He already spoke English, French and Romanian and was adding Irish to his repertoire.

From their conversations, Gary could tell that Garret, Cristian, Jimmy Ford and Bill Donnelly had known each other for some time. He later discovered that the three young men were members from the very start of the Society.

A lone man of advanced age arrived, followed by a middle-aged man and his wife. This second man was Tom Dwyer, whose brother-in-law was a miner at the Upper Branch Mine in West Virginia. He was a physical opposite to Gary. Dwyer was short and wire-thin with a thick moustache and dark hair. His wife was a pleasant woman of Irish and Germanic descent. Tom and Gary would grow close over the next three years, until hard times kept Tom away from the Celtic Society. The Upper Branch disaster claimed his sister's husband and Dwyer would have to devote every extra penny to helping her and her family.

The last person to enter the building was a teenage girl of striking appearance. Gary noticed her getting out of a silver Ford Expedition which drove away after she exited. She seemed unsure whether she should be there. Bill did not introduce her. Rather, he and Megan walked over to the girl. Gary could hear him ask her name. It was clear that this was her first visit.

"Jessica Hanratty," said the lovely creature when Bill asked her name.

Her hair was light brown and her eyes green. Jessica's face was unique and very beautiful. Her nose had a curved shape that must have come from the Roman influence in France, for it was clear that she had French as well as Irish ancestry. In a few years, thought Gary, she'll look like a model from a magazine.

During their first visit to the club, Gary and Anna observed the proceedings and, toward the end of the two hours, they began to participate. Megan and the women worked on quilts that they had been knitting. The motifs were shamrock, the Irish Harp and other pertinent symbols. Bill gave a lesson in the Irish language and then held a discussion on war in the time of Irish hero Cú Chulainn. This took place outside and included some spear-tossing. Bill threw with skill and Garret seemed to have some experience; for the others it was just good fun.

Bill and Megan did not monopolize the meeting. The informality was interesting to Gary, who appreciated the fact that the society could be relaxing as well as challenging. There were laughs and discussions of everyday life and something else that grabbed Gary's attention: if someone needed help, from automotive repairs to moving furniture, from painting a house to regulating the gas flow of an oven, there was no shortage of volunteers to do whatever they could. Cristian was skilled in the installation of ovens, ranges, and air conditioners. He was just twenty years of age. Garret offered to debug the Cunningham's computer. Much to the joy of the membership, Megan often demonstrated her culinary skills. The previous evening she had stored food and drink in the society's refrigerator, and today she served some excellent hors d'oeuvres. There was tea to drink, or a Guinness if one was of age. Gary had one of the latter.

Toward the end of the meeting Gary approached Bill. He had a few questions on his mind and was not bashful about asking. He liked this place too much not to clear up his doubts.

"I like this place," Gary said, and Bill expressed his appreciation. The two looked at Anna who was trying her luck at spear throwing. "I think she does too. Tell me, Bill, how much does it cost to join?"

Earlier Bill insisted that Gary call him by his diminutive first name.

"You're already a member, should you wish to remain with us," Bill said, "We take donations but there are no fees. If you can help a fellow member, please do so. Time and effort can be worth more than money. As far as policy goes, there are no fees or requirements."

Actually there was one requirement, one that the Murphy's already met, but Bill was not yet able to discuss it. Had they not been white they would not have been invited.

Gary was surprised. He no longer wanted to ask the second question but it was vital for Anna.

"My girl and me are 100% Irish," Gary said, "I love the mother country and I know why we had to fight. But I don't want my daughter blaming Englishmen or Scotsmen for the evil in the world. I didn't see any of that

here and I'm glad. I understand why the boys had to fight but I'm tired of our people killing each other. By our people I mean Irish, Scotsmen, Englishmen, hell, Frenchmen and the others too. I don't want her to hate other white people."

Gary was never afraid to say exactly what he meant.

"She'll get none of that here," Bill said, "There are enough fools teaching young girls to hate their race. We're not among them."

Bill's answer made Gary rejoice inside. He didn't want to abandon this place, but he would not compromise his principles. His Anna would not grow up hating her brothers and sisters in race. In the three years that the society continued to exist, neither Gary nor Anna would miss a single meeting.

When she was 13, Anna attended Laurel Highlands Middle School. By her 13th year it was obvious that she would be a striking beauty. Her resemblance to her mother was astonishing. Boys began to notice her, though they soon learned that she was off-limits for the time being. Gary made sure that she knew it. That was a very difficult lesson for the man. He did not want to shove her toward feminism, hostility toward white males, or cold-heartedness. He knew she could not be happy all alone with cats and bitterness. Neither did he want her to surrender her body to the first - or twenty-first - taker. Sexual proscriptions were at the top of what was a short list of rules. Gary tried to eliminate the frivolous rules born of vanity in hopes of preventing Anna from rebelling and violating the rules that were important for her future. She was not to smoke. It was a disgusting and malodorous habit that yellowed the teeth and damaged the lungs. In the interest of her health he forbade it. She must never take drugs. This included marijuana, which violated two rules on the small list. First, it was smoking and it could damage the lungs like any cigarette. It was true that pot could make a person feel at ease when he was perturbed, but there are times when a person must feel that way. Emotions are your body's voice, he told her. There's a reason you're sad or happy...or angry. There may not be a good reason, but sometimes it is proper to be angry. Drugs could silence your internal voice and replace it with a siren's song. Why bother solving a problem when you could submerge unhappy feelings in a sea of smoke or a mountain of pills? That euphoria is a lie, he told her. The chemicals rule your inner voice and neuter your reactions. Gary mentioned that he could have numbed his pain while his wife suffered or when life got very, very hard. He did not. He owed it to Anna and other white children not to set that example. They needed their wits, not a false high. Sometimes you have to feel angry. Sometimes you have to fight.

Gary had told her about relations between the sexes and he told her that she must wait until she was of age and married. To him, his mother's age at the time of her marriage would be acceptable if the woman was responsible with her life and she truly loved a mature young man. He told her that he and Mary had waited until marriage and that the depth of their relationship was much greater as a result. They bonded to each other, he told his daughter; especially her to him, because a woman who waits for the man she loves and respects will bond to him for all her life. He will reciprocate, since she is his alone, and together they will participate in the ancient union that is stronger than any other on Earth or in heaven.

"That's a power you'll have as a white woman," Gary told Anna of her ability to love and to give her body to one man, "It's a power greater than any other and it's more than any man can have. Don't throw it away."

On her 13th birthday Gary gave Anna a rifle. She had proven herself responsible with the varmint gun that she'd been using and now her body was strong enough to use a serious deer gun. Her eyes lit up when she held the Remington .30-06 for the first time. Anna was mature for her age and out of decency and respect she gave the impression that she loved all of her birthday gifts. In truth, after Gary gave her the rifle she couldn't think much of the other presents. Shooting would become perhaps her favorite hobby and she would practice as often as she could.

At about this time, the membership of the Celtic Society reached a new high. There had been one-time visitors and some who attended a few meetings before disappearing, but Bill did not consider them to be members. During the spring the Society gained another regular member as well as an occasional one. The new regular was a seventeen-year-old blond who joined the club with his father. Both were skilled mountain climbers. Aaron Van Dyke, the name of the younger man, was another comely youth among a very good-looking group. He had a handsome face and his muscular arms were tanned from time spent outdoors and up high. He was a very pleasant young man who always paid his regards to Gary and Anna. When prodded by Gary, Aaron regaled them with stories of the places he'd been. He'd already climbed several high mountains in the Rockies and California, and Mt. Hood in Oregon. He had his hopes set on Everest, someday. His ancestry included some Irish and Welsh and both languages intrigued him, not so much because of his ancestry as from its harmonious sound. Aaron Van Dyke was sincere and proud without being arrogant. Gary felt an instant liking of the young man. He also got along well with the father, though the elder Van Dyke's attendance was sporadic at best.

Mason Walker, Jimmy Ford's second cousin, became a full-time member not long after Aaron Van Dyke. Walker had been to the club twice before but now he swore that he would attend on a regular basis. Just fifteen, Mason's youth showed in his appearance and his behavior. Energetic buffoonery seemed to be his forte. He was close enough in age to Anna for her to attach to him as a friend. Mason had light hazel eyes and similar colored hair. He looked like he could play sports or engage in strenuous activities, but never mentioned either. Maybe he'd tried and grown bored. Cristian would later tell Anna that Mason was a decent skateboarder. His most adorable moments came when he'd try to impress the females by doing too much too soon, such as his first attempts at dancing an Irish jig. It would be one of the more memorable club occurrences.

One of Bill's mechanics, Austin Kelly, joined the club when Anna was just shy of fourteen. He, too, was young; 18 years of age to be exact. Austin wore his long brown hair in a ponytail. On occasion he would grow a beard and moustache which made him look a little older and, in Anna's female opinion, made him look better. Gary would have many conversations with the young man from Hopwood, Pennsylvania. Neither spoke Irish. While Anna, Sinead and Garret practiced their fluency by talking about God knows what, Gary and Austin would discuss mechanics, mining and - once Austin came to trust Gary - Hacksaw Kelly's homemade whiskey. Austin and Jimmy Ford were already friends. They'd met through Kelly's vocational-technical instructor when Austin was sixteen. Austin and Jimmy often worked on independent repair and reconstruction projects in their free time.

The Society was a place of learning and practice, with the subjects being quite varied. History, language, literature, poetry, song and dance, cooking, crafts, art, and period weaponry all factored in the unwritten curriculum. In short time Bill stabilized the schedule at every other Saturday, with additional meetings for special occasions. The biggest highlight for the men was the pub meetings. While the womenfolk refined their singing, dancing and food preparation skills, the men met for a brew and a few words. Bill converted one of the florist's storage rooms into a makeshift bar and the men appreciated having a place to unwind. For many of them, the meetings came at the end of a difficult work week.

Gary realized that certain members of the Society did not leave their relationships at the door when they departed. Garret, Jimmy Ford and Cristian O'Toole would mention meeting in private as did Bill. "Come by on Monday," Bill would say, or "I'll see you tomorrow" Jimmy might tell O'Toole. Sometimes they'd meet after the other Society members went

home. Bill would wish everyone well, and then return inside with his wife and the young men. In time, Austin Kelly joined the secretive group.

About the time of the third meeting Anna began to engage Jesse Hanratty in conversation. The young lady began to open up and enjoy herself. Though Anna practiced dance as a novelty, Jesse was passionate. She became the star of the class.

Anna was already the best of the American-born Irish at speaking the maternal language, but speaking Irish was not her only talent. When Bill had a discussion on archery and asked for volunteer shooters, Anna got the opportunity to prove her mettle. Her performance with the bow prompted Bill to shake Gary's hand.

"You're a hell of a father, Gary," Bill told the big man.

Gary looked to the sky. Surely Mary could see her daughter excel at such difficult tasks.

Gary didn't always find the sailing so smooth. Overall Anna was a very good kid. Many of her misbehaviors would eventually become humorous anecdotes. Some even became cherished memories in the years to come. Others were never a laughing matter, though each provided a good lesson for Anna.

Gary bought Anna a cell phone for her twelfth birthday. In this day and age, it was not surprising that she texted too often. The third time she ignored Gary's admonition she lost the phone for six months. Relying on a Trac Phone for half a year taught her to text in moderation. She also had a Facebook page. Once, she posted a little too much information and it cost her all internet access for a month. She could also use impolite language on rare occasion. On one of the Saturdays that the Society wasn't meeting, Gary and Anna sat down for breakfast before setting off on a trip to Ohiopyle. It was early September and Anna was rapidly approaching 14 years of age. Gary promised her they'd go rafting. Anna was reading an issue of Fur-Fish-Game while she ate and her attention wasn't as focused as it should have been. She reached for her cup of tea without looking and ended up knocking a syrup boat off of the table. That foolish yet innocent accident did not upset Gary. It was Anna's response that annoyed him.

"Shit!" she said.

It wasn't a yell, but it was loud enough. She froze and looked at her father. To Gary, cursing meant next to nothing. They were just words. Priests and preachers were the ones taking the Lord's name in vain when they told the faithful that God wanted them to send money to non-white nations and adopt non-white children. Still, Gary didn't want Anna swearing in front of small children. If he let it pass now, she'd develop the habit

and wouldn't be able to help herself. She needed the discipline not to swear, whether or not the words troubled her father.

Gary completed his preparations for the trip to Ohiopyle. Anna knew that he was upset. She was meek and silent while he gathered his gear for the rafting trip.

"Have supper ready at seven," he told her before heading out the door.

"Dad?" she said, "Can I go?"

"Not with a mouth like that," he said, "I can't risk you talking like that in front of little kids."

She knew he wouldn't have half the fun as usual. Neither would she if he were the one staying home. She'd mucked up their happy time. When Gary came home he found a large and delicious supper waiting for him. Anna was in bed. With his huge hands he grabbed her up and carried her to the kitchen, where they both enjoyed the food.

Anna's first fight happened ten days later. Unlike the swearing incident, this time Gary had no intention of punishing his daughter. The confrontation came from a misunderstanding on the part of a brutish classmate. Someone had written crude comments on Karen Nusser's notebook and, as circumstance would have it, Nusser happened to ask the perpetrator if she knew the identity of the vandal. One of the reasons the perpetrator defaced Nusser's notebook was because of Nusser's masculinity. Now the guilty girl panicked at the thought of fighting the much larger Nusser. Rather than feign ignorance the perpetrator lied. Already jealous of Anna Murphy's good looks, the vandal blamed Anna. Karen Nusser, yearning to avenge the affront, believed her.

Nusser confronted Anna during lunch. Anna noticed her coming and was already wary of the aggressive brute. She did not fear Nusser. What the bully had in bulk Anna more than matched in strength. Anna did not enjoy the idea of a fight. She was usually jovial and pleasant and did not make enemies. Gary had taught her that fighting was to be avoided, but not at the expense of self-respect. If Nusser wanted to press Anna Murphy into a fight, Anna would not acquiesce.

"Fucking ginger skank!" was how Karen Nusser addressed Anna. Anna jumped to her feet and her section of the cafeteria became quiet. "You can't fuck with me and walk away from it. It's on, bitch!" Nusser said.

Nusser threw the first punch but Anna blocked it with her left arm. Anna hadn't learned much yet about fighting, though she'd beat on her uncle's heavy bag now and again. Since the contest would be between two inexperienced fighters, raw strength would determine the victor.

Nusser had always won such confrontations in the past. Today she was the weaker of the two. Although most of her strikes landed it was not where Nusser needed them to land. She telescoped her punches and could not get past Anna's simple yet effective blocking moves. She tried to grab Anna's hair but Anna kept her ponytail away from Nusser's grasp. Anna had more success during the battle. Just before a janitor and a teacher could end the fight, Anna had struck Nusser twice in the face and bloodied her nose.

Principal Michael Nazario of the Lafayette Middle School called Gary Murphy and let him know what had happened. Gary, who still worked cat-eye shift on most weeknights, came by to get Anna. The school would suspend her for three days. She didn't say a word on the way home. Gary parked his Ford Sport Trac on the driveway and told Anna to stay put.

"What happened, Anna?" he asked.

She told him verbatim and did not alter or leave out any detail. She even quoted Nusser.

"Did you get hurt?" he asked again.

She shook her head "no".

"Well," he said, "She'll think twice about doing that again, won't she?"

Anna, who was looking down, smiled.

That Friday afternoon the skies were overcast. Gary and Anna went rafting on the Youghiogheny.

The family computer was in the living room. Anna used it for the most part for school work and research into the many things that interested her. Gary had little time for browsing though he did keep a favorites folder loaded with websites that he believed to be important for Anna's development. Some of those websites dealt with race; others dealt with the differences, similarities and complementary nature of men and women. This was a lesson that Mary had often discussed with Gary and one that she mentioned as she lay dying in the hospital. She knew that Gary could not afford to send Anna to private school, nor did he have the time to home-school her. Anna would face the oppressive environment of public school. Mary wanted her daughter to be a strong white woman. She wanted Anna to have a full life, and that included being a wife and a mother. Even before Gary could teach her these lessons, and years before Hannah could serve as a living example of these principles, Anna had already seen the strength and glory of a strong and loving white mother. Mary faced certain death but she did not abandon those dear to her. To her husband she gave her body and her love, and for her daughter she gave her life. The enemy she faced was as terrifying as any beast that walks the

earth and the battlefield was more than close, it was her own body. Before her death, Mary told her beloved husband that cancer had not beaten her. She had brought Anna into the world where she was beyond the monster's grasp.

Despite her own hectic schedule, Hannah often babysat Anna while Gary toiled at night. Gary and his sister would have tea before Hannah had to depart. Hannah and Mary were schoolmates even before Gary knew his future wife and Gary's sister would remark that Mary was a person of incredible inner strength and character. Gary, of course, agreed.

"She wasn't a flake or one of those goddamned man-hating feminists who think they're so damn strong," Gary told his sister, "You know, the ones that whine to HR or Uncle Shithead when they don't get their way. Mary was a real woman. She wasn't going to let some race-traitor or dyke tell her what to think or who she could love. She wasn't their slave, and I'll be damned if that little girl becomes a slave, either."

Gary wasn't oblivious to the propaganda that Anna would face in school. He'd faced it too, although it is much heavier and more destructive for young white girls. Teachers and talking heads alike would tell white girls not to marry until they were in their mid-to-late twenties. These were the same hypocrites and miscreants who encouraged girls under the age of 17 to be sexually active. School was not the only source of indoctrination. Film and television played a part in dividing white men and women and destroying the intimacy that had existed since the dawn of time. The television was a simple problem to solve. The proliferation of lesbian, race-mixing and anti-white imagery on television and in films troubled the father and spurred him into action. He turned off the TV and it remained off. Anna did not miss the "idiot box" since she was a very active child with many hobbies. For four years the television went into storage.

No one can be perfect and Gary was not an exception. He made mistakes and on occasion he was a bit heavy-handed in his treatment of transgressions. Overall, he allowed Anna a good deal of freedom. Most of his discipline was in the form of guidance. He spent many sleepless nights thinking out potential problems and when the relatively few difficulties did arise they did not catch him unawares. Strict punishment, from grounding to corporal punishment, did remain options, albeit little-used. As Anna entered adolescence Gary seldom had to resort to anything but a mild rebuke.

Anna's generation faced more pressure to engage in homosexual activity than any generation had before. Gary could prepare her for the upcoming onslaught and he could cross his fingers and pray but in the

end Anna's power to resist would be the only way that she could escape unscathed. He did not want her to even consider a lifestyle that would leave her lonely, angry and resentful, and prone to suicide and drug abuse. Those who had embraced the high-risk homosexual lifestyle never kept their promise of being "just like everyone else." "Everyone else" did not march naked in front of children. "Everyone else" did not clamor for the acceptance of depravity. "Everyone else" did not have hundreds of sexual partners. It was not natural for a woman to bond to another woman in a sexual relationship and multiple partners would further damage any chance his daughter would have to bond to the person she might love. Female homosexuals might adopt or even become pregnant, but motherhood would forever be out of their reach. Without the healthy affection for a man who would reciprocate her love, Anna would have extreme difficulty teaching her own son or daughter the importance of chastity before marriage as well as the unreserved expression of love afterward. Anna could not stress the need to her child to complement their future mate if her own example fell far short of the ideal.

"I don't want her to substitute a cat for a child," Gary told Hannah, "and I sure as hell don't want some pervert turning my child into a useful idiot for the system."

To his enormous relief, Anna resisted the pressure to be aberrant and promiscuous. Though his paternal instinct told him to hate the Johnny Depp and Tom Brady posters that hung on her wall, he tolerated their presence. Anna was developing a healthy interest in handsome white men.

Gary noticed early on that Anna did not blame men for the difficulties she faced. From both her parents she learned not to complain, but to search for solutions. She could waste time whining but she learned that it did no good. Her father and other relatives did not cater to tantrums. Anna learned to try and solve problems, and then she could move on to something she enjoyed. She did not hesitate to ask Gary for help or advice and she was quick to show her appreciation when he helped her. She could have responded to the loss of her mother and the difficulties of life by becoming resentful and cold. She did the exact opposite. Anna lost her mother at a tender age and though her father loved her with all his heart and tried the best he could, her childhood was not ideal. Still she thrived. Gary spared no effort to raise his daughter to be strong and loving, and the entire Murphy and Buckley clans supported and aided him. Through it all, Anna did not build walls between herself and her loved ones. She never lost her affection for those who touched her heart. Neither did she reject her identity as a strong and feminine white woman. A bow and a rifle could

bring her enjoyment and so could her collection of old-fashioned dolls. The camouflaged pants and army boots had a place in her wardrobe and so did the elegant dresses.

As Gary predicted, by the time Anna was 14, young males were beginning to show interest in her. Anna became pleased with, and then proud of her appearance. Diving practice was giving her a lovely swimmer's body and she worked hard to remain in excellent shape, even on days when all she wanted to do was lounge around and eat blackberry pie. In particular she was proud of her hair. It was very thick for a redhead and she grew it long. Her eyes were bright and pale blue and she took great efforts to keep her skin from feeling the wrath of the sun. She had freckles, though they were more sprinkled than massed. By avoiding the sun's rays she kept it that way. Gary noticed her pride in her appearance and he used the occasion to begin conversations about identity and race. Just because America had declared a subject taboo did not mean that Gary Murphy would deny his daughter a vital lesson.

Anna was studying on her bed when Gary called her into the living room.

"Take a look at this and tell me what you think," he said.

Gary had opened several websites on the desktop computer. Among them was Whitaker's site. He expected some objections and was prepared to address them. It pained him that Anna had to suffer through anti-white propaganda at school and he assumed that she'd internalize some of it. Now was the time to arrest its progression.

"I saw a story about red hair disappearing," Anna said, "The writers were happy about it, dad. I had to stop reading the comments. Most of them said it was Darwinism or that it's a good thing and a lot of them made remarks about gingers. They're just sad. Some of them said that they'd miss ginger girls but not the guys." Gary was sitting beside her and she looked over at him. "They're talking about us, dad; about mom, too."

"Most of those fools are white," Gary said, "and I don't mean Jews, either. I mean white-white. That bullshit they tell you in school, they say race doesn't exist for white people but it's the most important thing in the world for everyone else. They say we're the only one who's racist, and we're the only ones who don't have a race. Like Whitaker says," Gary motions toward the website, "only white countries are forced to take millions of non-white immigrants. One of the reasons I took out the television, I kept seeing black men with white women. The people who make those shows know what they're doing. I can only imagine how bad it's gotten now. We're the only ones who get that kind of brainwashing, so that our

race will disappear." Gary took her left hand. "Anna, honey, you want children someday, don't you?" he asked.

Anna nodded.

"They talk to us like it's wrong or something," she said, "but mom risked her life for me. How is that wrong? I want a family someday. I'm gonna have a family."

Gary smiled and rubbed her head.

"You look like your mother," he said, "and you're strong like me. When you have a family, wouldn't you want your kids to look like you? When they look at you they'll see a mother who's just like them. They won't see some white woman who made them into half-breeds. Mulattoes eventually hate the white parent, Anna. If not the person they'll still hate her race, and in the end that means they will hate her as a person, 'cause our race is who we are. Just look at that asshole in the White House. His preacher buddy wants us all dead and his other buddies too. He won't say it out loud, but everything he believes in means we eventually disappear from the Earth."

"They're ugly," Anna said. Gary fell silent. He knew tough men who didn't have the courage to say what his daughter had just said. "We don't do nothing to them, but they hate us because they're ugly. Everyone acts like a half-white-half-black baby is beautiful but it's not. I'm sorry, but it's ugly." She went back to perusing the BUGS site. Gary watched her. "My baby's not gonna be ugly 'cause he's gonna be white."

Gary was prepared to fight a war. He was prepared to be hard on his daughter so that she might escape the guilt of being white. He needed to break through the walls of silence that anti-whites had built. Those walls of ignorance prevent honest discourse about race and could condemn a girl like Anna to a life of sorrow or even violence, should she fall for the pro-miscegenation propaganda. Their lies and defamation prevent decent white folks from looking out for their own children's future. Gary was thunderstruck that his daughter understood more than he could have imagined. If he'd checked the internet history on their computer, he'd have seen that for a year or so she'd been reading Whitaker's site, among others. Anna had her strengths and weaknesses in the scholarly and mental arts and one of her strengths was the ability to see clearly. It was more valuable than any of the others.

Anna was both an extraordinary individual and a typical early-teen. When she asked Gary if she could help Society member Garret Fogarty with his Irish language lessons, Gary agreed, though the meetings had to take place either at the Society or in the Murphy Home. Garret had im-

pressed Gary and the older man was interested in getting to know young Fogarty. He'd seen Anna looking at Garret and suspected that she liked him. That realization gave him pause. He thought for a day and decided the idea was acceptable. There were conditions. For one, she had to promise that the lessons would stop if they began to interfere with her schoolwork. Once she agreed, Gary contacted Garret. The three established Wednesdays and Sundays as the days for language study, with two and three hours allotted, respectively. In both parties' interest, Gary established times when he would be at home.

Brian Murphy, who worked as a mechanic in Connellsville, had a little more time on his hands and therefore had become a better hunter than his brother Gary. He usually sighted Gary's guns in the off-season and had instructed several of the younger Murphy's and Buckley's in proper shooting techniques. He was thinner than his brother and not as strong, though this was less a criticism of Brian's robust physique as it was a compliment to Gary's. Brian, too, had red hair and blue eyes, although his were somewhat darker than Gary's and a whole shade darker than Anna's. When Gary asked his brother to help Anna become a crack shot with the Remington, Brian was happy to accept.

Archery had come easy to Anna. Gunnery was a different matter. The gun wasn't too heavy nor did the recoil intimidate her but she found it difficult at first to master its use. It was one of those skills that she would develop but she would have to work hard in order to do so. When it came to learning a skill, Anna demonstrated that she had all of her father's tenacity and stubbornness. She'd become an excellent springboard diver; especially with the 1 meter but also the 3. It was a shame that her future school, Laurel Highlands High, no longer sported a women's diving team. Gary and her coach at the Pittsburgh pool both knew she'd be the star. Swim team coaches noted how she performed after a dive and when goofing off in the pool and several asked Gary to enroll her in competitive swimming courses. Anna had many talents, both mental and physical; she was fluent in the Irish and could try trick shots with her bow and usually succeeded. Though it took a little longer for her to master the .30-06, in time she would shoot with razor-sharp precision and deadly accuracy. She'd still prefer the bow for sentimental reasons, though her skill with the rifle would come to equal her skill with archery.

Meanwhile, a man and his wife visited the Celtic Society. His name was Tom Neely and he was an ER doctor who came all the way from Pittsburgh. Tom's hair was short and brown, and his eyes a deep, dark blue. His wife Sarah was an ER nurse from the same facility. Sarah was

on the tall side and a bit too thin, though this turned out to be her body type rather than some foolish act of self-starvation. In contrast to her pale skin, her hair was almost jet-black.

The Neely's had been at wit's end. A recent epiphany convinced them to reconnect with their roots, and when the day would come to have a family they wanted their children to cherish the rich history of their people. The couple had tried larger and wealthier clubs and societies but found every one of them to be tainted by political correctness. It was as if their Irish roots had no connection to other European peoples, which in the case of the Neely's was insulting since neither was pure Irish. The couple did not want their future children to love one part of their ancestry and hate the other. They would not have a mulatto child with an imaginary axe to grind against the white side of his ancestry; their child would look like them and he would love both sides of his family. This would be their final attempt to find a club or society that could broaden their knowledge of their Irish ancestry without denying or condemning the existence of the white race as a whole.

Though they had no idea at the time, they had come to the right place. When Bill spoke of the Troubles during conversations that usually took place in the makeshift bar, he never blamed any single white group, only individuals and organizations. He named those who were responsible for crimes instead of saying it was the "English" or the "Protestants." Without proclaiming himself or the society as "White Nationalist" it was obvious that the entire Donnelly clan felt no shame in being white. They were proud of their own accomplishments and the achievements of their race. Bill did not condemn non-whites who had done his race no harm. During the men's pub meetings, he did speak of immigration and voiced his belief that non-whites did not have a place in white nations. He spoke of England's suicidal open borders policy and its ramifications for Northern Ireland and the Republic, and he voiced his concerns and his fears. He did not mention what had happened to his son David.

During the time that the Neely's first attended the Celtic Society, the club began to feature activities that may not have been strictly Irish in origin but were useful nonetheless. Robert McKenna discussed nutrition and exercise. His rock-hard, sculpted body was proof enough that he knew what he was talking about. Depending on the weather, the membership began to take field trips into the woods of Maryland and West Virginia. Those who knew plants and mushrooms would instruct those who did not. The biggest surprise was the performance of Jesse Hanratty, who knew far more about flora than anyone would have guessed. On the contrary,

the depth of Anna's knowledge surprised no one. Less than an hour into their first nature hike, Anna called out to her father and guided him to a patch of ramps she'd just discovered. Years before he had taught her to recognize ramps and to avoid anything that resembled them but lacked the distinctive smell. Gary learned a great deal from his father and, in turn, instructed his daughter during their numerous hikes and excursions. Gary enjoyed watching Anna "ace" the impromptu quizzes given by the likes of Megan Donnelly, et al.

Whether by design or by accident, the Society began to fill many needs of its membership. Small talk often led to important discussions and hands-on demonstrations. "I'm gonna look at Aaron's Chevy," James Ford or Austin Kelly might say, and it was the cue for the others to gather around and watch the masters at work. Of course they could only perform simple repairs in the confines of the parking lot, but the men were sure to demonstrate all that could be done under less-than-ideal circumstances. These types of demonstrations became commonplace and of great use to those members with limited mechanical experience. The money they saved with this and other knowledge would be a blessing during the current economic hardship.

Everyone found a niche, from teacher to student, and most members ended up playing both roles. The Neely's did not hesitate to impart their own special know-how. Thanks to their efforts, most of the membership became competent in the administration of first aid and other life-saving techniques. Being well-rounded people, the membership had a great deal to teach. Sarah taught Anna to sew and make modifications to cloth, which was one of Sarah's hobbies. Austin taught Garret Fogarty to dismantle and repair an automobile engine, and in turn Garret helped Austin become quite skilled in the use of computers and computer programs. Bill had hoped that these relationships would blossom; it was one of the primary reasons he founded the society.

At the time the membership did not know it but Bill was prepared to weed-out members should they show an excessive "PC" taint or prove to be anti-white. Friendship wasn't the only reason Bill had created the society. In fact, he had several motives, not the least of which was a concern for the future of white children. He desired to create a place where individuals could learn to have pride in their past and their people's accomplishments and share their knowledge and experiences with like-minded brothers and sisters in race. He hoped they could network and help each other in the tough times to come. Meetings at the bar would help him determine who might share his vision and who might be antagonistic to-

ward it. Bill suspected that the anti-white FBI and Homeland Security would infiltrate and destroy groups like his. The FBI had done so in the past. Out of the club meetings, friendships emerged, though it was clear that the Celtic Society had an expiration date. Bill wanted a core to remain even after the society ceased to exist.

He hoped that core might be willing to do more than talk.

May was gorgeous as it often is in the Laurel Highlands. There was stormy weather and even a funnel cloud, but no deaths and little damage. Orange daylilies began to beautify the roadsides and mulberries came on in huge clusters. Gary and Anna spent most Friday afternoons away from the house, though not usually in the sun.

"Too bad we can't go rafting today," Gary told Anna one Friday, "It's too sunny for you. Hell, it's too sunny for me too!"

"That's OK, dad," she said, "Beautiful skin comes with a price."

Gary laughed. He wanted to tell her that she would someday be an incredible wife and would bring great joy to some lucky man, but it was a little too early in her life for that kind of complement.

The weekend was excellent until Sunday. After supper, Gary sat down to read one of his various union newsletters. The newsletter professed the usual support for diversity and featured endorsements of Democrat candidates who voted for outsourcing and gun restrictions. There was a condemnation of a Republican candidate for being anti-labor. The accusation of racism factored in the attack piece. In reality, the Republican's views on race were as anti-white as his opponent. Gary turned the page and saw a story about Central America and the International Union's attempts to organize not only laborers in Honduras, but "guest workers" in the United States as well. Gary rolled up the newsletter and laid it beside his car keys. He'd be meeting with a union representative on Monday. He wanted to be sure he'd have the paper on his person.

Monday night, while Gary was at the mines, Anna looked at an old picture book. She saw a photo of her mother sitting at the kitchen table. The photo was taken a week after Mary and Gary were wed. There was a candle in the center of the table, where Anna usually placed a vase with flowers.

When Gary walked into the Murphy Home Anna could tell that he was angry. It was Tuesday morning and, as usual, Anna had breakfast ready. She'd be eating for the long day ahead; for Gary it would be a late supper before trying to get a few precious hours of sleep. Midnight shift never allowed a good day's rest. There was a light rain outside but that wasn't the problem. It would clear up later anyway. When Gary sat down at his

usual place he noticed a lily on the table. Its bright orange color complemented the clean white of the walls and the ceiling. Anna had put it there.

At first Anna didn't ask what was wrong. She served breakfast and joined her father at the table. She was already dressed for school. It would be warm so she was wearing a sleeveless blue top. Like the flower and the table, her thick red ponytail complemented the pale white skin of her arms and face. Anna waited until coffee was done to ask Gary why he was so quiet.

"What's wrong, dad?" she asked.

He thought about not bothering her, but those blue eyes beckoned him to talk. Gary often brought peace to his daughter when she was feeling down. There were times, though, that the daughter could bring peace to the father.

"I had a meeting with that son-of-a-bitch Martin Borkowski," he said.

Martin Borkowski was a United Mine Workers rep at the time. He had been a miner for twenty years. Now he was rotund and soft. His hair was blackened by dye that did nothing to hide the wrinkling of his face. He'd known Gary for seventeen years. In that time, Gary learned a secret that Borkowski didn't want the union membership to know: he'd applied for a manager position just before he became a union official.

"You remember Marty, don't you?" Gary asked.

"Is he the one with the tiny little eyes?" Anna asked in return.

"Yeah, that's him," Gary said, "He's got a big fat face, too. It matches his ass."

Anna laughed and sipped her coffee. It was excellent; Hannah bought the beans for Gary on his birthday. It was Hawaiian peaberry. Anna loved it as well, savoring each sip from her purple cup, the one with the rabbit and eggs painted on the middle. Gary remembered the day Mary bought that cup from an antique store in Morgantown, two years before she was diagnosed.

"What was it about?" Anna asked.

"I went there to talk about Paul Repasky," Gary said, "but after I saw that article in the newsletter I wanted to get my two cents in before he could run away."

Gary received several union publications, including the Steel Workers newsletter. He would live and die a fierce union supporter, though the unions would repay his loyalty by courting non-whites who threatened the jobs of men like Gary and their sons.

"I asked him why the hell our unions are organizing in other countries," Gary said, "I reminded him we don't need darkies coming in here

and driving down wages and running out good union men. Good white union men. I asked him what the UMWA has to say about illegal immigration and racial quotas, and that kind of shit."

"What'd he say?" Anna asked, her bright eyes fixed on Gary.

"He said the union won't protect me if I get fired for racism," Gary said.

"What did you say?" Anna asked.

She knew it'd be good.

"I said I didn't expect a coward to fight a man's fight," Gary said.

Anna laughed and shook her head.

"I love you, dad," she said, a big smile on her face.

Gary smiled for the first time that day.

"You know what we need?" he asked.

She shook her head. She wanted to say "to shoot that fat traitor" but she let it be.

"We need a wildcat strike to send a goddamn message to the leadership," he said, "No more helping the companies replace us with niggers."

Anna smiled. Gary was a powerful father figure for the lovely young lady, and he was making it easier for her to resist the temptations of the flesh by being so strong and resolute. It was not easy, nor was it without its price.

On Tuesday afternoon a call came in to H.R. at the Consol mine. An anonymous caller made an accusation of racism against Consol employee Gary Murphy. The obese feminist representative who took the call recorded the accusation and filed it in Gary's personnel file. Should he ever apply for a maintenance position, the accusation would possibly bar him from achieving that goal.

During the first half of the year, Anna had been meeting with Garret and he'd made significant progress with the Irish language. Having someone to talk to was a godsend for him and it also helped Anna keep her speaking skills sharp. Gary refused payment for the service, telling Garret that the benefits of study were reciprocal between the pupil and his 14-year-old instructor. Gary accepted Garret's offer to build them a new computer. The young man provided the labor and the parts. It was the least that he could do, he told them, and Gary let him have the joy of giving something tangible in return for the lessons and Anna's time.

"Anna, start supper," Gary said to his daughter on a Sunday in June.

Anna and Garret had just finished the day's language practice. As Anna obeyed her father, Gary walked with Garret out to the young man's

black Corolla wagon. Garret was letting his blond hair grow longer and it lapped at his shoulders as he walked. When the two arrived at the car Gary stopped Garret for a short conversation.

"That was a good talk we had yesterday," Gary said, referring to a conversation that had taken place that weekend at the Society's little bar. The limit was one beer per meeting, since Bill wanted everyone to make it home safe.

"A lot of evil's been done in the name of Great Britain," continued Gary.

He was testing the young man.

"A lot of evil's been done by our own, right here in America," Garret said.

"How so?" Gary asked.

Inside, Gary felt a rising joy over the young man's response. The Murphy father hid it well.

"England didn't create the 1965 Immigration Act," Garret said, "That's Kennedy's crime, not some Englishman. How much Irish blood has been spilled or corrupted by non-white immigrants, hmm? How much white blood is on Kennedy's hands?"

Gary looked into Garret's blue eyes.

"Are you racist, Garret?" he asked.

"I love my people," said Garret who never looked away, not for a second. "And I love my race. Is that your definition of racism, Mr. Murphy?"

"No," Gary said, "Racism's a weapon against white people. That's my definition." Garret looked a little surprised although he never averted his gaze. Gary smiled and slapped him on the shoulder. "We'll see you on Wednesday."

Garret wasn't sure what to think as he drove back to his Pittsburgh flat. One thing was certain: he would definitely drop by on Wednesday.

In the days that followed Gary noticed that the posters were missing from Anna's room.

"A little redecorating?" he asked her.

She looked up from the bureau and smiled.

"I'm a little old for that stuff," she said.

"Is that so?" he asked.

She nodded and went back to mathematics.

Anna continued practicing with her rifle, often alongside her cousin - Brian's son - a young man named Michael Collins Murphy. He was a strong lad, four years Anna's senior, with dark red hair and the blue eyes that were prevalent in the Murphy clan. Michael was a bit chubby though

his strength resembled Gary's. For three years he'd been a starting line-man for the Connellsville High Falcons football team and a skilled defenseman for an ice hockey club. Michael and Anna had always been close and the relationship continued to grow. He became somewhat of an older brother. It was better late than never. When he could, Michael began accompanying Anna and Gary on their excursions in the Pennsylvania woods and to Ohiopyle.

Soon there would be another addition to their little "adventure" group. Michael had a girlfriend named Emily Rose, a lovely brunette from Connellsville. At first Anna was aloof, but in time Emily won her friendship. Time permitting, Emily would go hiking or rafting with the Murphy's.

The summer had been tranquil and not too hot, so it came as a surprise for Gary to find Anna in a state of depression. It was late August and the approach of fall was evident in the fresh morning air and in the rich taste of garden vegetables. It was a time when Anna should have been busy planning all the autumn activities that she hoped to fulfill. Instead, she lay on her bed, visibly upset. Gary entered without a word and sat beside her.

"Don't hide, Anna," he said in a voice whose sound was often enough to comfort her. "Tell me what's wrong."

"It's stupid," she said.

Gary could guess the source of the unhappiness. He glanced up where the posters used to be.

"Nothing that makes you upset is stupid to me," he said, "Tell me what's wrong."

"Well, it is stupid," she said, "Garret's older than me and I know I shouldn't feel this way, and he's so nice, but it's different, dad. I don't know if I'll ever meet a guy like him. He's not a jerk and he's not weak at all. I really like him, dad, but it's stupid. I tell myself I'm just crushing on him but it really hurts, you know? I can't help thinking about it." She laughed through the tears. "I said it was stupid."

"Everyone goes through it, God knows I did," he said, thinking back to one of his own crushes, years and years ago.

He tries not to laugh at himself.

Thank God we don't always get what we want, he thought.

He reached over and squeezed her knee.

"Garret's a good young man, there's no doubt about that" he said, "But there are other good men like him. When the time comes, you'll find the right one for you. You're beautiful and smart and affectionate. Your mother would be so proud of you. But right now, you're way too young to

have any boyfriends, not your age or older. You don't need to speed things up, Anna. Life will come at you fast enough."

"OK," she says.

He sees her misery. He figured this might happen and though he'd like to spare her the suffering, some of life's most painful lessons are necessary.

"Do you want me to end the study meetings?" he asked.

"No!" she said, "No, please."

"OK," Gary said, "But you have to be strong. You'll get through it, but don't put it on him. Truth is, it's not really about him, it's about you." He rubs her red hair and smiles. "You'll be fine, Anna. Tough it out. I know it's easy to say but time will make things better."

"OK" she says with a sad little smile on her face.

"I am going to tell him we're taking a week off," Gary said. He stopped her from objecting. "No buts, we're taking a week off." He rises to leave. "Oh, and put the Tom Brady poster back on the wall."

He saw her laugh a little. In a week's time she was diving better than she ever had, with most entries ripping the water and her body creating the smallest splash. Sinead and Rian Donnelly were also there enjoying the huge pool. Two weeks later, when Anna and Garret resumed their meetings, Gary could hear them practicing and carrying on in the Irish. He couldn't understand a word.

The next few days he kept an eye on his daughter, just to be sure she didn't fall into depression. There was nary a sign. In fact, she had noticed his altered behavior and she asked him if he was alright. He smiled and hugged his little warrior. Life went on, and Anna began hinting that she'd like to visit Falling Water in the fall.

The next time Gary saw his daughter in such a distraught emotional state it was from horror rather than a teenage crush. She had been searching the internet and what she had seen horrified her; when Gary checked the internet history and read the web page, he could see why. One of the white-friendly news sites linked to a page about events in South Africa. Anna had looked at the page and saw the terrors and brutality inflicted upon white South Africans, and now she was utterly horrified.

Gary did not shield Anna from these truths. He had protected her from sexual perversity and websites promoting or glorifying depravity, though he gradually reduced the barriers as she grew older and better equipped to face the ugly realities of modern life. She would face them someday; it was best, he thought, that she confront sexual and spiritual deviancy with him by her side rather than be surprised by it later. Gary

thought about showing her the reality of post-apartheid South Africa. Now was a good time for her to understand what was at stake. Gary called her into the living room and they sat on the couch.

"You saw what they're doing to whites, huh?" Gary asked, his arm around her, giving her a refuge where she felt safe.

"Yeah," she said, "I can't imagine anyone doing that."

"We don't have to imagine it, sweetheart," he said and kissed her head. "It's happening."

"And no one cares," she said, "Does anyone even mention it on the news? Why isn't there a task force to save those people? Did you see what they did to those little babies! Babies, dad, I...I'd want to hold those little babies, and look what those monsters did to them!" Gary saw the pictures, more and more of them as time went by. He's seen the broken bodies. He's seen the burned ones. He's seen the child murdered by being boiled alive and the one cut out of his mother's womb. "Why don't any white countries do anything?" she asked, "Is it OK to do that to white people? Those fucking monsters are murdering little white babies!"

This was one of those times that Gary ignored the profanity.

"I wish I could tell you otherwise, sweetheart," Gary said, "But the bastards who run the government and the military don't care if someone murders whites. That's what we face, honey. That's what your children are going to face if we don't stop it. That's why we can't be afraid to love our race and fight for our children. We didn't hurt no one, but it doesn't matter. They want to kill us just for being white. Well, sweetheart, I won't let them hurt you, never."

He didn't need to show her his .357 magnum revolver. She knows he means what he says.

Anna looked deep into his eyes.

"I won't let them hurt my children, either," she said, and Gary knew she told the truth.

Before the end of the year, there was a major change in the membership of the Celtic Society. The first of two new members was a young man from Limerick, Ireland - Sean Collopy. His father was a very close friend of Bill Donnelly. The two grew up in County Tyrone. The United States government granted Sean a student visa and the young man began engineering courses at the University of Pittsburgh. One of the reasons that Sean received his visa was a lack of any criminal record or known association with the IRA. While Collopy was not a member of any of the IRA organizations, his father was in fact a member of the RIRA. His association must have been unknown to the U.S. government. Another factor

in Collopy's favor was his excellent academic record and superior scores on aptitude tests.

It was natural for Sean to become friends with Aaron Van Dyke. Sean was an admirer of the late Ger McDonnell, an Irish mountaineer of great renown. Van Dyke also admired McDonnell. In time their friendship became very close. Van Dyke would take Collopy on a few less hazardous climbs over the next few months.

Sean also caught the eyes of the ladies. Nineteen, with brown hair and light hazel eyes, he had a handsome if boyish face and a spark of joviality that matched his easy-going and personable demeanor. Aside from Anna, most of the unmarried females took in interest in the young man. Whether it was an occasional stare from Sinead or, in the case of Jesse, an obvious attraction, Sean Collopy had his share of attention and acceptance.

Anna was becoming friends with Mason Walker and had little time to regard the Irishman. Walker was two years older than Anna and he had a girlfriend. Neither he nor Anna considered their relationship to be more than friendship, at least in the open, and Gary wouldn't have allowed it anyway. Still, the two shared a very close friendship.

Mason became like another brother to the only child. They had similar rambunctious spirits and shared in mischief. Sometimes they would try to outdo each other during the various activities of the society. She easily bested him in archery; he vanquished her with the sling and stone. Mason hid her canteen during a hike at Spruce Knob. She switched her grapefruit juice - which he loathed - with his cranberry drink. Mason was much stronger than he looked and he became a capable mechanic and roofer. At first he worked for Bill, and then got a job with a construction company in Somerset County. After the society closed its doors he did not disappear nor did his familial relationship with Anna come to an end. It did not become romantic, however. By the time she was old enough for their friendship to blossom into something more beautiful, the both of them were occupied.

In the fall the Cunningham Sisters bade farewell to the Celtic Society. They'd had the experiences they'd hoped for and learned quite a bit along the way. The younger sister, Melinda, was moving to North Carolina and the older sister was becoming active in other clubs that demanded her free time. Bill considered their leaving in the same manner as he considered their coming, i.e. fortuitous. They were a lively and gregarious addition to the society but now that the society was approaching its true purpose, it was time for the sisters to leave.

The year's final addition was a young man from Deer Park, Maryland. He was 23 years of age, the same as Cristian O'Toole, and had been a schoolmate of O'Toole from elementary to high school graduation. The two were very close friends. It was O'Toole who convinced John Ashley Bowen to join the society. John, or Johnny as friends often called him, was just over 6' tall, with brown hair and green eyes. He had a rugged look and his lean muscles were hard and powerful. He wasn't beautiful like Garret nor was he cute like Collopy. Instead, he was very handsome in the traditional masculine sense. His jaw was strong though not exaggerated. Someone or something had once broken his nose; it healed near to its normal shape but still had a small hump where the break had occurred. The popular unshaved look would have suited him well. Instead, he opted for a clean-cut look. Bowen's physique was the best of a very fit group of men. His body and strength were unparalleled, even by massive Robert McKenna. But John's greatest asset was his eyes. They were expressive and fiery, and could warm a loved one or pierce an enemy. After a few meetings with Bill, the elder Donnelly could see that Johnny Bowen was a man of passion and honesty.

John Ashley Bowen had just ended his service in the active army. He's been in Iraq. Eventually Bill would learn that Bowen had been in numerous firefights. It would take about a year for Bill to learn why Bowen had joined in the first place. It would take even longer for him to learn the significance of the black rabbit tattoo on Bowen's right shoulder.

A week after Anna turned fifteen she approached her father several times as he watched a Pittsburgh Penguins game on an internet feed. Each time that she crept up she would lose her nerve and turn away. Gary noticed her timidity and figured that she desired something from him. The last time she did this she asked for a laptop computer. He had no clue what it might be this time.

"Come right out and ask," he said.

She obeyed him and he nearly fell out of his chair.

"I want a tattoo," she said.

He could see from the look on her face that she wasn't joking.

"Why in God's name!" he said.

Tattoos weren't actually a huge deal to Gary, unless the tattoo was a tramp stamp or some similar affront to decency or femininity. In that case, he'd smash the hands of the artist who put such an abominable mark on his daughter. Even if she did not want such a tattoo, but rather desired a true work of art, Anna was still too young. She probably wanted something frivolous. She was a young girl, after all. Gary would have to say no. She

might like a mermaid or a flower at this moment in time, but she'd probably grow tired of it. Laser removal was expensive and often left scars. He couldn't bear the thought of a laser burning her perfect white skin.

Anna didn't respond. She just looked at him.

"No," he said, "You'd get tired of it and it hurts like hell to have one removed. It'll leave a scar, too." Gary looked back at the Pens game. Mal-kin was going for a hat trick. Gary glanced at Anna, who hadn't moved. He was prepared to explain why he thought a tattoo was a bad idea. He'd tell Anna that if it had no deep meaning for her she would get tired of it. Then she'd either have to keep something that meant nothing to her, or have it removed in a painful procedure. "Well," he said, "You didn't tell me what you want."

"Ivy," she said, "like on mom's dress."

Gary looked at Anna for a long while, not caring that he missed Mal-kin's triumph.

"Maybe soon," he said.

"OK," was her reply, "Thank you, dad."

As much as Gary loved hockey he had no desire to finish watching the game.

The New Year brought what would be the final changes in the membership of the Celtic Society. Mason Walker convinced his cousin Kevin Toomey to drop by the club, and the seventeen-year-old began to attend with regularity. Kevin had light brown hair with a hint of auburn, and his eyes were green like John Bowen's. Toomey's best friend at Meyersdale Area High was John McShane. McShane had thick red hair like Anna, though his was darker. His eyes were just as blue. He was short and solid and resembled a younger Bill Donnelly. It came as no surprise that they were related: McShane's father Gerry was Bill's cousin. He left Ireland many years ago and maintained contact with the Donnelly Family. Gerry McShane was instrumental in helping Bill come to the States and now his son would begin working for the elder Donnelly as soon as his two weeks' notice was up at his old job. John was a reserved type, who didn't open up until a person won his trust. Toomey had done so and the two were very close. In time, he became friends with Mason and Garret Fogarty.

Anna's crush on Garret was over, though she was still spellbound by his immaculate good looks. She was fifteen and received her fair attention from boys, owing to her decency, vivacity and most important, her appearance. She was already a gorgeous teen, and had the dual attraction of being feminine yet resilient and unpretentious. She was not a tomboy yet she could fish and hunt with the best of them. With Gary's blessing, Bill

(via his son Rian) taught Anna to drive an ATV. Once or twice a month she'd join Mason, Rian and - again to everyone's surprise - Jesse in the woods around the Donnelly Homestead. It cut into her time with Gary, but he did not restrain her. He loved her enough to let her enjoy herself.

Though the limits on dating remained, Gary relaxed a bit as Anna demonstrated her growing maturity. A boy from church and school began showing a strong interest in Anna and Anna began to reciprocate. Elijah McClure was a decent lad who lived close to Laurel Highlands High and who had known Gary and Anna since he was a babe. The first time he asked Anna out on a date she refused. It was not out of a lack of attraction. Elijah had a strong and agreeable personality and he was handsome and athletic. He'd practiced gymnastics and kept up the physical conditioning even after he gave up the sport to concentrate on other endeavors. He had bright hazel eyes and thick brown hair that he grew just a little longer than most his peers, something that Anna found particularly attractive. Elijah was also very intelligent. Anna felt a strong attraction to him, but she believed that honoring her father was more important than immediate gratification.

Elijah was not a stalker nor was he smitten with emotion. He had a strong moral upbringing and high self-esteem which protected him from falling in love with an ideal rather than a real person. He did like Anna a great deal and figured he'd try his luck. To his surprise, his second attempt met with a measure of success: Anna told him she'd have to ask her dad. To her surprise Gary did not object. As long as Michael and Emily could go with them, Anna and Elijah could attend an approved movie or engage in some outdoor activity. Though he wished to join them, Gary had been young himself once, and he knew to let the four responsible youths enjoy a day together. That Friday afternoon, Anna, Elijah, Anna's cousin Michael and his girlfriend Emily went biking at Ohiopyle. It was too warm to sit inside, being a balmy 50 degrees; quite a nice day for the end of February. The solid overcast suited Anna's pale complexion and made for a perfect day on the trails.

On the return trip the foursome stopped atop the former railroad bridge to gaze upon the Youghiogheny. The clear waters lapped at the stones and the river was beautiful as it snaked between ancient hills and big sleeping trees. Michael thought about the big question he wanted to ask Emily. Elijah thought about a kayak trip, one he and his father had been planning for four months. Emily thought about the dress she'd wear if Michael ever asked her to be his bride. Anna thought about dropping a rock but worried she might hit someone.

Gary didn't mind that Anna listened to heavy metal music. He knew she wouldn't change her worldview or lose her faith in God because of a song lyric. Quite often she'd plug her iPod into the Sport Trac's audio system and play a selection from *Celtic Frost*, *Shadow's Fall* or several other metal bands that she enjoyed. Anna became attracted to the music thanks to the internet. She was searching for an alternative to uninteresting pop music and ghetto hip-hop. Neither she nor Gary was a fan of country music. Anna liked the sounds of metal, in particular the Goth and doom genres, and she appreciated the mostly white nature of the music. Fascination and enjoyment grew into passion, and by the spring of her fifteenth year she was, among other things, a "metal head."

The music was fine, Gary told her. Concerts were not. He never thought for a second that she'd use drugs or engage in the debauchery that seemed to be the sole motivation for some concert-goers. He knew that others would engage in such behavior and Anna could easily become an innocent victim should a fight break out or if the police raided the concert and made indiscriminate arrests. If they could find a place that was safe for a young girl and did not tolerate any drugs or violence, he'd be happy to drive her to a show. Until such a place existed, the iPod and car speakers would be her concert hall.

After an April meeting of the Celtic Society, the men gathered at the little bar in the rear of the old florist's building. As usual, everyone was dressed casual; from "business-casual" in the case of Garret, to Austin Kelly's shorts and sandals in spite of the cool weather. As he entered, Gary noticed that someone had hung a sign by the door of the bar. A *Piece of Tyrone* was written in red letters. On the left of the sign was an engraved harp; on the right, a wolf. He later found out that Crisitian O'Toole crafted the sign.

Today the selection of beers was greater than usual. Aside from Guinness and Bass, there was Samuel Adams double bock and cherry wheat ale. Gary could see bottles of Tooheys in the cooler and on the small shelf sat two bottles of Old Nick barley wine. Gary took one of the barley wines and found it much to his liking.

"That's the best stuff here," said James Ford when he noticed what Gary was drinking.

"Blasphemy!" said O'Toole. "How can you choose an English beer over our Guinness? Even a good English beer!"

"Your Guinness?" Johnny Bowen asked of his close friend, "Your beer is Ciuc. Half a Ciuc, half a Guinness, you fucking Gypsy."

"What the hell's a Ciuc?" Gary asked.

"A Romanian beer," Johnny said, "A really good one, actually. Cristi brought me a few bottles and it was pretty damn good."

"You know, you can't find Ciuc Negru anymore," O'Toole said as he raised his Guinness. "Damn shame, really. That was one of the best darks I ever had."

"Garret," Bill said, "what are your thoughts on this delicate subject?"

"Kriek Lambic," Garret said, who held a bottle of Sam Adams cherry wheat. "Among the available selection, I'd have to say cherry wheat."

"Well, Tom," Bill said to Tom Dwyer, "seems we've got two for Guinness. What's your expert opinion?"

"Toohey's," Dwyer said, "I don't like the dark beers as much. Where did you get these, anyway?"

Dwyer looked down at his half-empty bottle.

"There's a little hole-in-the-wall in Vienna, Virginia," Bill said, "I make it a habit to visit now and again."

Gary looked at Bowen who had yet to weigh in on the subject.

"Johnny?" asked Gary of John Bowen, "I take it Guinness is your brand."

Bowen took a drink from his Guinness Premium and nodded.

"You're not even a Mick!" said Rian Donnelly, who'd been listening with interest.

"He's a better Mick than you," said Bill who pointed to the Bass ale in young Rian's hand.

Conspicuous was the silence of Austin Kelly. He was never one to withhold his convictions on such an important subject. It was startling that he didn't immediately offer his opinion. At the height of the debate, Ford put his hand on Kelly's shoulder.

"You alright?" he asked.

Gary could hear the question and the response.

"Yeah," was all that Kelly said.

For the rest of the discussion Austin sat in silence, nursing his Guinness. The others left him in peace. As the meeting ended and the beer debate remained unresolved, Ford stayed behind to talk to his close friend. He and Austin worked all day Friday on a 1965 Oldsmobile Cutlass that Jimmy hoped to restore and sell. Based on their conversations at Ford's private workshop, Jimmy figured out that Austin was having difficulties with his younger brother, Stevie.

"What's up?" Ford asked Kelly.

"I caught Stevie smokin' weed," Austin said, "I told him if you won't think of your own fuckin' life, think of where the money goes. It goes to

trash; spics and niggers and fucking white trash. Why give those filthy animals your hard-earned money? He works all night at that shitty restaurant, and for what? Suckin' on a joint some nigger rolled."

"Do you know who?" Ford asked.

"What do you mean?" Kelly asked.

"Who sold it to him?" Ford asked.

"Some fucking stoner named Chris Meck, him or his nigger buddy," Austin said.

"I guess we have a job to do," Ford said, "It's been a while."

Teeth clenched and mouth closed, Kelly stared into Ford's eyes.

After Anna was born, Gary and Mary Murphy had her baptized at the Catholic Church in Connellsville. It was one of the greatest joys that Mary had experienced in the short time she had with Anna. Father Schumacher, who had baptized the child and who had wed Gary and Mary, had passed away not long after Mary. Gary was not pleased with the replacement. His appearance was fine enough. Father O'Brien was a handsome young priest from Philadelphia. He was white with contrasting black hair that served to increase his physical allure. O'Brien seemed to favor the "new" Catholics such as Mexican immigrants and Africans. He considered racism - and by that, he meant any expression of white pride or solidarity - to be a grave sin. Once O'Brien voiced that opinion, Gary stopped paying attention when the priest spoke. He and Anna continued to go to church for the atmosphere; the feeling of being closer to God and experiencing the beauty of the church building, with its arches and stained glass.

Anna, thanks to her discussions with Gary and her own good sense, was becoming racially aware and already felt a powerful love for her white brothers and sisters. She, too, grew annoyed with the priest, though in truth she'd always paid more attention to the gospels than to a man in robes. Still, the two Murphy's did not want to sever their ties with the Catholic Church. They continued to attend services in spite of the priest. For a while at least; then, one rainy day in April, Father O'Brien went too far.

In January a major earthquake struck Haiti. Hollywood and other rich Americans sent great sums of money to a nation that had always looked just days removed from a catastrophe. Those familiar with the history of the black Caribbean nation knew that little if any good would come from the donations, but it was good P.R. and it helped the actors and businessmen feel superior to the working class men whose entire paychecks went to supporting their families.

Not to be outdone, the U.S Government promised to pillage those paychecks and send another huge sum of money and supplies. Most

members of the clergy - Catholic and Protestant - did not want to be left out or accused of racism, so they chimed in quickly and vociferously. Father O'Brien was among the most vocal. He had urged the faithful to donate and even adopt black orphans from Haiti. Today he reiterated his plea. His Philadelphia flock had always encouraged his racial pandering. Today was different. Not everyone was a sheep, and one of the wolves was present with his daughter.

"It's been three months since the disaster in Haiti," O'Brien said in conclusion, "Let's not forget our obligations as Christians to those less fortunate than us."

"Let's not forget how many Catholic Frenchmen were butchered by those savages when they took over Haiti," said the wolf Gary Murphy.

"Gary," Father O'Brien said, "Those sins do not weigh upon the current generation of Haitians."

O'Brien had never asked or received permission to call Gary by his first name.

"But the sin of slavery weighs upon me and my white daughter," Gary said, "Isn't that right?"

"I'd suggest we have a private discussion, Gary," O'Brien said, "I'd be happy to meet with you and you daughter if you'd like."

Anna looked at her father. She was an unforgettable sight in her blue dress.

"How about this, father," Gary said, "we discuss helping poor white children rather than always harpin' on giving my hard-earned money to black children and children from non-white countries? How about Belarus? Can't we help the children with cancer? Are they too white?"

"Their race doesn't matter, Gary," O'Brien said, a rising annoyance in his voice.

"How many times have you appealed for help in their name? Or children in Russia? What about that flood in Tennessee?" Gary asked.

"Are you racist, Gary?" asked O'Brien.

The parishioners looked at Gary as if he'd blasphemed before the altar. O'Brien had drawn his verbal sword.

"Are you anti-white?" Gary asked.

"Of course not," said O'Brien.

"Then why should we adopt Haitian children?" asked Gary, "Why not adopt white children from broken homes, or white orphans? What about children from Europe? Why bring more non-whites to this nation?"

"Do you suggest that we do nothing, just leave them to die?" O'Brien asked.

"I suggest we leave them to the fate they've chosen," Gary said, "and we take care of our own. You tell me to flush my money down that toilet of a country and then ask if I'm racist when I say we should care for our own people. And don't give me that bullshit about how we're all one people, because if that were true you wouldn't insinuate I'm a racist for caring about whites but not say a damn thing about some African who has pride in his race."

"You have some serious issues, Gary," O'Brien said, "I think it's a good thing that you're opening up, so that we can help you. I'd like speak to you in private. I think I can help." He looks at Anna, who returns his stare. "I can only hope you haven't imparted too much of that hate to the next generation."

"I'm sick and tired of the anti-white hate you and other worthless priests force upon the next generation," Gary said, "and I'll ask you man-to-man not to make another goddamned accusation about my daughter, thank you. This is a discussion between us. If you want to continue down that path I'll ask you to step outside, and leave that collar of yours."

"That's enough, Gary," said an irate O'Brien.

O'Brien looked away for a second, but he could not resist continuing.

"I'll remind you not to take the Lord's name in vain," he said.

"It's just a goddamned word," Gary said, "You know what's blasphemous? Telling whites that there's no such thing as race, and we're all one in God, and that it's God's will for us to adopt Haitian children at the expense of our own. You want us to send money to the descendants of murderers who haven't changed a goddamned bit and you know it. You tell us it's God's will to give comfort to illegals who are taking white men's jobs and forcing white families to work longer and longer hours. You're the one taking the Lord's name in vain."

O'Brien would never admit his hatred, though hate is exactly what he felt. He did believe in God, but his belief in white guilt was much stronger, and at the moment he felt genuine hatred for Gary Murphy.

"I think you made..." O'Brien begins to say.

"Is it God's will that only white countries have to accept non-white immigration?" Gary asked, "Is it God's will that whites go extinct? Using God's name to promote genocide is taking His name in vain. Don't you think? Because it sure as hell sounds like it to me."

Gary wasn't speaking to the priest. He wanted the parishioners to remember his words. O'Brien rose from his seat. This prompted Gary to do the same. Big Gary would have no qualms about beating a man in robes if that man were anti-white.

"I'm going to have to ask you to leave, Gary," O'Brien said.

He didn't need to. Gary had no intention of ever returning. Neither would Anna. The Murphy's would not lose their faith in God, just in the traitorous priests who claimed to speak for Him.

Anna was almost late for school on Monday morning. Gary was working overtime and although Anna set her alarm, she slept through it. A fortuitous visit by Owen Buckley woke Anna and she hurriedly dressed and grabbed a couple of energy bars for breakfast on the run. She arrived at school with seconds to spare.

"What's the difference between a blonde and a rooster?" asked Juliette Fowler, an attractive brunette freshman at Laurel Highlands High. "A rooster says 'cock-a-doodle-do' and a blonde says 'any cock'll do.'"

Her best friend Brianna, who was blonde, chuckled at the so-called humor.

Anna glanced at them as the three dressed after Physical Education class. She did not have an amused look on her face. Juliette noticed Anna's displeasure. She considered telling Anna to "fuck off" or perhaps cracking a cruel joke about "ginger" girls. Juliette didn't say a word. Anna beat up a girl who was much more powerful than both Juliette and her friend. Neither girl wished to fight the strong and sometimes fiery redhead.

Anna was silent as she and her father ate supper. It was unusual for her to be upset. Most often she was chirpy after escaping the drudgery of school. It was Monday evening and Gary had just brought her home from the Pittsburgh Aquatic Center. Anna had performed very well on the springboard and Gary hadn't noticed anything unusual about her demeanor until they sat down for supper. In three hours Gary would leave for work. He didn't want to leave without knowing what was troubling his daughter.

"You OK, sweetheart?" he asked.

Anna looked up at him. Those eyes could melt the iciest heart.

"Yeah," she said.

"Do you like the peas?" Gary asked, "I think they're pretty good for spring."

"Yeah," she said, "Thanks for having it ready."

When Anna had diving practice, Gary would make supper.

"I'm going to work in a couple of hours," he said, his eyes staring into hers, "Do me a favor and tell me what's on your mind."

"Well, I heard some idiot at school telling a blonde joke," Anna said, "I thought about it, and it's OK for someone to tell a nasty joke about blondes or any other white people, really. I wanted to repeat the exact same

joke and substitute 'nigger', or 'black' instead of 'blonde' but I think we both know what would happen to me if I did."

"Anna, sweetheart," Gary said, "We're deep in enemy territory and we're surrounded by enemies and traitors. There aren't any homelands anymore, no place where we can be safe or left alone. That idiot told an anti-white joke because it's safe. Nobody ever gets in trouble for making fun of white people. That little shithead's a coward. Those kinds of assholes have the state, and the police, they have Hollywood and a bunch of dirty money behind them so they can make you pay if you stand up for your race. Don't misunderstand me, sweetheart, I'm not telling you to 'give up', or that 'it's ok to be a traitor', because it's not. There's a reason the deepest part of Hell is meant for traitors. But that fool who told the joke is a coward, and when they have power behind them cowards are really dangerous. If you told the same joke and said blacks, not niggers, just blacks, or even African Americans or whatever the hell niggers want to be called, that little piece of shit would be the first to turn you in to the administration and they'd make an example out of you. You know what should have happened? One of the boys should have beat his ass. Aren't there any blond guys at Laurel Highlands?"

"It wasn't a dude," Anna said, "It was Juliette Fowler."

Gary was quiet for a moment.

"I'm not surprised," he finally said.

Gary knew Juliette's father, who was a city councilman.

"Dad," Anna said, "I agree with what you're saying but you shouldn't assume it was a guy. A lot of us girls are traitors, too."

She looked down as she said the final words. She felt ashamed at what her "sisters in race" were doing, though she shared none of the blame.

"You're right, honey," he said. He reached over and rubbed her left hand. "I'm proud of my beautiful white daughter."

"Thank you, dad," she said as she looked up into his eyes. "It's just that, when someone makes fun of white people, I want to slap them, you know? They make fun of us all the time. They really make fun of my white brothers and I'm tired of just taking it."

Gary noticed the words she used. She'd spoken highly of white men before; now she called them brothers. Gary felt enormous pride when he heard his own flesh and blood talking like that.

"Listen, sweetheart," he said, "I've never told you to back down. Just be smart. When you pick a fight, pick the right one. That jackass said something insulting to our race. I know it must have been hell not to slap

her face. Get through school and you'll have the rest of your life ahead of you. I know you won't listen to the anti-white lies they tell you at school, and, yes, I know it's going to be hard for you to sit still when they tell you those lies. I hope that Laurel Highlands isn't so anti-white but I wouldn't be surprised if it's as bad as other schools. I'm sure it's hard to sit there and just take it. I imagine you feel weak. But you're not, sweetheart. You came from the strongest, and most wonderful woman I've ever known, and I know you're going to make a difference someday. Shit, you already are."

Anna smiled. Maybe he knew about the battles she'd fought on the internet. Under the internet pseudonym "blueredwhite" she had been posting Whitaker's Mantra as well as using the Mantra to attack anti-whites who dared to post their hate. She had even posted the Mantra in the comments sections of YouTube videos and on-line newspapers. Usually her rebukes of anti-whites disappeared within minutes of posting. Most websites permitted dissent as long as it did not violate racial taboos or threaten the racial status quo - to Anna and Gary, the status quo meant white genocide.

"Our race's future is at stake," he told her, "we have to be smart. Let the bitch say something stupid. It's not worth the punishment you'll face if you put her in her place. But if that little bitch ever gets personal with you or if she ever gets physical, then put her down. Hard."

Anna laughed a little, though the smile remained twice as long.

"You did well, dad," she said.

"I did, huh?" he replied.

"Yeah," she said, "the peas and bacon are awesome."

Elijah McClure was among Anna's closest friends, but he was not the only one. Comeliness usually opens the door for friendships, and with few exceptions Anna was popular with classmates and fellow divers. Due to her busy schedule, Anna developed three types of acquaintance, each more dear than the next. She had class and study friends. She had a few pool friends who she'd known since she started diving. She also had a number of very close friends. In time, Sinead Donnelly became one of the closest of her female friends. Sinead was homeschooled and Bill was delighted at the chance for her to socialize with a wonderful and unique girl like Anna. The two would study mathematics, which was a great help to Anna, and afterward they'd go on hikes with Rian Donnelly. Toward the end of April the Murphy's, together with Sinead Donnelly, invited Jessica Hanratty to join them on a woodland excursion. Jesse was overjoyed by the invitation.

When Anna and Sinead were alone, they would speak in the Irish. Though Gary did not speak the language, he was enchanted by its sound. He loved to listen to the intonations and harmonies of the beautiful tongue.

Once Anna learned to drive an ATV, she and Sinead would explore Bill's property all the way to Dunbar Creek. Someone - usually Rian - would accompany the two, even after they had proven to be responsible drivers. This was more for reasons of safety rather than supervision. In time, Garret Fogarty and Johnny Bowen would begin accompanying them on their woodland rides. Time permitting, the little group would stop near the creek and put together a campfire supper.

The growing friendship between the daughters and the fathers brought the Murphy's and the Donnelly's together. On the Saturday before Easter, the Murphy's spent the day at Bill's place. The women and the girls made bouquets of daffodils and crocus while the men talked about good times and old times and good old times. Garret Fogarty was among the guests that fine spring day. The Donnelly's relationship with Garret was already very strong. The two had known each other almost as soon as Bill came to Pennsylvania. Once the Easter ham began to cool, Bill cut a few pieces when his wife wasn't looking, and presented them to his guests.

"It's not the worst thing I've ever done, I'm sorry to say," he told them.

The men washed the ham down with a pint.

The Murphy's were welcome to spend Easter Sunday with the Donnelly's. Gary declined; on Easter, the Murphy and Buckley clans met in Somerset at Owen Buckley's little farm. Among the delicacies at the big meal was cured ham and roasted lamb with rosemary and garlic.

There was no meeting of the Celtic Society that weekend. Cristian O'Toole celebrated the Resurrection with his lovely Romanian mother and his affable American father. The Fords met at brother Paddy's place in Pittsburgh for ham and some excellent French wine. Austin Kelly spent the day with his girlfriend and her folks, who had really taken to him.

John Ashley Bowen's father was too depressed to care about Easter. His wife deserted him and John three years previous. Carl Bowen never got over the blow. Garret's parents were too progressive for "superstitions". They did practice yoga. Garret, who'd grown fond of Bowen, met with the former at Bowen's small place in Deer Park, Maryland. The plan was to have a quick supper and a few drinks. Instead, Garret learned that John Ashley Bowen was a fabulous cook. He could conceptualize and prepare a meal with speed and skill. Fogarty, who was independent since

his early teens, was no amateur in the kitchen. Still he was shocked by Bowen's culinary abilities. A simple meal with drinks became a memorable Easter feast.

By late April, the joys and tastes of Easter had become memories. Austin Kelly drove by his girlfriend's apartment and decided to drop in for a quick hello. On most Fridays, Rachael and Austin would spend the evening out, but right now he didn't have time for more than a few words and a kiss. He was on his way to meet James Ford, and the two had some important business. It was late afternoon and the sky over western Maryland was clearing. It would be a cool, starry night. Austin got his kiss and then jogged down the steps. On the way down he passed the Easter decorations that still adorned the apartment's windows.

At around seven o'clock, Austin Kelly parked his red Ford Ranger outside James Ford's home in rural western Pennsylvania. From the road it was impossible to see Ford's private shop or the collection of vehicles that filled the gravel parking lot. Kelly expected to find Ford's Ram Charger sitting in the driveway. Instead there was a red Dodge Stratus. Ford must have been watching since he came out of the house in an instant. Kelly climbed out of his truck and the two departed in the Stratus.

Ford's hair was due for a trimming. He'd probably put it off until they dealt with Austin's little problem. Kelly began to wish he'd done the same. The Stratus backed out of the long driveway and entered the highway. Ford did not exceed the speed limit nor did he pass a pair of coal trucks that slowed their progress until they crossed the state line. The last thing he wanted was to attract unwanted attention.

"Be careful when you take the club," Jimmy said, "I don't give a shit if ash falls off, just don't rub it on the seat or pull the bag out of the car. And don't touch it to the door or the upholstery. Open the flap, lift the club and pull it out without touching anything."

"OK," Austin said.

"I can imagine you're nervous," Jimmy said, "If you do fuck it up, just toss the club back in the car and we'll try this some other time. Any fuck-up and we go home."

"OK," Kelly said.

Austin was nervous; nervous as hell. He was also committed. There was no going back.

Within a year after Steve Kelly moved to Frostburg to go to college, he became an acquaintance of Chris Meck. Meck, who was a trim, good-looking white male, was a junior at the time. He enrolled in easy classes and passed them with minimal effort. Chris spent most of his energy chas-

ing girls and drinking with his buddies. One such "buddy" was a black student named Malcolm Sims. Meck and Sims enjoyed a bit of weed like many of the students at Frostburg. When Sims suggested that they sell as well as consume and found a way to achieve the goal, Meck became an enthusiastic accomplice.

Two weeks previous, Kelly visited his brother at the campus dormitory. There he caught Stevie with marijuana provided by Meck. Under considerable pressure from an irate Austin Kelly, Stevie admitted where the weed came from and where the supplier resided. Meck was, in fact, one of Stevie's neighbors. As Austin returned to his car, he noticed a vehicle parked outside Meck's place. It was a black Wrangler. If this were indeed Meck's Jeep, and it seemed likely considering the parking space number, Austin could have confronted Meck at that time. The passions of the moment made such action inadvisable. Instead he took note of the plate number.

Life was returning after winter's cold. Leaves claimed by the fall began to grow anew. The wooded hills and dales of northwestern Maryland seemed to be covered with green hair. Those trees that ended their slumber early already wore shrouds of foliage. The few pines were dark green islands among a sea of lighter colors. It was a beautiful country, all the way from Oakland to the great Sidling Hill syncline.

"When you're done with the club," Jimmy said as he motored through the picturesque region, "throw the damn thing down. Don't bring it back, alright?" Austin nodded. "Another thing," Ford added, "I'm out of there before dawn. If we don't get a shot at it we'll try again sometime. We're not there to get ourselves caught."

"OK," Austin said, "What if he has a gun?"

"I have that covered," Jimmy said.

He wasn't exaggerating. Ford was carrying a .357 magnum revolver and he was a good enough shot to compensate for bad fortune.

Ford turned on his iPod. The music of *Audioslave* came over the Dodge's speakers.

The parking space in front of Meck's apartment was empty.

"Goddamn it!" said Kelly, who was juiced up on adrenaline and now faced a crushing disappointment.

"We're not done yet," Jimmy said.

Jimmy pulled out of the parking lot as fast as he'd entered it. If Meck had left town there was nothing they could do about it. If he was still in Frostburg the meeting might yet occur. Ford had studied the town well. First, he'd been there before and had a general idea of the lay of the land.

He had passed through on his way to Cumberland and Hagerstown. Google Earth gave him a good idea of the topography and features. He had a folder of Google Earth images in case his memory failed him.

After cruising past the college bars without any luck, Ford and Kelly tried the cinema complex. In the parking lot of the huge facility their fortune changed: nestled in the middle of the lot was a black Wrangler with plate numbers that matched what Kelly had seen near Meck's place.

"You sure it's his?" asked Ford as he cruised by the Jeep.

"No," Austin said, "Not 100%."

"Let's get a pizza," Jimmy said, "You hungry? I'm hungry."

James Ford drove over to the adjacent Pizza Hut and ordered a small pepperoni pizza. Kelly was too nervous to eat. He drank his watered-down Coke and watched the Jeep with Ford's binoculars.

At 10:30 PM, with half the pizza gone, Ford closed the box and tossed it on to the back seat and beside the plastic-covered club. Ten minutes later Chris Meck strolled out of the cinema complex and walked over to his Jeep.

Meck caused Kelly's heart to skip a beat when he turned right near the cinema's entrance. If he were going back to his pad, he'd have gone the opposite direction.

"What the fuck's he doing?" Austin asked, "Do you think he's on to us?"

"No, fuck no," Jimmy said.

Ford kept a three-car-length distance from Meck's vehicle. His pursuit was not furious, but it was dogged. A half-mile from the cinema, Meck turned on to a broad curving road that led out of Frostburg. Woods and houses flanked both sides of the two-lane highway. Ford recognized the route from his mental picture of Frostburg, though he had no idea where Meck was headed. A short distance down the serpentine highway, Meck's left turn signal lit up. Ford slowed the car to a crawl. The Wrangler climbed up a driveway and parked in front of a well-manicured house.

Ford accelerated as he drove by the place. Kelly imagined that Meck was wise to their pursuit and was turning around to make his escape. Beyond the house, the road entered a large, gentle curve that continued into a heavily wooded area. Ford turned around just beyond the apex of the curve in a section devoid of inhabitation.

"Try to see as much as you can when I pass the house," Jimmy said, "I won't be slowing down."

Ford turned on his high beams. In the light Kelly could see a young woman, perhaps 25 to 30, standing just outside the door. Meck was in

front of her. As the Dodge rolled past Kelly could see them enter the house. Kelly looked over his shoulder and saw a swing set and kiddy pool in the yard. There was a covered bass boat in the rear left.

"Fucking worthless cunt," he said.

"He might stay all night," Jimmy said, "If not, you'll probably get your chance."

Ford did not turn around until he drove all the way to the Frostburg campus. Neither did he slow down when he returned to the house that Meck entered. After he rounded the curve he parked the Dodge on the wide left shoulder. Ford pocketed his iPod and exited. It was then that Kelly could see Jimmy's revolver. Austin put on a pair of latex gloves and with supreme care removed the club from the plastic cover and lifted it out of the back of the car. Its surface was burned and left ashes on his gloves. He could tell by the way it felt that the flames had not weakened its structural integrity.

James Ford and Austin Kelly entered the woods to the right, with Jimmy Ford in the lead. They stopped within sight of the house that Meck had entered. Ford and Kelly worked their way through the woods to the other side of the house, so that they might face the driver's side of Meck's Jeep. At 1AM Jimmy Ford, wearing a mask, crept up to the Jeep. With a razor-sharp knife he slit the right rear tire. Then he returned to the woods.

"I'm betting that's her husband's boat," Jimmy said, "He'll probably be back tomorrow, so I think you're going to get a shot at this asshole."

The night was clear and cold. Kelly didn't feel it at all. He was too excited to be cold. The distance from the hiding place to the left side of the Jeep was around 40 feet. At 4AM the agonizing wait came to an abrupt end. The front door opened and Meck emerged from the house.

Jimmy watched Austin stand and ready himself for a charge. Ford looked at Meck, who took out his keys and started to unlock his door. Then he noticed the flat tire.

"Fuck!" Meck yelled.

His words were like a cue. Kelly charged. Meck took two steps toward the tire. Ford aimed his pistol at the door of the house. This was not a time for sentimentality. If the woman came out with a weapon, Jimmy would kill her.

Meck's back was toward him when Austin entered bludgeoning range. Meck's anger over the flat tire must have blinded his senses. He didn't turn to see Kelly, not even when it was too late. The first blow struck him on the back of his head. Austin Kelly continued to strike Meck, landing five more blows to his head as Meck lay bleeding. Then Kelly started

to flee the scene. Halfway to the forest he remembered to drop the club. Ford stood ready to fire until Kelly entered the woods and he, too, withdrew from the scene.

When James Ford entered middle school he crossed paths with a hulking brute named Gilbert Thomas. Ford was physically weak and a little overweight. He was also passive. These flaws attracted Thomas like a fly to excrement. After a day of heavy torment at the hands of Thomas, Ford arrived home in tears. It was not the first time this had happened. The difference was, this time his father was home to witness his son's distress.

William Ford, Jr., was not a man to be trifled with. He loved his family but could be very hard and very cold. In short, he could and would protect them. His type was becoming a rarity. The America of Jimmy Ford's lifetime had become an anti-society. Hostile groups, vying for domination, played the system that favored them above the productive white majority. It encouraged them to attack the weakening white majority with accusations of racism and ever-increasing physical violence. That majority was already split into two self-destructive camps. White women considered themselves a minority apart from the white race, and the rampant feminizing of white males made them too weak to fight the white feminists and Jewish antagonists who were destroying the love between men and women. Most white women were becoming too weak to love their own race, and most white men were becoming too weak to win the love of a strong white woman. The anti-society was poisoning young James Ford, making him submissive and effeminate. His overworked father had already noticed his son's decline. Now was the time to act. James expected a shoulder to cry upon. He was in for a surprise.

Jimmy's father loved his son and the corrective measures that he enforced upon Jimmy pained his very soul. William would never tell anyone about the pain; not his wife or his children, even after they grew up and moved away. It was a father's duty and a father's burden to make his son a man.

James Ford wept in his room. His stone-faced father watched him from the doorway.

"Come wash your face," William said. When James hesitated he continued, "I said come wash your face."

In the bathroom Jimmy could sense that there would be no sympathy from his father. He felt like lashing out but he also felt very weak. He knew the temporary exhilaration of a tantrum would not be worth the punishment that would certainly follow.

"You were born male," his father told him, "Now we're going to make you a man."

The senior Ford, who was 35 at the time, was thin and tough as nails. He was the son of a farmer and had seen combat in Panama. His body bore scars from work and war. William Wallace Ford, Jr., taught James to fight, just as he had done with Ford's brothers Paddy and Howard. He told his son to lift weights and not only showed him proper technique; he made sure that James actually did the lifting. When the soft child resisted, his privileges and allowance began to disappear. When James' mother thought the father was being too rough on the boy, William put his foot down and told her that absolutely nothing would alter the course he had set in motion. James needed to toughen up or else he'd be a whipping boy all his life. Once James lost his excess fat and his body began to have a trim, fit appearance, his mother dropped her opposition. Ford's self-esteem was rising and she finally realized the point of William's tough program. Mentally and physically, young James was thriving from his father's challenges.

His mother wasn't the only one to notice Ford's metamorphosis. His improved physique gave him confidence, which made him aggressive when others challenged and tried to humiliate him. Bullies noticed, too; in fact, James would never have the opportunity to test his power on the most notorious of their number. Gil Thomas - and the other predators - backed off when they saw that Jimmy was no longer one of the sheep. Their instincts recognized a wolf when they saw one, and a wolf can bite back.

As James neared the completion of his conditioning program and began to concentrate on body maintenance rather than muscle construction, his respect for his father grew by magnitudes. The "old man" had been right all along. Ford escaped the misery of being an easy target by becoming a powerful adversary. During his last two years of high school he did not suffer a single act of humiliation or degradation on the part of bullies. As he watched his son become a man, William's pride in his son swelled. The day after James graduated from high school his father took him out to O'Rorke's in Gettysburg. The clean-cut, trim and powerful son now resembled his father in more ways than one.

"You've come a long way, Jimmy," said William, "We don't need another white nerd or pussy and you sure as hell aren't one of those."

At 7AM the red Stratus exited off US-119 North and drove up to a Burger King. Ford ordered breakfast at the drive-through and then parked the car with the rear away from the restaurant.

"Thanks for helping, Jimmy," said Kelly, who found enough of an appetite to eat a blueberry biscuit. "I won't forget it."

"No problem," Jimmy said.

"I figured you'd stop me when I started wailing on him," Austin said.

"Why?" Jimmy asked, "He's a piece of shit who helps fuck up young whites like Stevie. I don't give a shit if you killed him." Jimmy sipped from his steaming hot coffee. "Fuck, I hope you killed him."

Ford did not get his wish. Chris Meck did not die. Modern medicine saved his life, but it did not spare him the brain damage that ended his educational - and entrepreneurial - career.

Aside from autumn, May is often the most pleasant month in the Laurel Highlands. Several of the Society's members were busy that month, so there were only two meetings instead of the usual three. Ford and his brothers were helping their uncle on his farm. Garret was working part-time for a small software company in Pittsburgh. He also had his studies at Lycoming. Bowen had gotten a job driving a coal truck. He had his CDL since before his army days. Gary and Anna were also busy. Being among the most beautiful times of year, there were trails to walk and fish to catch. When the Society did meet, the time spent there didn't seem sufficient for all the catching-up and spirited conversations that became a central part of the Society's agenda.

During the final May meeting of the Celtic Society, Bill and the men respected custom and spent the last hour at the "Piece of Tyrone." Tom Neely joined them. He didn't usually find beer to his tastes but the company suited him fine. The others enjoyed their favorite brews or decided to try something different. Austin Kelly was in a good mood and everyone in general seemed jovial. Perhaps it was the changing of seasons and the warm, comfortable weather that brightened everyone's spirits.

Predictably, the conversations were light in character. That is, until Robert McKenna mentioned the IRA. McKenna looked like a big Canadian logger with his heavy beard and moustache. He grew it for the Nailers playoff run, which came to an end in a hard-fought seven game semi-final.

"There are things I don't like," McKenna told Sean Collopy, "but there's a lot of good to the IRA, you know what I mean?"

He went no further when he realized how quiet the bar had become.

"There are no taboos in this bar, Mr. McKenna," Bill said, which inspired a surprised glance from Garret Fogarty. "Please continue, you appear to have an audience."

"Alright, Bill," he said, "It's not my intent to offend anyone..."

"Please, Robert," Bill said, "dispense with the shite. We're all men here." Bowen chuckled. Bill glanced at him and smiled. "You especially, Robert," Bill continued, "You face a piece of wood aimed right for your eyes."

"Fine," said McKenna, "What I want to say is, a lot of innocents died and a lot of good people got killed who shouldn't have got killed. There were screw-ups and some real evil people in the IRA. But there's a lot of good, you know? From what I know they protected Catholics in Derry and all over the north. They wanted our people to have the same rights as the Protestants. What's wrong with that? And they took out drug dealers, which is fuckin' awesome." He looks around to make sure none of the teens are nearby. "Sometimes I think we could use somethin' like that in the States."

"Johnny, you're a Protestant, are you not?" asked Bill.

"I believe in God and Christ," he said, "but I don't give a shit for the race-traitor preachers who act like they speak for Him. Fuckin' traitors."

Gary slapped Bowen's shoulder and drank to him. Johnny didn't know about Gary's confrontation with Father O'Brien.

"I don't care for them, either," Bill said, "There's still good priests, men of character, but money and power have corrupted most of them. Robert, you brought up the IRA. Most of my life I heard the Protestants are causing all the trouble, or the English but that wasn't as common. Or we'd blame the UDF. There was enough guilt to go around so I'm not going to cast stones right now, because we're facing a struggle that's much bigger and a lot worse. To tell you the truth, I'm starting to resent the petty squabbles. We face enemies that are much worse than some filthy landlord or loud-mouthed old preacher, and I wish we had realized it then. I wish the Protestants had seen it. If they did, they'd join the Republic without a moment's wait. And if we Catholics could see it, we'd welcome them. As much bad as she's done, I pity old England and the poor bastards who can't get out."

Garret looked at Bill. Bill looked down at the bar and played with the bottle cap from his Guinness. For a moment Garret wondered if Bill would explain what he meant. He hoped that he wouldn't; not until he was sure he could trust everyone at the bar. He wasn't in an Irish pub surrounded by IRA sympathizers. This was America, where the government doesn't need a secret police. Neighbors fulfill that role.

Bill liked Tom Neely. He hoped the doctor wouldn't be turned away by the rough language or subject matter. However, Bill was not about to stifle a conversation to please one member. He was happy to see that

Tom stayed and even joined in on the conversation. He didn't know that Tom had an epiphany of his own and the direction of the conversation, especially McKenna's bold speculation, intrigued him.

Sarah Neely née James's racial awakening was due in a large part to her mother and father. They let it be known that if she were to remain in good standing with the family, she would marry a white man. Though often spoken behind closed doors, this is not an unusual practice. However, Sarah's parents also explained the reasons why they would not accept a non-white as a son-in-law. The James' racial heritage was precious, and it was responsible for the unique and lovely shape of Sarah's face, the color of her eyes, and the sharpness of her creativity and her intellect. Those things could not be separated from her total being. What she had to offer in the form of a child was a priceless gift, and she did not have a right to condemn a child to a life of anti-white animosity and feelings of inferiority that most mulattoes come to feel. She did not have a right to destroy the unique beauty that her white body could create.

Tom's lessons came from personal experience. A young cousin of his played football for the Moon Area Tigers. Due to his size and speed, he was the starting tailback for the team and during his senior year he rushed for 2500 yards. The family was certain that he'd receive an athletic scholarship to a major or mid-level college. In spite of his ideal build and proven ability, Travis Neely did not receive a single offer. West Virginia University expressed some interest, but only if he'd bulk up and become a blocking fullback. That same university offered a full athletic scholarship to a black halfback from New Jersey whose top speed did not match that of Travis Neely.

The sorry affair did have one positive effect. Outraged, Tom Neely sought out similar incidences of anti-white discrimination. Those searches led him to a pro-white sports site. It also led him to the Mantra. At first Tom refused to believe that his race was facing more than discrimination, but reality began to gnaw at his resistance and in the end he came to believe that whites were also facing genocide. He read of the horrible crimes in South Africa and Zimbabwe, with neither nation facing serious international repercussions. He saw the constant import of non-white masses, from Africa and the Middle East as well as Latin America into what were once the white nations of North America and Europe. He could no longer deny that white nations and only white nations were forced to accept massive non-white immigration. With the assimilation of non-white masses, the unique genetic heritage of the white race - such as red hair and blue eyes - was in dire peril of disappearing. The final straw of his re-

sistance broken, Tom came to agree with his wife on the matters of white survival and pride in white accomplishment.

If the men present at the bar did not understand Bill's cryptic statement none of them asked him to explain. There were boundaries developing. It was instinctual. In a nation where an innocent racial comment can cost a white man his job, asking too many questions can create distrust that is difficult if not impossible to overcome. Everyone let Bill's comments stand as they were, although two members believed they knew exactly what Bill was talking about. One chose not to mention it; at the end of the meeting John Bowen shook Bill's hand and assured him he'd be back next Saturday. The other was Garret Fogarty. He did not ask Bill to explain. He did approach the Donnelly patriarch after all the other members had left.

Garret was dapper and handsome as usual. Though he was of Irish descent on both sides, to Bill Garret looked like some kind of Swedish knight or prince. Anna also thought of him in that way. Bill was Bill; strong and a little on the portly side, the top two buttons of his shirt unfastened. It was obvious that he was a moody man but had complete control of his emotions. Bill could tell that Garret had some kind of question that he might not be willing to answer. It wasn't wrong for Garret to ask, or for Bill to refuse.

Bill noticed that Garret remained and approached the young man after the session in the bar.

"How have you been Garret?" Bill asked out of genuine goodwill as well as the desire to start the conversation in a friendly manner.

"I'm fine, Bill," Garret said. "And you and the family, well I hope?"

"Good," Bill said, "Good. Family's good too, thank you. What's on your mind? Usually you're out with Johnny Bowen."

"I don't know who you're recruiting for, but I believe you have good reasons for what you're doing here," Garret said, "But please be careful, Bill, even more careful than you have been. This isn't County Tyrone. The Supergrasses here work for free."

"How do you know I'm not one of them?" Bill asked, "I could have set up this society with the government's blessing to bring down men like you."

"You wouldn't dishonor David's memory by becoming a traitor," Garret said.

He never altered his stare from Bill's eyes, even when his words had the effect he knew they would. Bill was speechless for a full minute. His mouth was closed tight. Then he nodded. A little smile came to him.

"I'm not the only one feelin' people out, recruiting as you say," Bill said, "I'll take your advice up to a point. But sometimes we have to trust. If we can't ever trust then we don't have a future, do we?"

"No, we don't," Garret said, "You're a good man, Bill. I urge you to be more cautious."

"OK, my boy," Bill said. "Come by the place sometime soon. Bring Johnny and Gary, Anna too if you'd like."

Garret gives Bill his regards and then departs. Bill expected a question that he would be unwilling to answer. Instead the two men got a strong feel for each other. Bill trusted that they did so as allies.

A pleasant surprise awaited the membership in the waning days of July. It was well known that Megan Donnelly and her daughter Sinead had lovely singing voices. Anna's voice was also melodic though her lack of training and dearth of natural talent made her easily the third best of the three. When Jesse and her surprising *contralto* voice joined in, Anna fell to fourth place. On the last Saturday of July the ladies decided to treat the men to a song. One song became three when Megan convinced Bill to sing *Danny Boy*.

The musical interlude seemed to be ending when Austin Kelly whispered something to Jimmy Ford, who went outside to his black Ram Charger. He returned carrying an acoustic guitar. One of the hobbies that Ford had picked up in middle school was music. William Ford revoked Jimmy's online gaming privileges when Jimmy resisted his father's attempts to toughen him up. When the father finally relented, instead of allowing James to return to his old habits, he made his son an offer: Jimmy could take lessons in an instrument of his choice, or in whatever art he preferred.

He chose guitar. At first he practiced in order to win back his gaming "rights". As Ford became more and more physically fit, he found that the guitar was actually a lot more interesting and challenging than fighting make-believe monsters with a keyboard. His pride and courage came from real-life achievements rather than fake electronic ones. When William told him that he could continue gaming, James Ford all but refused. That year he turned sixteen and for his birthday William bought Jimmy the guitar that he would eventually play at the Celtic Society.

For an amateur and part-time musician, Ford was excellent. He could hit F minor without visible difficulty. He played an instrumental version of "She Talks to Angels" and an acoustic version of "Soul for Every Cowboy." There was no applause for a little while after he finished. The shock was too great.

Ford's performance made Anna feel a little self-conscious. Though she had little time for singing lessons and did not want to give up her many other hobbies and activities, there were occasions over the next two years when she'd ask Megan Donnelly for any help that she could offer. Megan was happy to assist. Anna's singing did improve. It was still raw and amateur and fourth-best of the four, but the gap between them narrowed a little.

Outside the Donnelly clan, Gary was the first to notice the spark between Rian Donnelly and the lovely Jessica Hanratty. In August the two began holding hands. They didn't kiss or show any other signs, at least not around the membership, but they did hold hands and that meant the other niceties weren't far behind. At first Gary was surprised that Jesse and Sean Collopy didn't end up in a relationship. When he thought about it, this result made more sense. Sean was a nice boy but a bit frivolous and prone to exaggeration. Gary had gotten to know Rian as a serious and mature young man. At twenty years of age, he was two years Jesse's senior. His glasses did nothing to diminish his Irish good looks. Rian was not a man of many words but when he spoke he did so with confidence and level-headedness. He was also able-bodied and had an air of determination and conviction. Gary wished that more young white men would behave in that manner.

Rian was already a skilled motocross driver. Ford once told Gary about Rian's untamed streak. He'd let it show whenever he got behind the wheel. He wasn't reckless; he was just damn good at maneuvering a vehicle, even at speed.

"If you ever need to get to the hospital fast and in one piece," Jimmy said, "he's the man to call."

In September Tom Dwyer left the Society. The Upper Big Branch mine explosion had claimed his sister's husband and now he had to devote his extra monies for the care of her three children. The drive to Cumberland from Gorman, West Virginia, took well over an hour. With the price of gas rising to four dollars a gallon, he could no longer afford the money or even the time he spent on the Society. With heavy heart, Dwyer gave up yet another hobby in order to do what a man has to do. Gary hoped they'd keep in touch, but aside from Christmas cards, it was not to be. Bill was the last one to bid Dwyer farewell. Though it took effort, he convinced Tom to accept a donation for his sister's family. The membership had given what they could and Bill more than matched it. It was inside a sealed envelope which Dwyer did not open in front of the others. He thanked them with sincerity and then departed from their lives.

For a long time after the “Big Meeting” Gary wished that his friend Dwyer could have been present. From private conversations he realized that Tom loved his race with the same depth as Gary Murphy. But then, no one, not even Bill, intended the “Big Meeting” conversation to evolve into a pivotal event. It just happened that way.

The beginning of the “Big Meeting” was light-hearted and humdrum. Bill mentioned a trip to Blackwater Falls and there was talk of having a supper meeting at the Schnitzel House in Dailey, but both Gary and Garret considered the distance too great for an afternoon outing. Megan brought the men some soda bread, which hit the spot after the restaurant discussion had made everyone hungry.

Again it was Robert McKenna who changed the direction of the conversation and sparked what would be called the “Big Meeting”. After two months of wearing a beard his face was clean-shaven and he looked years younger.

“I was thinking about something that some of you men might find interesting,” he said, “I’m gonna make the assumption that none of you guys are gonna whine if I say ‘nigger’ or some shit like that, so I don’t think anyone’s gonna throw a hissy fit when I tell you what’s on my mind. I mean, we’ve been pretty relaxed with our jokes and discussions.”

McKenna looked at Johnny Bowen.

“I don’t know if any of you saw that YouTube video where the white woman and her boy get beat by a pack of niggers. I see shit like that any time I do a search. Everyone says they’d do something about it if they were there when it happened. So why isn’t someone there?”

The others became quiet. Bill Donnelly, Johnny Bowen, Garret Forgarty, Gary Murphy, Tom Neely, Austin Kelly, Jimmy Ford, Rian Donnelly, Mason Walker, O’Toole, John McShane, and Kevin Toomey were the others in attendance. Aaron Van Dyke was off on an excursion in some God-awful Asian country.

“There’s nothin’ illegal about ‘dojos’ and boxing clubs. So why not teach white kids how to fight?” McKenna said, “No one has to say it’s racial or any shit like that. You don’t have to teach them to hate Jews or that kind of stuff. I’d say everything should be positive, proactive.” He took a swig of Guinness. “But teach ‘em to fight like hell, the best way you can. You don’t have to teach them some racial agenda but teach ‘em how to fight well and how to put down an opponent for good.”

Bill rubbed his chin. Garret looked at Bill and then back at McKenna.

“That’s a good fucking idea, Rob,” Johnny said, “The goddamned Feds would be on it like shit on flies, but in principle it’s a good idea.”

"I thought about the risks," Robert said, "I think one way around them is to have it all private. For example, I'd ask Gary if he wants Anna to learn self-defense..."

"Yes," Gary said, "I want that a lot."

McKenna smiled. He didn't mind the interruption since it came from a kindred spirit.

"You were saying?" Gary said.

"I'd ask you and you'd say yes, so I 'd have another pupil for the class," Robert said, "Then Gary could ask Bill, for example, and he might have kids he wants trained, and so it would go. No one would advertise. There'd be an adult class too, so after Bill learns he could go out and train John Doe's kids, and John Doe could one day train Joe Blow's kids."

"You'd have to be really careful which adults you allowed to train in the adult class," said Garret, who wasn't drinking today. "On the one hand there are the authorities who would destroy your martial arts club like they did the Branch Davidians. On the other hand you'd have to try and keep pedophiles and anti-whites from going out and starting branches with your blessing. If that happened no one would ever trust you again. Not to mention what the media would do."

"They'd tear you a new asshole," Johnny said, "Any sign of white resistance, even self-defense is going to have the kikes screaming 'Holo-caust!' and bringing in the fucking feds and the snipers."

"I think you could avoid that, as much as anyone can," Robert said, "I'd choose guys I knew real well, Bill would choose guys he knew he could trust, and so on. Oh, I thought about the pedophiles too. Parents would be encouraged to sit in. And like I said, there'd be no overt racial tone. We'd train white kids, and only white kids, but that'd be the one prerequisite. What me and Bill and Gary do on our free time is our business."

"If those fucks in law enforcement saw it that way," Johnny said, "we could start this shit tomorrow. If you're serious about this you're going to have to figure out ways to keep it secret. Since you'll be dealing with pre-teens and teens, good luck."

"I know," McKenna says, "It's a work in progress. I'm not here to bull-shit you, though. There's enough of that on the internet, tough guys telling everyone to act but not one of them doin' shit. I propose we start with our own. We get trained up; at least we can learn how to protect one another. Maybe a club function, huh Bill? If you don't mind, you could close membership for now and we'd do this shit among ourselves."

"I don't mind any interesting idea," Bill said, "and this is quite interesting."

Garret, who had experience with his own “fight club”, hung on every word.

“Who can fight?” Gary asked, “What I’m saying is, who’s trained and who knows how to train? I’m not talking about beating down some loser. I can do that. I’m talking about showing Anna how to protect herself, not some big fucker like me.”

O’Toole put both hands on Bowen’s shoulders.

“Here’s your man,” he said, “and he has the scars to prove it. Show ‘em your chest.”

“Nope,” Johnny said. “But I’d be willing to teach what I know. This is actually a good idea.”

Bill glanced at him. Bowen took a drink from his beer.

“Some of us could start learning from outside sources,” Garret said, “It doesn’t matter who created a system or who currently promotes it. I don’t mind if it’s Oriental. If we can use it to protect and teach our youth then it’s valuable for us to learn it.”

“Gary,” Johnny said, “I wanted to get back to something you said because it’s important and I do give a shit. Shut up, Cristi! Even a big fuck like you should rely on more than brute strength. You could really get fucked up that way.”

“Brian Poehler did,” Cristi said.

“Who’s that?” Gary asked.

“I’ll tell you sometime,” Johnny said. He looked at O’Toole and shook his head. “Stop that shit,” Johnny said.

“We’d need a private place to train,” Robert said, “I wouldn’t trust a gym.”

“I’d suggest a place but it might be too far for some of you,” Garret said, “and I’d have to run the idea past a relative. It’s a possibility.”

“Seriously,” Jimmy Ford said, “I’ve had a fair amount of aikido but I’d like to learn street fighting, if that’s what we’re talking about. I’ve heard about Special Forces training and shit like that, and my brother’s got all of MacYoung’s books and he’s done a lot of practice. I’ll talk to him.”

“Good,” Robert said, “Thanks, Jimmy.”

“I can see your goal is to teach young whites to defend themselves,” Bill said, “It’s an admirable goal, for a lot of reasons. It’ll keep them occupied with somethin’ positive and it’ll help them stay fit. I’d imagine you’d see less of them engaging in self-destructive behaviors. The self-esteem they’d get would help a great deal, too.”

“There’d be fewer dysfunctional nerds,” Johnny said, “The last thing we need is a bunch of pussies whining about not getting dates and pay-

ing lip service to feminists and faggots because they think that's the way into a white girl's pants."

"Amen," Jimmy said.

"Please, Johnny," Gary said with a smile, "Don't hold back on our account."

"Aren't you interested in this?" Mason asked McShane. McShane, his arms crossed, nodded. "Hey Rob," Mason said, "I was gonna ask you if you were ever a bouncer. Maybe you could show me some of your stuff. I want in on this from the start if that's OK with you."

"I imagine it'll take up most of your free time," said McKenna.

"I'll do it," Mason said, "Whenever you can get together, just text me, OK?"

"It's still an idea, Mason," McKenna said, "But I'll let you know if anything comes out of it."

Mason couldn't help but look a little disappointed as he nodded. Garret watched him while McKenna spoke. He looked at McShane, who shared Bill's corporal genetics. He was already becoming a mountain of a man. With proper training, he could become a fearsome opponent. Toomey was too thin to match his friend in power. He was the kind that Garret would keep an eye on during his fighting days. Toomey was smart and quiet. Guys like him always seemed to have speed. If that were true in Kevin's case, he could become a deceptive and devastating fighter. This was a fascinating development. Garret would help it bear fruit if he possibly could.

"I just came for a beer," Austin said, "But now we're getting' into some cool-ass shit. I'm in."

"Tom," Gary said, "Are you OK with this? If we started some kind of training program, just the membership and our kids, would you be OK with that?"

Gary liked Tom Neely and hoped the doctor would not object to what Gary considered an excellent idea.

"What I've seen, Gary... Anything that might spare a white child the pain and misery I've seen, I'm all for it. I was thinking about something though. We need to include some firearms practice, just in case. You know, worst-case scenarios don't go away just because you hide from them. Bad things can happen to anyone. I've seen it. Me and Sarah would appreciate learning to shoot just in case. God forbid, we ever have to, but we'd better learn how."

Tom looked up for a moment and his mind flashes over the gunshot wounds he's seen at the ER. "Nowhere's safe anymore."

"Another great idea," Johnny said, "The way shit's going, self-defense training better include firearms."

"While I agree," McKenna said, "I still think the emphasis should be on unarmed self-defense. Kids in a school environment will have to rely on their fists."

"Makes sense," Gary said. He'd taken pains to make Anna proficient with a pistol. She preferred to practice with her rifle, but Gary made sure she spent a little time with his .45 and Michael Murphy's 9mm H&K. "But I'd like to see some firearms training."

He'd already paid for Anna's birthday gift, which bore the names "Smith" and "Wesson".

McKenna was getting a little nervous from Bill's relative silence. He didn't expect Rian to talk, but the father was being a little less gregarious than usual.

The groups continued to discuss fine points and personal preferences. There were some minor disagreements over particulars but the general idea met with overall approval. The notable exception was Bill, who said very little. Robert McKenna hoped Bill might make some declaration before it was time for everyone to go home, but no statement was forthcoming. McKenna could see the idea falling into the dustbin. Next week they'd have something else to discuss. He promised himself that he'd carry on alone if necessary.

Megan Donnelly realized the serious nature of the men's discussion and had already left with Sinead. Bill called McKenna aside while Rian loaded the Cherokee and cooled down the interior. Bill unfolded and donned his herringbone hat as Robert approached. It was hot for September.

"What is it, Bill?" Robert asked.

He was prepared for a falling out. If that occurred, he would not renounce his ideas or his convictions. He'd wish Bill well and depart.

"I think your idea's a damn fine one," Bill said.

McKenna was prepared for the inevitable "But..." Even the mildest pro-white stance would trigger hysteria and accusations of racism on the part of both liberals and conservatives. There was no doubt now that Bill was sympathetic. Even the sympathetic had reservations about being called racist.

"Let me know what you need," Bill said, "I'm putting up a building on my property. Maybe we can work something out."

McKenna was stunned. All he could say was "thank you". Robert McKenna knew that he did not have the talent to play in the NHL. He'd

planned on playing a few more years in the ECHL and then hanging up his skates. At the start of the day's meeting he did not know that he'd already played his last game. He'd answer a different calling from that day forward. "Dullahan" - the name McKenna would eventually give to his self-defense idea - was born.

Johnny Bowen, his longtime friend Cristi and Garret Fogarty had taken to meeting on Saturday evenings. After the Society gathering would end, the three would drive to Bowen's flat in Deer Park and have a couple more beers.

"It's not enough," Johnny Bowen said.

"What's not enough?" Cristi asked.

The three sat on plastic chairs inside the garage. The door was raised to allow some air to circulate. Bowen's beat-up old Jeep was down the driveway. The sun was setting on a hot and dry September day.

"McKenna's idea," Johnny said. He looked at Garret. "What do you think?"

"You drive a semi, right?" Garret said.

"No shit," Johnny said.

Garret had known that since he met John Bowen.

"When are you going to replace that old Wrangler?" Garret asked.

"Next year," Johnny said.

"You already know what I think," Garret said, "You knew a year ago."

"Eight months ago, actually" Johnny said, "When you pulled that shit about not being a narc."

"Why ask?" Garret asked.

"Is anything certain?" Johnny said, "We don't know what the fuck to do. At least McKenna's got a good idea. I hope he pulls it off. It just doesn't go far enough."

"No," Garret said, "It doesn't."

"I'd like to see our boys and girls learn how to fight," Johnny said, "McKenna says it won't be nothing overtly racial, but there has to be something. We're fighting lifetimes of anti-white indoctrination. At least have a discussion of the Mantra. Something. Put it in a notebook with their techniques."

"I agree with that," Cristian said, "I want this to happen but I don't want to train a bunch of SWPL faggots. Those assholes will corrupt anything we try and they'll be the first to call the pigs, crying about fucking hate speech."

"There could be two classes," Garret said, "One for those still sleeping, one for those awake or awakening. The first class will have subtle

presentation of racial reality. The second will be more overt, with a Mantra introduction."

"SWPL classes too?" Cristi asked.

"No," Garret said, "They disown us and virtually 99% of our race. They'll have to survive as best they can. I hope some of them will come around before it's too late."

"Fuck the parents," Johnny said, "The way they're setting up every white child for terror and death, they deserve to be ass-raped by niggers."

"I was referring to their children," Garret said.

"So was Johnny," said O'Toole who began to laugh.

"Fuck you," Johnny said.

"I think we should support McKenna's idea as an excellent first step," Garret said, "It won't hurt to get all of us trained. I know Gary's in and that means Anna."

"Do you know how important that is?" Johnny asked.

"Which part?" Garret asked.

"Anna," Johnny said, "The anti-whites have done a hell of a job dividing us. White women saying they're women without the white part, saying they're members of minority groups and standing with niggers who'd rape them if given the chance, all to knock Whitey down."

"Anna's not like that," Garret said, "But I think I know what you're getting at. When white women begin to think of themselves as white again, we've won a massive victory."

"Good luck getting through," Cristi said.

"Don't underestimate them," Garret said, "These divisions are artificial. Was African hypersexual behavior always considered Alpha behavior? No. When we were strongest it was one man, one woman, with strength and love. They loved each other, they loved their white children and they loved their race. How was it in Vlad Tepes' time?" Garret knew that half-Romanian O'Toole held Vlad "the Impaler" in the highest esteem. Garret and Bowen had come to consider the much-maligned Romanian warrior with similar respect and appreciation.

"Like you said," Cristi said, "His wife gave her life so that the Turks couldn't rape her. Thanks to that fuckhead Stoker everyone thinks he's a monster. Sometimes you have to do ugly shit or your people go extinct. It's just that simple. Ohfff...If we had men and women like those..."

"We can and we will," Garret said, "Nobility and righteousness aren't dead, you know."

"We need to figure out a course of action," Johnny said, "McKenna's got a good start. Now it's our turn."

"Do you want to talk to Jimmy Ford?" Cristi asked.

"I will," Garret said, "I have high hopes for him, but I temper them with reality."

"I think Ford 'll come through," said the often-pessimistic Bowen, "He's not afraid of the nigger word and I think he's got something inside. I think when the shit hits the fan he's a fighter."

"Mason?" Cristi asked, continuing what was becoming an impromptu evaluation of the Society membership.

"Him and Toomey are a little too young and inundated with anti-white propaganda," Garret said, "At the same time, they give me a lot of hope. I think they're about to awaken and if we treat it right they'll become conscious of what we face as a race."

"Tom?" Cristi said.

"I wasn't sure," Johnny said, "but he was quick to ask for more than unarmed training. That being said, he could be a narc but I doubt it."

"We'll find out," Garret said, "but my instinct says you're right."

"Kelly's like a lot of guys," Johnny said, "He'll say nigger and I think he'd beat the fuck out of one if he touched his sister. But there's a lot of guys like that and I find they never ever start this kind of talk. Sure, they'll agree when you say something. But, you know, he might be more than that. We'll just have to see." Bowen shakes his head. "It's always that way. We march to oblivion and the best we can do is 'We'll have to see. Time will tell.' Jesus Christ already!"

"Keep spreading the Mantra on-line," Garret said, "That's the best thing for now. In the long run I think it's the best thing, period. You're right, though. Time is growing short and the anti-whites will get frantic if they see any resistance, and they'll use all the power they have to destroy it. It's going to get ugly."

"I don't think the internet warriors realize how ugly this could get," Cristian said, "even if we never fight back with more than words. The enemy will shed blood. Fuck, they already have. They just do it through stooges and proxies. It'll get a lot worse."

"At least we don't have any false illusions," Garret said, "I guarantee I'm not the only one carrying."

In fact, each of them was carrying a .45 automatic pistol.

"Our side points to douche bags like Dees and Foxman and all the big-name white traitors and says that they're the ones killing us," Johnny said, "But as bad as those cocksuckers are, it's bullshit. Without their army of anti-white fucking stooges, they're nothing. Without all those white traitors they can't do shit to us."

It was a statement that echoed the voice in Garret's inner soul.

When Aaron Van Dyke looked up from the counter to see who'd just entered his father's store, he saw the familiar face of Garret Fogarty. The two shared a similar outward appearance though Van Dyke's hair was now shorter than Garret's. Based on physique and attire, either could have been a mountain climber or snowboarder - or both. There was no uniform requirement and Van Dyke wore jeans and a short-sleeve shirt with collar. Garret was dressed casual; more than usual, in fact. He, too, wore jeans and a plaid Alfani shirt. To the unknowing observer, the two might have been discussing a future expedition, or perhaps Garret was asking Van Dyke what types of ice axes he had in stock. The store sold supplies for all sorts of mountaineering and outdoor endeavors.

"Hi, Garret," Van Dyke said.

"Aaron," said Garret, who glanced at the young male worker who was stocking a shelf behind the counter. "Do you have five minutes?"

"Sure," he said, "Audi, could you cover the register? I'll be back in five minutes. Thanks."

The two stepped outside into the September warmth. Rain clouds gathered on the horizon but the morning was gorgeous.

"I just got back a couple of days before the last meeting," Aaron said, "I was too bushed to drop by."

"That's what I'd like to talk to you about," Garret said, and turned toward Aaron. His blue eyes could pierce a man to the bone.

"Not long ago you mentioned what happened here, how that helped open your eyes to what we face as a race." Garret did not mince words, though he kept his voice down for Aaron's sake. "We kicked around an idea that might be of interest to you, especially in light of what happened. We'd like to set up a self-defense training program. We'd teach each other and our loved ones how to protect ourselves. Everything would be confidential. There wouldn't be any advertising or anything public."

Van Dyke looks up, into Garret's eyes.

"Let me think about it," he said, "That's a huge step, in my opinion."

"Would you be against such a thing on moral grounds?" Garret asked.

"Absolutely not," Aaron said.

This time he did not look down.

Garret shook Van Dyke's hand.

"I appreciate that," he said.

Occasionally, over the course of the work day, Aaron Van Dyke wondered about 24-year-old Derrick Hunthausen, who was still suffering terri-

bly as a result of a gunshot wound. He was manning the cash register at the Van Dyke's store when a black criminal robbed the place and shot him before leaving.

Maybe it's time we take some kind of stand, Aaron thought, even if it's just self-defense training.

In November, Bill announced the impending end of the little Celtic Society. He'd hoped to keep the club going for another two years. It was an unhappy announcement even for those forewarned. For Gary and Anna the announcement came as a shock. Money and inconvenience were not the reason for the demise. Bill believed he had found the core of dedicated people that he hoped to attract when he founded the society. During the penultimate meeting, which took place in November, Bill met with Gary and urged him to visit the Donnelly Homestead. He told them that there'd always be a place at the table for the Murphy father and daughter.

After the meeting, Bill yelled to the Murphy's from the door of his Cherokee. Beneath his soft hat Bill was all smiles. Gary was surprised at Bill's demeanor. He figured the entire Donnelly clan would be upset with the impending demise of the Celtic Club.

"Come by the farm tomorrow," he said, "I have a nice little surprise," he told them.

The last meeting of the society did not mean an end to the relationships that had grown among the "core" members. That next Friday, Jesse accepted the Donnelly's invitation to have early dinner at their Lemont Furnace homestead. Afterward, Rian took Jesse to a ballet performance in Pittsburgh. It was their first "official" date.

On a Sunday in early December, Gary and Anna paid Bill a visit to his spacious farm off of Old Braddock Road. The two had been to the house, and now Bill gave them a tour of the grounds. He showed them a little workshop in the forest, and the field where his small herd of cattle grazed. There was a small parking lot beside an unfinished structure. The tour finished with the surprise: a rectangular building that Gary had seen from the outside but had never entered. When Bill led the two inside, Gary could tell that it was an indoor shooting range.

"Come by any time," Bill said.

Both Murphy's smiled at the offer.

Every remaining member of the Celtic Society showed up for the final meeting. Even old Bill Cunningham, who'd missed the last eight meetings, managed to attend. He trimmed his hair and white beard for this special occasion. Bill had called him and told him the news, and with cane in hand he showed up for the last hurrah.

During the meeting there was music and dancing and a few more beers than usual. There was no hint of loss or disappointment, just fun and laughs from folks who had no intention of losing track of one another. Mason ate too much Donegal crab pie and Gary relaxed his rules and permitted Anna a single bottle of Guinness. Jimmy Ford and the Neely's exchanged contact information while Rian and Jesse shared a dance. Jesse was stunning in her dark purple dress. Anna matched her in a white dress with green and red floral pattern. The white bow in her thick red hair completed the lovely ensemble. Gary and Anna also shared a dance, and then John Bowen replaced Gary as her partner. John McShane wasn't quite so dour that day; he was lively enough to play the *bodhran* while Ford strummed his guitar.

In two weeks it would be Christmas. Bill invited the membership to his place on Christmas Eve. Nearly everyone made plans to attend. When the "core" began to depart from the old florist's shop, Bill and Megan Donnelly remained to turn out the lights for the final time. For lovely Megan, it was all she could do not to shed a tear. For Bill it was a step toward something much larger - the main reason he'd created the club, in fact. He now had the core group he'd dreamt of creating before he left Ireland.

Laurel Highlands High no longer called the Christmas Holiday "Christmas". To the administration it was "Winter Break". Unlike some schools, however, Laurel Highlands did not enforce a strict suppression of the actual holiday. Most students would still say "Merry Christmas" instead of "Happy Winter Break." Even if the school administration had been totalitarian in their oppression, no amount of political correctness could erase the anticipation of the coming holiday. Most of the students shared the ebullience of Anna Murphy, who could not wait for the Friday before Christmas vacation to arrive. There were still six school days until the big moment but the students' attentions were beginning to drift away from boring lessons and droning professors.

There were exceptions, of course. Greg Stanek was not thinking about his classes, but neither was he anticipating the impending holiday. Recently he had become infatuated with Anna. Anna had become undoubtedly the most attractive girl at Laurel Highlands High, but she was neither condescending nor mean. Unlike many girls who were far less attractive than her, Anna was confident and she was kind, and she treated people with civility. Greg had seen her hanging with Elijah McClure, who was a decent enough guy. Elijah even talked to Greg on occasion and the two sometimes shared conversations on Facebook. Anna was different than most of the other girls. Not a lot of them got along with her, other than

Missy Snyder and Lindsay Templeton, who were known as “tomboys” and “farm girls”. Anna didn’t need heavy makeup nor did she wear it. Lipstick - sometimes an interesting shade of blue - and blue eye shadow were the extent of her cosmetic applications. Though she didn’t dress like a “Goth”, the general consensus was that she was a throwback to the “Goth” fad. Greg couldn’t figure out why Anna, if she was a “Goth” or “Emo” seemed to be happy most of the time, or at least energetic and active. Most guys didn’t care; Anna had a hauntingly beautiful face and her lovely and strong body was well on its way to being a perfect match for such a gorgeous face. Greg was stunned that there wasn’t some powerful linebacker or tall basketball player attached to her arm.

Greg was not ugly. His face had fine features and his hazel-green eyes were bright and expressive. His light brown hair was a little long and very well manicured. His body, however, was a disaster. Had genetics given him a predisposition to obesity, he’d have weighed three hundred pounds. Aside from live-action role playing on one or two Saturdays a month, he never practiced physical fitness or even mild calisthenics. His diet was miserable. When his mother wasn’t serving him fast food to eat, she was heating up a microwave meal. It was a miracle that Greg escaped the ravages of obesity and acne.

There could be no denying that Gregory James Stanek was a nerd. It wasn’t his pursuits that made him one, though the on-line gaming marathons and dressing like a sorcerer did not help him correct his personality flaws. Neither did his home life; his passive-aggressive mother divorced his malleable father after her affair with a more aggressive male. That male had no intention of making Mrs. Stanek his wife; he was gone within two weeks of the divorce. Meanwhile, Greg, who had a scrawny body and a very large head for his size, had a predictable bully problem. Mrs. Stanek was too busy chasing a doctor to encourage her son to face his own shortcomings and then deal with the bully like a man. It was easier for her to complain to the school, which demonstrated its commitment to protecting its vulnerable students by enacting new anti-bullying measures. It did little to help Stanek. White males soon found themselves excluded from the “victims” list, and any who fought back suffered the same punishment as the bully.

A week before the Christmas of Greg and Anna’s junior year, Greg was feeling depressed and lonely. He’d all but lost hope that he’d ever have a girlfriend. Like most nerds, he did not blame his own failings for his inability to impress a girl. It was always somebody else’s fault, or some abstraction like “society” or the “patriarchy.” At the same time, his lack of

self-esteem made him passive around females. He lived in a cycle of laziness and self-pity that made his prediction of a life alone much more likely to come true.

Anna was different, he told himself. He'd wanted to ask her out for a month or two. Though her friend Elijah was a polite and moral young man, Greg feared his reaction should he find out that the nerd was interested in Anna. But now Elijah and Anna seemed to be just friends. Anna's beauty was astounding and growing as she matured. Greg figured he'd have little time before a stronger, more desirable male made a pass at her. He decided to make a move.

Anna was always beautiful, but to Greg she seemed even more so that Friday afternoon. He saw her standing beside the stairway window. Her snow-white skin matched the pristine whiteness from last night's Alberta Clipper. She was wearing jeans and a snug turtleneck sweater; her hair was in a long red ponytail. A lot of guys should have beaten him to the draw and asked her out, but it didn't appear that anyone had done so. Many guys stared at her before and after she passed them. They started with her face, and progressed to her chest and then her rear as she continued walking. Greg was one of them. He did not know why she didn't have a boyfriend. He just knew that he wanted her.

Six times Greg thought he had the courage to ask her. Five times he was wrong. The sixth attempt would be his last for the day, and maybe for all time. Perhaps desperation is what gave him an extra bit of courage. Whatever the reason, as Anna waited for her Aunt Hannah to pick her up, Greg came over to her.

"Hey, Anna," he said as he stepped around a red F250 that was parked to her left.

Anna looked at him. The wind blew and it was cold outside. Anna looked gorgeous as well as adorable in her brown toboggan. There was a little mushroom on the front.

"Hi, Greg," she said.

The fact that she didn't ignore him gave Greg a modicum of relief. Anna checked him out, as is normal for any human with a pulse. His face was cute, but the rest of him was skin and bones. His full backpack looked like it would pull him to the ground and anchor his flailing body in place. Anna forced herself not to laugh at the mental image.

Greg tried to look into her blue eyes, but could not. He rubbed his head and scratched an itch that didn't exist.

"I was thinking," he said, "maybe you and I could hook up some time?"

She was hoping he wouldn't do this. Most girls wouldn't hesitate to destroy him. If he were black, most white girls would be polite to him, even if they had absolutely no interest. Of course this would encourage further attempts with other white girls. But to a weak white male, they'd be ruthless. It always pained Anna to see such white-on-white cruelty. At the same time, she deserved more than a spineless mollycoddle. What, exactly, would he do if his woman or - more important - their children faced harm? Would he fight if he had to? If he faced a resolute enemy, would he kill?

"Sorry, Greg," she said, "I'm not interested in dating or hooking up until I'm seventeen."

Gary laid down that rule. In fact, on his short list of inviolable rules, dating and sexual relations were at the top.

"What about Elijah?" he asked out of spite.

He regretted having done so as soon as the words left his mouth.

"We're friends, Greg" she said with obvious annoyance in her voice. "Melissa McLaughlin's his girlfriend."

"I'm sorry," he said, "I mean...I'm just...I'll leave you alone." He started to trudge away.

"Wait, Greg!" she said. "I want to say something. Hear me through, OK? Promise?"

"OK," he said as he shuffled back to her, his head hung low.

He wouldn't be surprised if she insulted him. If he was sure, he would have already left. Girls have emasculated him before. Anna had a dignity and sincerity that lifted her above the others. He knew she was compassionate as well. He had hopes that she would not be cruel.

"You need to get stronger, Greg," she said, "Not for any girl; do it for you. I know you didn't ask, but please listen. You need to start working out and eating right. I know you can do it. Believe it or not, you're not ugly, Greg. Actually," she says and smiles, "you're kinda cute." Then her face gets serious, almost like she's pleading. "But you don't give a girl any reason to have faith in you. You need to get into shape."

He misinterprets her plea.

"It's easy for a girl to say shit like that," he said.

She figured he'd get defensive. She slides her right arm out of her coat, and then she looks around to see if anyone is looking.

"Look here," she said.

When the coast was clear she flexed her right bicep. The long-sleeve turtleneck was tight enough that the size of her arm was easy to see.

"I'm a girl," she said.

Greg felt a wave of shame. *She's going to be cruel after all*, he thought. Then she continued speaking and proved him wrong.

"I've been diving for nine years," Anna said, "I bet in two years you can pass me up in arm strength."

He didn't flex his arm; they both knew it's quite a bit smaller than hers.

"Is that what really matters?" he asked, "Looking like a jock?"

"Strength does matter, Greg," she said, "So does commitment. If a guy won't get his body into shape, what's that say about his commitment? Or his discipline? I'm not sayin' become an asshole. I'm not interested in assholes or bullies or wiggers." Greg raised an eyebrow when she uses the "w" word. "Look," she said, "I won't get two white guys into a fight. I fucking hate girls who do that. In fact, if a girl does that around me, I'll kick her ass." Greg could imagine that she could beat up any girl at Laurel Highlands, even the seniors. "I'm not going to start shit between two of my white brothers, but I might need my boyfriend to fight. There are bad people and sometimes a man has to fight."

His sigh was quite loud.

"I could use some upper body strength," he said.

So far all he's thought about is himself. He didn't notice that she said "white brothers".

"Work out for six months," she said, "And then show me your arms. I'll bet you get a lot bigger if you stick with it."

Three months ago, Anna overheard John Bowen talking to Mason Walker. He mentioned a "test". If a white person failed the test, a serious relationship with that person was highly inadvisable. "Say 'nigger'," Johnny told Mason, "See how they react. No use moving forward with the relationship if they can't handle a simple word."

Anna decided to administer the test. If Greg failed, there was no use wasting more time trying to steer him toward manhood.

"Like I said, I won't start fights between dudes," she said, "but someday, some nigger's gonna paw at me and my boyfriend's gonna have to fight him. I won't just stand there and watch. I'd shoot the piece of shit if I could, but if I don't have a gun I can't match a big nigger in strength. I am a girl you know. My boyfriend's gonna have to fight him. He'll have to be strong and know how to fight so he can put the nigger in his place."

Had Anna spoken to him in Akkadian he would have been less surprised. He never could have imagined that she'd violate the strongest of all American taboos and use the "n" word. He looked at her, wondering what to say or do.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"I can't believe you said that!" Greg said.

"If some nigger starts hurtin' my boyfriend, of course I'd shoot him," Anna said, "If I didn't love my boyfriend, he wouldn't be, you know, my boyfriend. Sometimes you have to resort to violence. I'm not just gonna watch my man get hurt!"

"No!" he said, "No, I meant the n-word."

"Nigger?" Anna asked. She starts to laugh. "N-word. Shit, that's funny. C'mon, Greg, no one's listening. We're in the parking lot for Christ's sake!"

"You're trying to get me in trouble!" he said.

"Yeah, right," she said and rolled her eyes. "By saying nigger about ten times, that's how I'm going to get you in trouble. Brilliant plan, huh?"

"I can't believe you're a racist," he said.

He did not hesitate to use the "r-word".

"Goodbye, Greg," she said and turned her head away.

Stanek scurried off, shaking his head in shock and exaggerated disgust.

On the way to Lemont Furnace, Hannah noticed that Anna was quieter than usual. Hannah was still an attractive woman in spite of the stress and long hours of work. She was not the stellar beauty that Mary had been, but she was a loyal and loving wife to Clyde, her husband. She would have been an excellent mother and wanted to be. The "liberated" workplace forced her to work midnight and scramble to find ways to raise her second child without resorting to daycare. Hannah spent years helping Gary take care of Anna, and she could read the girl like a book.

"What's wrong, Anna?" she asked.

Hannah slowed her '95 Impala as it approached icy Starlite Road.

"I was talking to this guy at school," Anna said, "He didn't like it when I said nigger, which doesn't bother me, but before that I was trying to give him a reason to get in shape I flexed my arm to show him what nine years of diving and weights can do. I'm startin' to think it was a mistake. If I ever find a guy who who isn't afraid of a word, I'd like to encourage him to get into shape without accidentally making him feel like a wuss."

"Hmm, that is tough," Hannah said, "Maybe you could say you're pretty strong, much stronger than the average girl. Then tell him how long it took and that he can be stronger than the average guy in a lot shorter time. But don't flex, that was a mistake."

"OK," Anna said, "I'll try that if it ever comes up again."

"Anna, dear," Hannah said, "You were showing off a little, weren't you?"

"Yeah," Anna said, "and now I feel pretty stupid."

"It's alright," Hannah said, "Sounds like you couldn't do much with that one. No boy who's afraid of a word is going to be a man. All his life he'll kiss nigger asses and let women walk all over him. You don't need that. Mary and myself, we got real men. If Mary had behaved like most girls your age she never would have got a strong and decent man like your father. Then when she needed a man she'd have a spineless little wuss or some asshole who screws around on her. When you're of age, look for one who isn't afraid of a word or a woman. And don't get bitchy on him if he tells you you're full of shit sometimes, because sometimes, well, you are."

Anna smiled and a laugh escaped through her nose.

On an early January afternoon, Garret, Johnny Bowen and Cristian O'Toole were having a beer with Bill on the Donnelly Homestead. The air was warm for January and the men sat in the open space of Bill's garage, just as Fogarty and company had done in Deer Park. John Bowen had mentioned an idea to Garret and Cristian and his two kinsmen thought it worthwhile to pursue. They agreed to discuss the plan with Bill. At the time they had no idea whose life it would affect and to what degree.

"Before I tell you what's on my mind," Bowen said to Bill, "I want to mention that we're not here to beg for money. If you think the idea's a good one, then great. If you want to invest along with us, shit, that's even better."

"Understood, Johnny," Bill said.

Though the door was wide open, it was warm enough in the garage for Bill to wear a light jacket. His yellow dress shirt was visible through the unzipped front.

"Good," Johnny said.

He ran his right hand over his arm and rubbed his left bicep. He'd never asked anyone to invest or give money before, and it seemed distasteful for the proud young man.

"Heavy metal, punk, hardcore and alternative all have one thing in common," Johnny said, "They're mostly the white man's music. A lot of the bands are leftist and anti-white, and others get wrapped up in some pussy anti-Christian stupidity that's as lame as it is safe. I know all that or I wouldn't have said it. There are pro-white bands, too, but that's not the most important part. Thing is, those types of music and the genres under them are voices for our young brothers and sisters. It's white rage and white sound and a lot of those bands are highly skilled musicians. Most of us don't know why we have that rage and a lot of us try to drown it in

booze or suffocate it in fucking pot smoke. The music can speak to our youth. I'm not talking about some heavy-handed bullshit or lecturing. What I'm saying is, I'd like to see white musicians who aren't anti-white have an opportunity to play."

Cristian, whose shirt was the same style and almost the same color as Bill's, was next to speak.

"We'd like to open a place where bands can play white man's music and we'd decide who gets a shot and who doesn't," Cristi said, "Kikes and rich traitors do it all the time. That's why there's never any pro-white music on the airwaves. If we could do that, we'd have control over who plays and who can't."

"What would you hope to accomplish in the long term?" Bill asked.

"Provide a location where bands don't have to be politically correct or attack safe targets like whites or Christians," Johnny said, "and at the same time have a club where no drugs or alcohol are permitted, just the bands and the music and the audience. If possible, attendance should be free. This isn't a money-making idea, it's so that we can preserve our music and our voice and get that music and voice out for young whites to hear. In the end we might just convince a few of them that our music and identity are worth preserving."

"It could get violent," Bill said.

"We'd have to be careful of that," Johnny said, "I know that antifa and other pricks would try to cause trouble, so we'd have to be firm and not allow any exceptions. We'd have to deal with any kind of harassment and violence right on the spot. I know there are risks, but I think it's worth it, especially since young whites could listen to music that makes them proud rather than shit that attacks or shames them for being white."

Unlike Bowen and O'Toole, Bill didn't care for the types of music that the two men mentioned. His experience in Ireland taught him the power of sensory stimulation. The murals on the Falls Road and the IRA fight songs had an enormous effect on those less likely to find inspiration in a well-organized speech or debate. It didn't take long for him to decide. He'd already considered a similar possibility, albeit with a different style of music.

"Start looking at property and material costs, and we'll get serious," Bill said.

Garret, who was standing all the while, handed Bill the folder that he was holding in his hand. On the side was the name "Diamond Crossing."

"I knew you were up to something, Mr. Fogarty," Bill said in an exaggerated Irish accent, "Standin' all quiet over there."

Inside the folder were a selection of properties and the cost of suitable structures, with the desired acoustics included. A plot of land near Murrysville was the most promising possibility. There was already a suitable structure at the site and the bankrupt owners were asking for far less than the construction cost.

In upstate New York, the hardcore band *Chironex* was on the verge of a final breakup. No club would accept them, not after their refusal to expunge their "racist" lyrics. Only the lead singer's passion and powers of persuasion held the band together, and even he was approaching wit's end.

In February of the New Year, Irishman John Boyle crossed into the United States. It was a bad time for the crossing, with all the snow and bare trees, but the challenge did not deter Boyle nor did it prevent his success. It wasn't the only border he'd crossed nor was it the second time he'd done such a thing. A native of southern County Armagh, he'd previously traversed the lines between Northern Ireland and the Republic in the south. His new endeavor proved to be much more difficult, but if there was a man up to the task it was John Boyle. At William "Bill" Donnelly's request, friends of the elder Donnelly and his wealthy son Michael helped Boyle find a spot on a private boat headed for Canada. Once the vessel neared the edge of international waters Boyle was left to his own devices. There was a small boat and supplies for a treacherous attempt at a landing. He had little time before patrol aircraft would sight him so Boyle had no choice but to make haste, which increased the chances of death in the cold waters. There would be no aid for this illegal immigrant; no reduction of college tuition or free medical care. His skin was white and he knew that disqualified him from the coddling that Cubans and Vietnamese usually received. In addition, John Boyle was a known member of the Continuity Irish Republican Army.

At the age of sixteen, John had joined Continuity. He was an introspective lad who rarely sang the pub songs or added his voice to the cheers. Boyle had somewhat thin brown hair and a gaunt face that made him look older than his relatively few years. His eyes were blue and intense; he had the stare of a hunter. He was tall and thin but the hard labor of his youth made him powerful and highly resistant to privation and both low and high temperatures. A relative who lived in Belfast went with Continuity when the group split from the Provos and that same relative gave John the opportunity to join the force. He did so without hesitation.

After a year of standard training, Boyle departed for County Tyrone. There he met a seasoned warrior named Bill Donnelly. Bill had been in the

Provos and he too had made the split with CIRA, though he harbored no ill will toward his old organization or the other new fighting force, the Real Irish Republican Army. Bill convinced a retired member of the PIRA to train potential snipers. One highly-regarded candidate was John Boyle, whose phenomenal hand-eye coordination and steady nerves made him a perfect candidate.

For three years Boyle trained in the use of the high-powered rifle. It was a precarious undertaking at times. If caught, he and his instructor would have spent years in Portlaoise Prison. The need for secrecy sent him across the border and into the mountains and bogs of the Republic. By choice he lived in tents and makeshift shelters. He cooked his meals over a campfire and learned to make the most of meager ingredients. Boyle conditioned his mind and body so that he could spend years in the field if necessary. In the final year of his training, he spent time in urban environments: Derry, Armagh, Belfast.

John did not involve himself in the political machinations of the Army or its allies. He saw himself as a soldier for his people, and nothing more. He left the Republican activism for someone else. Usually he was absent or merely present at policy discussions. Boyle would always be ready if CIRA needed him to fight. He wasn't interested in talk.

There was a notable exception to that rule, and it would eventually provoke a major change in John's priorities. Four years after he joined Continuity, he and Bill Donnelly shared a night drive through Tyrone. John had always liked Bill. He enjoyed a pint and a day fishing the Glenelly. Bill was a proud and courageous man who loved his folk and had risked his life for them. Bill could be a loving father when his daughter skinned her knee and he could be a fearless killer. He held dearly to the traditions and he and his beautiful wife taught them to his family. Like Boyle, he spoke fluent Irish, and both men would speak their maternal tongue at every opportunity. That night's conversation was no exception.

During the course of this drive, Bill voiced his gravest concerns to John Boyle. He was deeply worried about developments in the UK. The English people were apparently on their way to extinction; their replacements were Pakistanis, blacks and Asians. There were Muslims of all stripes and Hindus as well. Some of Bill's comrades welcomed this development; Bill abhorred it. Not all Englishmen and not all Ulster Protestants were wicked; not in the least. There were injustices. If Bill believed them solved, he would not have split with the Provos to join Continuity. But the Protestants and the English were white like his Catholic Irish brothers and there was always hope for reconciliation and reunification. With the world

increasingly anti-white and whites a shrinking minority, it was important, Bill said to John Boyle, that the three old adversaries in Northern Ireland put their differences aside and resist the greater menace. When England was majority non-white, how would the non-white invaders treat Northern Ireland? How would they view the Republic, which was still over 96% white? They would flood Northern Ireland with their own and thereby destroy its white population - both Catholic and Protestant. If the Republic resisted, the new enemies could use England's vast arsenal to enforce their will. It was of the utmost import, Bill said, that the IRA includes race and culture in its manifesto alongside rights for Catholics and reunification. That wasn't all, Bill told John. There needed to be open resistance to miscegenation and non-white immigration. Bill was both idealistic and practical. He believed that change could happen peacefully, but it was unlikely. He believed that his Irish brothers and sisters must train and prepare for a long and ugly war.

"We won't forget the past, John," Bill said, "The war's not over. But we must not allow it to condemn us to extinction."

At first Boyle wasn't sure what to make of Bill's impassioned argument. He could see truth in Bill's words though he did not believe the threat to be as great as his friend and mentor thought. So Boyle went on with his life; preparing for battles with the PSNI and the SAS that never came and sharpening his sniping skills all the while.

Two events would change forever the life and convictions of John Boyle. First was the death of Bill's son David. It came just five months after Bill had shared his concerns with John. The circumstances of David Donnelly's murder made Boyle wonder if Bill was right. As yet, however, he did not complete the intellectual journey.

For five more years John Boyle did not alter his lifestyle. Bill Donnelly departed for the United States, which in the meantime declared CIRA to be a terrorist organization in spite of having never harmed an American or attempted a terror attack on American soil. John Boyle remained in Armagh, working in construction and, after hours, as a mechanic. He still served in the CIRA and he still practiced and kept his sniping skills sharp. Twice he had to go into hiding to avoid capture by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Three years after Bill Donnelly left for the States, John Boyle received the order that he'd been training for. He was going to war. No one ever told him the exact reason for the mission, but he believed it had to do with a series of arrests by PSNI against allies in the RIRA. By then, Boyle was a very capable fighter. He had yet to engage in combat, but no

sniper in the CIRA or RIRA for that matter could best his talents. Since he'd be the only one pulling a trigger, those ordering the retributive strike allowed him latitude in choosing the location and the target. He chose to strike in Portadown; he knew the location well, and believed he could make a stealth approach from the south. There were two contacts in the northwest part of the town. He could rely on them to provide support. There would also be a RIRA ally in the vicinity, in case he needed to evacuate in a hurry. John spent three days modifying his camouflaged suit, which came to resemble the "ghillie suits" of American snipers. He confirmed that his weapon - a Parker-Hale bolt action rifle - was in excellent condition. Mounted atop the rifle was a high-powered sniper scope that he had sighted himself. When Boyle met with a sympathizer who supplied ammunition, he was pleased with the choice. The shells came from a quality manufacturer. Boyle would take six rounds for the gun. His preparations made, John left for Portadown.

The wind was light on that warm summer day. John Boyle was already in this chosen shooting place when the sun rose above Ulster. It had taken twenty hours for him to work his way to what he deemed a good position. Now he would have to wait at least eight more for the coming of night. The plan was simple: at his radio signal, there would be a call to the police. Someone would smash into a closed business establishment and a squad car would soon arrive to investigate a breaking-and-entering. The first officer to exit the squad car would meet his fate. The distance for the shot would be around 390 meters. The weapon was up to the task and so was the shooter.

John had approached through a field and now lay among the grass and sparse hedges. Not far from where Boyle lay was a small stream, and beyond another row of manicured fields was the edge of town. John scanned the inhabited area and recognized the building where the fake intrusion would take place. He estimated the distance and adjusted his scope for the wind. No doubt conditions would change by nightfall and he'd have to readjust the scope. It was typical for him to prepare for a shot even when the event was unlikely to occur. John believed in being ready at all times.

At a quarter past one in the afternoon a police car turned down the street that was 200 or so meters northeast of Boyle's target building. On the right side of the street from Boyle's perspective was a McDonald's and a pair of large buildings. There was a small café among the more humble structures on the left. The police officer stopped beside the café. Boyle estimated the range: it was around 600 meters. This would be a very dif-

difficult though not impossible shot. Boyle watched with all his attention. It was too early in the day. The coming of this car was coincidence; of that Boyle was certain. If he took the shot he'd have to escape on his own, or find a safe place to wait until nightfall. At that time, he and his contacts could depart for a safe-house in Tyrone or Fermanagh.

Sergeant Clement Powell emerged from the police car. His confident strut instantly annoyed Boyle, as did the very fact that he held a position of authority in Ireland. Powell's parents were Jamaican immigrants. Boyle did not know nor did he care about Powell's biography. He could see that Powell was black. Boyle wondered how blacks like Powell would treat him if he were to strut around Kingston or Johannesburg with similar arrogance and impunity. He'd probably be lucky to escape with his life. Boyle's training and experience allowed him to suppress his passions. This was a tempting target - two birds with one stone to John Boyle - but the conditions for success would be greater at dusk. Boyle resolved to wait.

Boyle had the option of choosing his target, as long as that target met the demands of the mission. Powell most assuredly did. If John chose not to wait, or could not wait, it would be up to him to make his escape. He'd already been through this scenario in his mind and knew exactly the steps he'd take. Boyle's decision was made easier when Powell gave him another reason to pull the trigger.

Clement Powell was not content to flaunt his alien appearance among a majority-white populace. He wasn't content to throw his weight around, knowing the entire British state would fall upon anyone who so much as insulted him. Boyle considered shooting him for these reasons alone. Through the scope of the Parker-Hale, John Boyle witnessed the final transgression that made him choose Powell as his target. When the sergeant passed the most attractive of the café's white waitresses, he slapped her on her ass. She turned, a shocked and outraged look on her face, until she saw the culprit. When she saw Powell's grinning face she smiled at him. He said something to her, both still smiling and acting as if this event was commonplace. Powell had probably done this sort of thing many times before. He returned to his patrol car while the girl continued clearing the coffee cups and cigarettes from the tables. Powell turned to open the driver's side door. John Boyle looked down his steady scope at the left side of Powell's head. The apricot in his brain presented an irresistible target for the distant barrel of Boyle's Parker Hale rifle.

The sun glared off of a silver Mercedes that exited the large grocery store and passed to the right. An old couple sat at the McDonald's across the street and a large Scania truck drove down the adjacent avenue. At

that instant, Sergeant Clement Powell was thinking about Victoria, a white Protestant girl who he'd meet with that night. The Troubles and the Easter Uprising and the years of blood and struggle meant nothing to him. The names PSNI and RUC were abbreviations to him and nothing more. The uniform he wore meant power and a steady income. There was no history or legacy to those names, no pride or shame. How could there be? He lived in Ireland but he was no Irishman. He had no connection to the land or the people - the white people. He didn't mind bedding its daughters; the somewhat few who were willing. He didn't mind causing problems for those who refused. As a police officer, he had that power. Powell saw himself as a black "Alpha male" within an open and subservient white society. John Boyle saw him as a defiler.

In that instant, John Boyle began to agree in totality with Bill Donnelly. The very next moment, a bullet struck Powell in the head and snuffed out his existence.

Boyle did not run like a mad man. He'd fired one shot. As long as he fired no more, it would be difficult for the enemy to realize his exact location. Witnesses had scattered. Most fled around corners and into buildings, not caring to know who fired the shot.

Northern Ireland was not Los Angeles or Buffalo. There were still people sympathetic to those who fought in their name. Unfortunately, this area of Portadown was Protestant and its citizens were more likely to sympathize with the fallen Negro than with the fellow Irishman who had cut down the invader. This reality was not lost on John and he resented it. He did not continue the cycle of blame, however - he knew the reaction from most Catholics would be similar. To John Boyle, the real enemies were the authorities and oppressive police organizations that maintained the anti-white, anti-working class status quo, as well as the propagandists who castigated white men and hung anti-racist billboards in majority-white Ireland. Boyle knew that they were not "anti-racist" but were, in fact, anti-white. It was the first of Bill's revelations that John would come to accept.

Boyle began a slow exit from the fields south of town. He hoped to rendezvous with his RIRA ally west of Ballydonaghy on the B2 road. Mark Collopy was one of six men who knew of Boyle's mission. He made sure he'd be in Portadown during the week of the retaliation. Collopy was a somewhat stocky man in his early-40's with thick honey-brown hair and gray eyes. He was not a member of Continuity as was Boyle; years ago Collopy joined the Real Irish Republican Army. It was not unusual for him to work with CIRA members. He had been a close friend of Bill Donnelly before Bill left for America. The two maintained contact. Collopy was not

the primary support for this mission but he was ready and willing to aid in John's escape. After Boyle contacted Mark, he called the two other contacts who were at the time located in the northern half of the town. He called off the extraction so that they would not be wandering the streets when the inevitable police lockdown occurred. Boyle then continued his trek to the far edge of the field.

It took John an hour and a half to cross the long field. He could hear and see PSNI vehicles drive along the B78 to Portadown and would cease his slow movement when one of them slowed or stopped. Officers scanned the area, including the field where he lay, but did not see him. When he reached the far south end he called Collopy. John did not speak; the flash of the phone number told Collopy it was time to rendezvous with Boyle. He'd arranged their meeting point in his previous conversation and once the call was complete, Boyle disappeared into the gorse and waited. As he watched the road, John hoped he'd see a black Alfa Romeo instead of a legion of PSNI. Twenty-five minutes later, when Collopy arrived in his black sedan, Boyle could feel some relief. Collopy made a pass and then returned once he was satisfied that no police were watching. Boyle hadn't heard a helicopter and he doubted that they'd have any of the little drones he'd heard about. He crept up to the side of the car and then pulled himself inside the back. Neither Mark nor John felt entirely relieved until they entered Armagh.

Sympathizers and fellow soldiers congratulated Boyle on a terrific shot. A couple of the weaker-willed members worried that the enemy might use the race of the target for propaganda value. This infuriated Boyle to the point that he chastised them.

"So if he'd been lily-white we'd all be cheerin' his death?" he asked them.

John Boyle could not change the minds of those poisoned by society's racial dogma. He could not change those who denied the existence of a white race while encouraging and sanctifying the racial grievances of a black one. He did know a man who had rejected the unholy anti-white religion and who had foreseen a dark future should the white men of Ireland fail to act. Though Bill Donnelly had departed from Ireland, he did not intend to remain in his new land. He had his own mission to fulfill. Bill had made John an offer a few days before he left. The more John Boyle considered the offer, the more it interested him.

The weather was abysmal on that late February day. A mixture of rain and snow pelted Western Pennsylvania as well as northern West Virginia. The wind was unmerciful and frigid. With temperatures plummet-

ing, the rain would become snow in a few short hours. By the morn, six inches would cover the ground at the Donnelly Homestead.

About the time the rain made its transition to snow, the doorbell at Bill's home began chirping. Megan Donnelly had chosen a bell that sounded like bird calls. It was 9PM on a Wednesday and Bill did not expect visitors at that hour. He stopped Megan from answering the door and proceeded down the hallway by himself. Though his hands were free, there was a pistol between his belt and his pants.

When Bill looked through the peephole of the front door he stepped back in shock. Outside, standing beside his son Michael, was CIRA sniper John Boyle.

Michael Donnelly could not stay. He'd driven all day and now faced a return trip over treacherous roads. Despite the pleading of his mother, the oldest of the Donnelly children returned to his Jeep. He'd taken a risk by associating with John Boyle, but he believed it worth his while. Michael was tall and thin. While his face showed that he was the undeniable son of Bill and Megan, his overall appearance matched that of his maternal grandfather rather than the men on his burly father's side. In temperament, however, he was Bill Donnelly all over again.

Boyle's possessions were in a valise that Megan took into the den. Once Boyle hung his coat, Bill led him to the dining room as Megan put on a kettle of tea. Bill looked over his old pupil and friend. He hadn't seen Boyle in six years.

John still had that same hard look. His legs seemed even thinner in the jeans that Michael had given him. His body was gaunt and could not fill his large button-down shirt. He did not look weak, however; and he was not. His strength showed in his handshake and the ease with which he swung the heavy valise. Perhaps whatever tribulation that had driven him to Bill's door had made him tougher and more severe. Boyle's blue eyes were more intense than Bill remembered and he could imagine the sniper's stare being icy and frightening. He didn't care to find out with certainty.

"I don't like to guess, John, but I'd say you've come to accept my offer," Bill said. As usual the two spoke in Irish. "That, or there's been some infighting and you're here to kill me."

"Would I do it from this close?" John asked.

"Yes," Bill said without a moment's thought, "You get to know a man and his family, you try to give him the honor of dying face-to-face like a man."

"Is the offer still valid?" Boyle asked.

"Of course it is," Bill said, "There're some men I'd like you to meet, and the daughter of one of them, too. From what I've seen she'll be at least as good as they are."

"Where can I stay 'till I can build a place?" asked John.

"You'll stay here until the Hall is completed," Bill said.

Boyle motioned with his eyes toward the door.

"You're son and daughter are watching," Boyle said.

Without turning to look, Bill called them out. Rian and Sinead entered the dining room. The last time Boyle had seen them, Rian was a strapping teen and Sinead was a lovely young lassie. Now the son was a young man and the daughter was becoming a rare beauty.

"You both know John, so there's no need to stare," Bill said to them in Irish, "Upstairs with you!"

Megan brought some tea and the three continued to converse for most of the night. The Donnelly's asked about everyone they'd known and Bill could not resist inquiring about the health and well-being of fellow Continuity men - using first names and nicknames only. Amidst the small talk and catching-up, Boyle told the Donnelly's about Sergeant Powell. He told Bill the reason why he'd shot the sergeant. There had been criticism for his action and it seemed that the authorities were pursuing this case harder than similar ones from the past.

"I remember your warning about non-white immigration," Boyle said, "It's one of those warnings that no one heeds until it's too late. I'm not waiting 'till then."

Winter lingered well into March and there was a Nor'easter in the middle of the month. Nonetheless, Bill managed to complete the final building project on his farm, and a week later Boyle was able to move into what would be called the "Long Hall." Inside the Hall was a room dedicated to unarmed self-defense training. There was storage space for a multitude of items as well as vault-like rifle lockers. The central room was large enough for meetings; Bill planned to invite the remaining core of the Celtic Society to meet there for food, drink and conversation. Throughout the spring, Bill and Gary Murphy would add a short underground tunnel from the basement into the woods that stood behind the Hall. It didn't go very well at first, but after a lot of trial and error the two men completed the project.

April began with a beautiful Easter Sunday and the trend of good weather continued for several days. The harsh February weather became a memory. April was not a good month for everyone, however; a couple of weeks after Easter, Anna Murphy would have an unfortunate brush with

the high school administration. As her class grew in age and physical maturity, the more masculine males began to become aggressive in their pursuit of females. This was natural. It was also natural that well-raised girls would tell them to wait.

The time for dating and romance was coming, but with the parties being 16 years of age it had not yet arrived. Anna was one of the few who kept that ancient custom and refused to have any but platonic relationships with boys. Most males respected her decision. Some kept her in mind for the future; she might be the kind of girl that a young man could present to his family without fear of her past.

On very rare occasions, a disappointed lothario would resent Anna for her polite refusal. One such boy was Rodney Stanko. Rodney was handsome and his body was strong from years of football and swimming. His hair was light brown and his eyes a similar shade. He'd been paying attention to Anna's blossoming womanhood but had yet to show interest, even though she was usually first on the list of desirable females. His aloofness disappeared in late March. He'd broken up with his then-girlfriend and was free to pursue the adorable redhead. Just before Easter weekend he asked her out; as usual, she responded with a gentle but firm "no". She would not have a boyfriend until she was seventeen or older, she told him, and avoided the inevitable question by explaining that Elijah was one of her friends. Undeterred, Rodney asked her to a school-sponsored spring dance and again she refused. When he asked who she'd be going with, she told him the truth: no one.

"What, you don't do dances?" Rodney asked Anna, "Are you going to skip the prom, too?"

"I'll go to the prom," she replied, "but that's different, and it's next year anyway."

Gary knew that certain events should be memorable. Anna didn't need a myriad of dances and balls diluting the importance of her prom.

While Stanko was away on Easter vacation, Anna's rejection must have weighed upon his conscience. With the exception of Greg Stanek, intrigued boys and interested young men had accepted her unwavering refusals and had moved on to other opportunities. Anna did not enjoy turning away someone who'd worked up the courage to ask; she was aware how difficult that could be in light of the confusion and divisiveness created by the feminized American nation. She was never cruel to young white males, even those who had no chance to win a girl of her caliber. Anna respected her father's rules about romance and by 16 had come to understand that he enforced them for her protection and happiness. She had

inherited and developed the good sense and compassion of her departed mother.

Anna also had the scrappiness of her father. For a couple of days after Easter break, Anna would speak to Rod as they passed in the hall or bumped into each other before English class. She did not dislike him as a classmate or as a male. His reply was silence. Gary had taught Anna to be civil and polite. He also taught her to stand up for herself and not to take abuse. On that Thursday, Anna quit speaking to Rod. He'd looked into her eyes on five occasions and spurned her decency. She figured he must be hurt and sympathized, but there was no point in continuing to look like a fool.

On Friday the situation came to a head.

"Hey, Anna," Rod yelled as students moved on to their next class.

Anna heard his voice and turned toward him. She believed that he was going to apologize for giving her the cold shoulder. She'd tell him she understood; that there was no need for an apology. The gesture would impress her, however, which was exceedingly rare among girls of high school age. Years of propaganda made most of them callous to expressions of humility and humanity.

"Yeah, Rod?" she said as she took a few steps backward.

Beside Rod stood Juliette Fowler. The image shattered Anna's dream that Rod would act like a gentleman. He was probably going to insult her.

"How long have you been a fag hag?" he asked.

He must have thought that the phrase was a pejorative for lesbian; otherwise it made little sense, since none of Anna's friends were sodomites. If she could have gone back and changed her response, Anna would have shaken her head and laughed at his stupid mistake. Then she would have walked away. Instead, the fire inside got the better of her.

"Never," she said, "I don't hang with faggots like you."

Anna didn't notice Ms. Cox stepping out from her classroom door. The white-haired spinster with the sagging jowls heard every word.

When Stanko began acting like he was talking to Juliette, Anna knew that a teacher or administrator was standing behind her. Anna rolled her eyes and sighed. When she turned to see which teacher had caught her, Anna's eyes got wide and she gasped. There could not have been a worse alternative. Ms. Cox gave detention for chewing gum.

"Come with me, young lady," Cox said.

Anna's apprehension became frustration.

"Did you hear what he said?" she asked in desperation.

"I heard enough," said Cox, who had a smug look on her face.

The vice principal gave Anna three days detention and a warning - she could be expelled for such "hate speech."

Gary was generally off on Fridays as cat-eye had a shift that began on Sunday night and ended on Friday morning. On Fridays he usually drove Anna from school to the University of Pittsburgh aquatic center for diving practice. Then the two would dine at a restaurant or return home and make supper. When she hopped into the Sport Trac she could see her bag and swimsuit bundled in the back. Gary had a smile on his face. She wondered if it would still be there after the news. She knew he'd realize that something was wrong, so she just told him what had happened.

The whole thing was an outrage, she thought; he'll surely sympathize.

Gary did not.

"They had good reason to punish you," he said. "You have to have more self-control, honey."

They sped past the little restaurant where she hoped they'd stop on the way back. That hope had dimmed.

"If someone escalates from the verbal to the physical, put them down," he said, "I'm not going to be upset. Defend yourself, sweetheart, but when you respond choose your words carefully." Gary glanced at her. She did not notice but a wicked smile was on his face. "And whatever you do, don't swear in front of that old bitch."

Anna gasped in surprise. "Dad!" she said.

"I knew Ms. Cox when she taught at Connellsville," Gary said.

Anna had another excellent practice, during which a coach from a Pittsburgh club inquired whether Anna might wish to join. Gary said he'd ask her. Anna did miss one dive when she allowed thoughts of the day's events to enter her mind. She didn't know how much or how little she'd disappointed her father, but she knew he wasn't pleased and that troubled her. To make up for the gaffe on the 3m she chose to dive from 1m, where she felt more at ease. Like a pro she twirled and ripped the surface.

Gary turned left at the restaurant near Perryopolis. Anna felt relieved when she realized that they would have supper together after all. The matter wasn't quite settled, however. On the way back to Lemont Furnace, Gary reminded her not to repeat the mistake.

"Anna, anytime something happens I'm going to consider the reasons why you did what you did," he said, "But don't let this happen again or I'm gonna have to come down hard on you."

Anna would try. At times it could be really difficult to resist erupting. Gary had told her to resist on the inside. The school system would bom-

bard her with anti-white propaganda; even Laurel Highlands High, far from the streets of Chicago and Los Angeles. She must hold on to any thought or memory that would give her the strength to resist the inevitable anti-white onslaught. Gary did not want her to humiliate herself, but he also did not want her to combat the teachers and fight the students. She could not win that battle. If a teacher demanded that she demean her people, she could refuse to answer and thereby shut down any escalation. If they asked her to make a selection on a test that she knew was a lie, she should try to pass the test and get her revenge later. By failing she did not strike a blow for her race. By living as a principled and proud white woman she would defy the enemies of her people and she would encourage other whites to do so as well. That was a much more powerful blow than a tantrum.

Gary did not want her to misunderstand his admonition. There were transgressions that demanded a direct response. If anyone tried to assault her for whatever reason, she should not show restraint. In that extreme case she must resist with violence. If a teacher threatened her with failure should she not acquiesce to his or her ideas or accept his or her advances, she was to leave the scene and inform Gary at once. "Papa Bear" would resolve those kinds of situations.

A few years before, once Anna understood that a person's identity could not be divorced from his race, she began to use the example of her mother and father as a shield against ubiquitous anti-white lies and propaganda. It was impossible to avoid the media's anti-white campaign or the government's anti-white declarations. When they told her that white men were stupid and evil, she thought about her father, who devoted his very life to caring for his dying wife and then raising their daughter. When they told her to stand in solidarity with other women in the fight against oppression - always linked to white men - she thought of her mother, who lit a candle every morning for the man she loved and who greeted him with breakfast and affection every time he came home to her. They'd had a beautiful life in spite of her brutal disease; in spite of the best efforts of the anti-white, anti-male enemy. Anna learned to parrot their lies on test forms and in essays, but her lips were always closed when the authority figures asked for conformity.

By the time she turned 17, Anna would feel an increasing desire to resist any form of anti-white compliance. Before the end of her junior year she would slip little forms of defiance into her written essays. Sometimes she'd use the first letter of each paragraph to spell a taboo word, though she was careful not to make it too obvious. At other times she'd regurgi-

tate the professor's lies in a way that sounded robotic if read out loud. When she'd see the "excellent work" comments on such tests and papers it always made her laugh.

During April, Garret Fogarty, John Bowen and Cristian O'Toole met John Boyle, though he would not reveal his actual name for some time. The four began to use the self-defense training room at Bill Donnelly's hall, as did Robert McKenna, whose "Dullahan" idea lead to its construction.

The most experienced fighter was John Bowen and he naturally took the lead. To the others' surprise, Garret Fogarty knew a good deal about actual hand-to-hand combat. He hadn't taken years of karate or any of the other formal disciplines. He'd had some boxing training and some real-life experience as a member of a private club. He called it the "Laurel Mountain Sparring Club", and though none of the others had heard of it, he certainly had familiarity with the core concepts of self defence.

With Lent over, Michael Collins Murphy seized the moment and asked Emily Rose to be his wife. The two hadn't had the relationship that romantics dream about, but compared to the modern average it was far closer to the ideal. There had been no cheating and no major arguments or "time apart." Everyone has disagreements and the two lovers were no exception. There were two major differences between their relationship and that of most modern couples: when it came to an "agree to disagree" moment, Emily would defer to Michael, and when the two were together she would never withhold her affection. There was no exception to that rule, regardless of disagreement or mood. There were times, or course, that neither felt like being so intimate. In the grand scheme of love and loyalty it was no sacrifice to show such affection despite the momentary reservations. Her response to the inevitable problems was mature and realistic and her loving demeanor resulted in an ever-increasing dedication from her mate.

By this time, Anna had spent a great deal of time with the couple. She had observed the turn of events, consciously and inadvertently. Already inclined to be an affectionate and loving soul, Anna saw her instincts confirmed in real life and it would stay with her for all time. During the drive home from school Anna mentioned her feelings to Hannah.

"Me and Lindsay went to a movie over the weekend," Anna said, "I noticed that every time there's a white guy who's nice he's a wimp, and every tough guy's an asshole." Anna knew she could speak with a little more abandon while alone with her aunt. "But a guy doesn't have to be a wimp to be decent," she said.

"What you're seeing is deliberate," Hannah said, "You're father used to get pissed when he saw that. Your mother knew better and so do I. I guess we were lucky. Mom was old-fashioned and strong and so was dad. They raised us right."

"Mike's not a wimp," Anna said, "and he treats Emily so sweet!"

"He sure isn't," said Hannah, who recalled the time Michael Collins Murphy got into a fight with six Masontown boys after a football scrimmage. He got roughed up and lost a tooth, but the Masontown boys respected him from that day forward. In time, one of them became a close friend.

"The thing about Mike," Hannah continued, "He'd dump Emily if she took advantage of his nature or if she started flirting with other guys. He'd show any girl the door if she wasn't loyal and didn't earn his affection."

"That's how it should be," Anna said, "for men and women. But, God, it's like a war neither of us started. Assholes and skanks did a long time ago, and now a guy shows you he appreciates your company and you call him a pussy or go after some jackass who's going to cheat on you five days later. Which one's going to work in a coal mine for his family? Which one would kill an intruder with his hands if he had to? I'm not talking about some sentimental fool who buys the feminist propaganda, but a real man isn't some player who bangs anything that smiles at him! Michael's a real man. He'll fight for his family. He's a man, and he's not like that."

"Gary isn't either," Hannah said, "He went into the hole for you and your mother. God, how we all worried about him." Hannah shakes her head. "We still do. I'd pay to see some mouthy whore-monger take on your father." Hannah already had, years ago, and Gary destroyed the fool. "Anna, a good man doesn't have to sleep with everything that's female and he doesn't have to show off. If you don't let the school or Hollywood Jews tell you what to look for, but rely on good sense, you'll be able to tell a good man from the wimps and the assholes. He'll cherish you if you deserve it and he'll work hard for your family. That kind of man you'll have to earn."

The Murphy-Rose wedding would take place in September. It was Gary's favorite month; rarely too hot, yet vibrant with life and greenery. It didn't hurt that everything tasted better in September and the specialty beers were plentiful on store shelves. It promised to be a gorgeous event. Emily was nice enough to have mercy on the bridesmaids, who included Anna in their ranks. Their dresses were actually quite lovely.

David and John Fox were cousins of Austin Kelly. They grew up in the Hopwood area as well, though David would become a firefighter in

Pittsburgh and the younger John found work as an orderly in a Uniontown hospital. John was burly and powerful, with dark hair and a boyish face. His eyes were smallish and light brown in color. He had a serious streak but in general was happy-go-lucky. David could have been someone else's brother; his eyes were green and his hair red-brown. He grew a moustache and looked about ten years older than his actual age of 25. Unlike John, David was of average build though he was powerful enough to be a capable fireman. He had even made a couple of trips out west to fight forest fires.

Both the Foxes were interested in the Celtic Society as it was described - lauded, actually - by Austin Kelly. Time and in David's case, distance, did not permit a visit until circumstances made such a trip quite important from a spiritual perspective. By then, the Fox Brothers hadn't had contact with Kelly in over six months, and the Society was a thing of the past. Upon finding the doors closed and the building vacant, the Foxes were disappointed. Their connection with the "Society core" and Bill Donnelly might have ended then and there if not for David Fox's call to Austin Kelly. He told them about the closing of the Society and, should the brothers be interested, offered to set up a meeting with the elder Donnelly. The group still met on his property and the scope of the Society had evolved into something interesting. That was all that he told John at the moment.

Although Austin Kelly did not know at the moment, he did not need to practice such secrecy with his cousins. They'd come to the same conclusions as him.

Since early childhood, David Fox hoped to become a fireman. Then, it was the bright red ladder truck and the image of the towering hero that attracted him. In time, his interest in the job, coupled with an altruistic desire to help those in need, replaced the childhood fantasy. At age 22 he fulfilled his dream and became a member of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire.

David Fox was a strong union supporter. For a while he looked past the unequal application of zero-tolerance "anti-racism" policies, though the hypocrisy infuriated him. To Fox, turning a blind eye was a matter of the "greater good." He believed that the current system was better than no union protection at all. The administration's attitudes toward "hate speech" and "racism" troubled him even more, but criticism of even the worst outrages could have destroyed his career as well as his union standing, so he assented for the time being. Inside, the pressure was mounting.

When the city of Dallas threw out the results of an exam so that non-white applicants could pass, Fox was furious. Wasn't that discriminatory against whites? Wasn't this supposed to be a meritocracy? Wasn't that

what being “colorblind” meant? If there were ten job openings and ten whites scored the highest, shouldn’t ten whites get the jobs? To Fox, anything less would have been discrimination. He could imagine if the roles were reversed. No one would complain if ten blacks or Asians received jobs had they scored highest. In fact, it would be used as evidence of racial “equality.” He remembered his time as a temp worker at West Virginia University. Chinese professors hired Chinese grad students. Indians hired Indians. Whites hired everybody. He thought about the double standard. *Come to think of it*, Fox thought, *white nations accept massive non-white immigration, but if they refuse they’re boycotted and condemned*. The world community can inflict real hardship on white nations that refuse to integrate or open their borders. South Africa came to mind. When African nations expel or even murder whites there is nothing but silence.

The incident that drove Fox to action occurred in Baltimore. A black firefighter claimed to have discovered a noose and an offensive picture affixed to his locker. The usual fury and denunciation of “racist whites” followed, and an impending federal investigation loomed. Once the so-called victim admitted that the entire affair was a hoax, the mass media ceased all coverage and the entire incident faded away like so many faces in a Stalin photograph. The last Fox heard of the event, the city had announced that the scoundrel would not face criminal charges.

David Fox was furious as always when he heard of these and similar hoaxes. How could life return to normal when even a false accusation can destroy a white man and harm his family? What if there was no admission of hoaxing or if no witnesses ever came forward? How many white men lost their livelihoods over a mere word or gesture? If a non-white insults a white and the white man dares to respond, even if he chooses words that cannot be considered racial, what happens if the non-white accuses him of using “racist” language? Even if someone had pulled a stupid stunt like the hanging of a noose, why was that so much worse than a false accusation against innocents? Incidences such as these had the effect desired by anti-white zealots: if a white man wanted to keep his job, he would have to avoid angering or upsetting a non-white at all costs. He would have to keep his mouth shut.

David Fox had an awakening of sorts, though it was incomplete. He could see that “racism” was a code word for “white”, but as of yet he did not realize that “anti-racist” was a code word for “anti-white.” He believed that whites suffered from overzealous affirmative action, and that everyone should be treated equally. He did not realize that forced non-white immigration, the massive promotion of miscegenation and constant anti-

white propaganda fit the textbook definition of genocide. He did not realize this until a late-night internet search led him to Whitaker's Mantra. The words of that simple yet relentless mantra would resonate with David, because he would no longer choose to ignore reality.

David Fox had little hope that his brother would have the same awakening. Still he would try to reach him. John Fox was an avid fan of the Steelers and Pittsburgh basketball.

For most of his life he believed the standard line about black athletic superiority and considered skin color as unimportant as birth date in determining the character and abilities of a man. Of course he did not see the contradiction of those two beliefs. John had black friends, though it peeved him when they were in the company of other blacks, because they invariably treated him differently. Overall, however, John tried not to think about race and all its implications. He enjoyed having a stable life, an occasional cold beer and barbecues in the yard, and his less-than-serious relationship with a female coworker.

Had John Fox been less honest, he would have ignored his brother's recommendation. He would have marched forward with his life and never questioned what rich men and hostile minorities told him about American "society." David told John to stop listening and check for himself. John admitted that he was infuriated by the attack on an elderly white Wal-Mart greeter by two black women. Their use of racial slurs and the usual media silence further angered him. By the end of the conversation, John agreed that in his free time he would peruse the internet sites that David had recommended.

Like David, John had an imperfect awakening fueled by stories of black-on-white crime and blatant racism on the part of minorities that went unpunished. If he'd let the larger sleeping dog lay, John would have embraced "egalitarianism" and hoped for a day when "racism" ceased to exist - both black and white racism. He would have never realized that "anti-racist" is a code word for anti-white. He would not have realized that anti-whites use words like "racism" and "racist" to silence any and all opposition from whites, even opposition to race replacement - genocide - in each and every white nation. David urged John to visit the BUGS site and not just read, but consider the Mantra and, as an intellectual exercise, to post the Mantra in the comment sections of relevant news stories as well as internet forums.

As David predicted, John first interpreted the Mantra as some cult saying or at best a well-meaning but paranoid creed. He agreed to David's request and posted it verbatim.

"Watch the responses and consider them with an open mind," David told his skeptical brother.

John had posted the Mantra to five internet sites. Three postings disappeared within hours. The censorship of the sites annoyed Fox, who believed that the website staff should try to debate rather than censor a reasonable opposing worldview. The responses to the other postings were most interesting. Some called him racist and urged the banning of the poster. Others said it was hogwash, but could not refute the simple statements contained within the Mantra. A few tried to address the concerns but John could see that they avoided or obfuscated the main thrust, i.e. that whites face a full-scale genocide. The last group was the most honest of the opposing posters - and the ones who awoke the sleeping giant in John's mind and soul. Those posters did not attack the Mantra; they reveled in the possible extinction of whites and taunted the person who posted the Mantra. They mocked white attributes such as freckles and blue eyes and rejoiced in their impending extinction, ignoring that fact that white attributes are what makes non-whites so covetous of white mates. The "anti-racists" degraded white civilization, ignoring the benefits that whites had given to each and every race. Some limited their bile to white men, never mentioning that without white men there would be no white women. In essence, these more honest posters confirmed the Mantra. These were traitors and hateful enemies who not only acknowledged the genocide, they wanted it to occur. More than any news story or Stormfront rant, the words of the anti-whites themselves convinced John Fox of the Mantra's accuracy.

Four months later, when John and David met for lunch, John was a changed man. So was David; his sense of race and origin had grown very strong and he sought a connection with both. He'd been talking to their cousin Austin Kelly, who urged them to join the Celtic Society in Cumberland. It took a while for David and John to both have the time for the trip, and when they got around to visiting the club they found it defunct. David called his cousin the next weekend. Austin promised to ask the creator of the Society, Bill Donnelly, if the Fox Brothers could attend one of the meetings he was having on his private estate. Their odyssey from slumber to consciousness was nearly complete.

Austin Kelly figured that Bill would be cautious. At the semi-weekly meeting of the "Core", as Bill called the remnant of the Society's membership, Bill asked each person's opinion about accepting new members. O'Toole and John McShane were opposed. Fogarty asked for a private meeting and time to research the background of the individuals in ques-

tion. To Bill's surprise, Bowen supported the idea, though he insisted on a private meeting beforehand. Ford joined Bowen and Fogarty and their suggestions became the consensus. Reserving the right to decide on his own - it was his property - Bill concurred with Garret, et al, and agreed to invite the Foxes in for a talk.

Nothing racial factored into the discussions the first two times the Fox Brothers attended the Core's meetings. That would come in time. Even after Garret's check revealed no discrepancies and the Foxes had won the trust of the membership, race was never an overbearing or omnipresent topic at Core meetings. When the subject did arise, no one hesitated to speak of it, in the open, without mincing words or catering to irrational sensibilities. Often the topic of race did not come up; the Core was just as likely to discuss the proper preparation of morels or walleye as it was to discuss racial strife or genocide. The varied conversations and the sharing of knowledge and expertise, rather than any overbearing racial discussions, were the foremost reasons that the Core remained intact.

There was, however, one instance where race would always figure into the meetings. After the Foxes joined the "Old Core," at the end of each meeting, Garret Fogarty would implore the membership to spread the Mantra as best they could.

In Early May, those knowledgeable in the arts of unarmed and armed combat began training the other members of the Core. The teaching of the basic techniques would last a couple of months, though the hands-on practice would last for far longer. As usual, Anna was eager to begin training and she became one of the most enthusiastic students.

Another milestone came at the beginning of the month - on the Fourth, to be exact. Work began on the Diamond Crossing music venue as soon as Garret, Cristian and Johnny Bowen could scrounge enough money to pay their share. Bill also contributed, though the lion's share of the funding came from his son Michael. Garret, et al, had yet to meet the eldest Donnelly son. After Michael's enthusiastic support of the Diamond idea they looked forward to the eventual meeting.

Diamond Crossing was austere though the renovations and improvements to the old structure were quite expensive. The men insisted that the location have the best sound system possible considering the circumstances, and Michael stepped in and made it happen. During the course of its existence, Diamond would be a "work in progress."

The "Diamond Crew" as Bowen would name their little group, made numerous improvements to the acoustics and electronics. Michael Donnelly was willing to pay for quality workmanship as well as an expedited

construction, so that by the beginning of May Diamond Crossing was ready for its first concert.

The first event would have been a major failure for a club that needed to survive off of attendance. In fact, attendance was free for the event. The "Diamond Crew," Rian and Jesse, the Murphy's and a handful of others were present to hear the thrash metal music of *Without Issue*, a Pittsburgh band. The band was decent and Bowen was pleased with the sound. Garret had little idea if they were good or not, but he was pleased that a few fresh faces had shown up. There wasn't a particular message in the lyrics nor did the Diamond Crew want there to be. This was the birth of a movement, not its fruition. When Anna heard about the idea back in April, she was ecstatic. She had by then become a metal enthusiast. After the first show she was adamant in her approval. She began to make suggestions as to the different genre of metal music that the venue should feature. No one told her that only three bands had shown any interest, and one of those was anti-white.

Let her enjoy the moment, Garret thought.

Late that night, front man David Hill of *Chironex* perused the internet for any venue that might be interested in hosting his band. Most of the locations were uninterested; some were downright hostile. He broadened his search to include Pennsylvania and the other New England states. There was a new venue near Pittsburgh that looked interesting. The website was sharp and the pictures of the place looked decent. Hill fired off an email and continued his search. After a few more hours of browsing he called it a night. Before going to bed he checked the band's email account. The club in Columbus, Ohio where Hill had hoped to play flat-out said that they were not interested. The next email tempered his disappointment. The new venue - Diamond Crossing - had already responded. They asked for the band's terms and, even better, listed available dates. *Chironex* would have a place to play.

On the Fifth of May, Garret paid a visit to his cousin in Uniontown. Garret's cousin Sandra and her husband Bradley Slavik lived in an attractive brick house on Cleveland Avenue. Their daughter Deanna was a freshman at Uniontown High School. Though not an incipient beauty, Deanna was a pretty blonde girl with blue eyes like Garret's. Garret paid the Slavik Family a visit every so often, mostly to see Deanna, since he and her parents had irreconcilable differences in beliefs. They were accommodating enough not to mention race or politics, or religion for that matter, and he was cordial enough not to violate the unwritten rule. He did not refuse to talk with Deanna about events at school, though most of

what she told him was mundane childhood banter. Garret held out hope that at least a few of the younger generations would rebel against the oppressive school system. He doubted the manifestation of such a revolt would be much to his liking, but any spark of rebellion was preferable to the blind march of acceptance. Every day the schools taught the American religion of assimilation and eventual white extinction. Every day they upheld the inquisition against racial "realtalk" and punished any transgression. It was a situation ready for a challenge. Garret listened with real attentiveness when Deanna spoke to him. Thus far the words were like static on a radio. Garret held out hope for an awakening; at least one wolf must exist among the sheep. That May came the first sign that Garret's hope was not in vain.

Deanna and Garret played Halo on the Xbox, killing hordes of Covenant and getting killed almost as many times as the enemy. Sandra brought them some cranberry juice mixed with seltzer water and then left for the store.

Deanna's parents always took advantage of Garret's visit by leaving him to supervise their fourteen year old daughter. Garret knew the game but he didn't mind. Between the grilles of the living room window he could see his cousin leaving for Foodland.

The massive grandfather clock struck two as Deanna threw herself on the couch. Garret sat opposite her on a soft brown recliner. He could smell Brad's cigarettes any time that he moved in the chair. He looked at Deanna. She seemed to have grown since his last visit a few months ago. There was a blue clip in her hair. The clip was the same color as her top.

"How's school?" Garret asked to begin the conversation.

"OK," Deanna said.

Deanna was an excellent student, but Garret worried for her. She already had an on-again, off-again boyfriend. He knew from his aunt Lisa that Brad caught her and her boyfriend kissing.

"I've already started on my science project," she said.

"Is that so?" Garret said, "What is it?"

"I'm trying to simulate an East Coast tsunami," she said.

"Cool," Garret said, "Let me know if you need any computer simulations or models, OK?"

Deanna continued describing her project and her success in school. She left off any mention of her boyfriend. Deanna lamented that one of her best friends got into trouble for texting in class. They couldn't go to a movie because the girl's parents grounded her for the weekend. Garret was polite and feigned interest. Then Deanna mentioned another girl.

"It's so unfair for them to ground her," Deanna said, "Jacky didn't even get detention. It wasn't like she got into a fight, or acted like that crazy girl."

"Crazy girl?" Garret asked.

Deanna's word choice did arouse some genuine curiosity.

"Weird," Deanna said, "Not like insane crazy, weird crazy."

"How?" Garret asked.

A tiny spark of intrigue flashed in his mind. He tempered it. *She's probably a stoner*, he thought, *Probably got caught with a joint*.

"She's really pretty, but she doesn't act like the other girls," Deanna said, "She wears boots and weird t-shirts and gloves a lot of the time. And she's really strong. If she's outside when it rains she'll put on her toboggan but I've never seen her use an umbrella. She's from Seattle but Vickie's from California and she's normal."

Stoner, thought Garret. "What'd she do?" he asked, dreading the answer. *Another white mind down the toilet*, he thought.

"She got all racist during class," Deanna said.

Many times Garret hoped and prayed for a sign of awakening among whites his age and younger. He was not prepared when that sign finally came. It rendered him speechless for a few moments. He didn't need to ask if the girl was white or if whites had been her target. The fact that an obedient youth called her "racist" answered the question. Garret began to feel a growing excitement until a sobering thought cut it off at the base. The odd girl probably said something by accident, or used a harmless word and some anti-white or whiny minority is blowing it out of proportion. Even if he was wrong, Garret figured she'd apologize and denounce her own race in order to save her ass. She was probably too young to realize that never worked. He recalled the student from UCLA who uploaded a harmless rant against Asians who abused the school library. After a series of vicious verbal attacks against the young woman, which included death threats, she issued the predictable profuse apology and withdrew from classes. Garret figured "boot girl" would soon fold if she hadn't done so already.

"How was she racist?" Garret asked. He expected to hear that the girl said "niggardly" or "blackmail."

"They said she gave an oral report," Deanna said, "and toward the end she started saying stuff about white guys not sticking up for each other, or something. No, it was something like white bosses not looking out for white workers and how she thought it was betrayal. Yeah, I think that's what Hayley told me."

Deanna's reply was even more shocking than her earlier revelation. Garret wanted to ask the girl's name; to know every detail about her. He quit thinking of her as "boot girl" and in his mind he began to call her "courageous mystery girl." She was from Seattle. Based on her appearance and wardrobe she should be conspicuous. The school must be buzzing about her. It had to be incredibly rare for a white student - especially an attractive white girl - to take up for her white brothers in front of an entire class. Garret hoped that the story was accurate. Any resolution would have to wait. He knew he shouldn't ask any more questions. Deanna was no idiot. It would seem very strange to her if he continued to ask. He directed the conversation to another subject, though Garret thought about the "courageous mystery girl" during the rest of the afternoon.

As he drove his tired black Corolla toward Pittsburgh, Garret had a painful realization. Deanna said, in not so many words, that the school would punish the courageous girl. He knew that she must be going through hell. Even if anger or passion had gotten the better of her and she now regretted airing her opinion, she was deserving of support. She may not be awake but she was far from being a tool or a traitor. As soon as he'd arrive home, Garret would call Bill. He'd call anyone who he thought might have a relative at Uniontown Area High School. They might at least learn the girl's identity. The enemy already knew who she was.

On the day after the end of the school year, Anna made a special supper for Gary in celebration of his move to day shift. His new schedule would go into effect on Monday. There were mashed potatoes and gravy, and the two ducks that Michael Collins Murphy had shot at the end of the season. For dessert Anna made a rhubarb and cream pie. The rhubarb came from a big patch beside Johnny Bowen's Deer Park home. Anna prepared a cooler with ice and loaded it with Guinness Premium. A week before, she had bought him a digital camera and the box, wrapped in silver paper and adorned with a bow, sat on the counter beside the refrigerator. She'd even beautified the table with one of their nicest tablecloths and two tall red candles that stood in the center.

When Gary rose from bed and finished his shower, he walked into the kitchen and saw the surprise. He kissed his daughter on the cheek and thanked her. The meal was sumptuous though it could have been sandwiches and pretzels for all he cared; it was the experience that mattered to Gary and he wouldn't have traded it for the world.

Gary was off for the weekend. He began working day shift on Monday morning. On Saturday morning, Gary and Anna took a trip to nearby Laurel Caverns. Anna was ten years old the last time they visited

the natural wonder, and she was excited to return. It was a beautiful June morning, with wispy mare's tails floating across the sky.

"I'm worried about the bats that live around here," Anna said, "I told you about that terrible white nose disease. God, it's like everything good in the world is dying." She looked at her father and took a strand of her hair in her hand. "We're dying too, dad, redheaded white people like us."

"Have faith, honey," he said to her, "We're not dead yet."

Before heading to the caverns, Gary drove over to Mill Run in order to meet with a work friend. He'd borrowed his friend's compressor and now wished to return it, since the two would not be meeting as often with the change in Gary's shift. The route from Mill Run to Laurel Caverns ran through Ohiopyle where the CSX railroad crossed Pennsylvania Highway 381. As Gary drove toward the crossing the crossbuck lights came on. He stopped the Ford to let the train pass. Anna, who'd been daydreaming, was dismayed by the approach of another long CSX train. She was familiar with their length, having watched them from the pedestrian bridge over the Youghiogheny. They would have to wait at least fifteen minutes.

"Fuckin' train!" Anna said loud enough for Gary to hear.

She wasn't thinking and the words just seemed to come out. Gary looked at her for a moment and then back at the passing hopper cars. He didn't say a word.

Once the train passed, the Murphy father and daughter continued on to Laurel Caverns. Everything seemed to be fine. Gary talked to Anna and did not seem angry. The two even ate at a little Italian restaurant on the way home. That night, Anna lay awake in bed. She squeezed her pillow and had great difficulty getting to sleep. She wished he'd have turned around or at least yelled at her for swearing. Gary looked tired when they returned home and she could tell that her crude vernacular had upset him.

The next morning at breakfast, Anna came into the kitchen and sat beside her father. She squeezed his hand and he looked into her eyes. Though she smiled, her eyes were shiny with unshed tears.

"You want some tea, sweetheart?" Gary asked.

He touched her cheek and she smiled. Anna nodded and held his big right hand in both of hers before releasing him to pour the tea.

For Garret Fogarty, June had been frustrating. Right after he bought a new Wrangler Sport model, financial difficulties forced his boss to give him a pay cut. He was working for a small computer programming company in Pittsburgh that created high quality software and programs, including volcanic and wildfire hazard programs. The firm was treading water at the moment. Garret knew that if the company could survive the

month, things would get a lot better in July. Both he and his boss would finish major projects by August. That wouldn't be the only windfall of the summer. Lawyers had finally settled the disagreements over his childless great-uncle's estate. Garret would receive a handsome sum from his departed relation. The money would more than pay off his Jeep; he'd just have to tighten his belt until July.

There was something besides money that was bothering Garret. This problem was spiritual and it cut him deeper. No one seemed to be able to contact the "courageous mystery girl." Garret was flabbergasted. The thought of losing an opportunity to help that brave girl was hard to bear.

Garret Fogarty was not the only one who felt helpless. When Johnny Bowen learned of her existence, he had a similar reaction to Garret.

"I hope you're not fucking with me," he told Garret as the two sat inside Bowen's living room.

Johnny was going to show his friend some of the many books and he'd just bought - books on survival and medicine, which included medical techniques far more advanced than simple first aid.

"Why would I drive to Deer Park to lie to you?" Garret said.

"What's her name?" Johnny asked.

"I don't know yet," Garret said, "I'm going to ask my cousin's kid next time I see her. Give me a few weeks."

He looked at Bowen's black tee. It said "Opeth" and had a burning candle under the name. Garret had seen that band on Anna's iPod playlist. Bowen's shirt reminded Garret of the mystery girl's description.

"Do you know how much this would mean?" Johnny asked.

Johnny didn't think about Garret's gray slacks or green dress shirt. Garret always dressed like that, or so it seemed.

"If a girl, a beautiful or attractive girl took a stand for our race and wouldn't back down, we'd more than double our number," Johnny said, "Triple. Fuck, we'd more than triple our number. Men will lead this battle for our survival. But we will need our women to see the truth. What victory do we have if we lose our women, anyway? The fucking traitors and kikes have driven a wedge between us and them. You know, maybe this girl's one of the few to realize that our fates are one."

"Don't get your hopes up," Garret said.

"Of course I will," Johnny said, "I'll deal with the disappointment if and when I have to. I have hopes in our white sisters. Not all of them; but there will be a few who are awake, and they will be more precious than anything in this whole goddamned world."

Garret doesn't tell Bowen that there's already one right under their noses - Anna Murphy. He leaves it alone for now.

"You think she'd make such a big difference?" asks Garret.

"If a young, beautiful girl or woman stands up and says 'fuck you, I'm not betraying my brothers in race,' it will be a huge victory. Their evil fucking religion says white men are oppressors and women are an oppressed minority like niggers or hebes. We know its bullshit but do they know it? Will those who do know give up their privileges and do what's right? This one might be that rare angel. This one took a stand."

"I hope it turns out that way," Garret said, "We'll try to contact her somehow."

"Let's just hope to God she's OK in the meantime," Johnny said.

Garret nodded. Robert McKenna talked of whites standing up for one another. Even if they had to remain anonymous and every step forward had to be done in secret, Robert believed that a great deal of good could be done for those who would otherwise fall victim to the anti-white system or to the hordes of non-whites who the system encouraged to be violent. Everyone in the Old Core agreed, though some thought of McKenna's approach as a bandaid on a hemorrhage. Garret Fogarty was one of them.

"We might need a change of direction," Garret said, "I've been thinking about a lot of things, Johnny. McKenna might not be going far enough"

Bowen rubbed the back of his head.

"Yeah," he said, "I know."

Garret looked at Bowen as the former soldier shook his head.

"I feel so fucking useless sometimes," Johnny said, "One of ours is going through hell and we can't do a thing about it."

He had no idea of the hell that the "courageous mystery girl" had been through in the meantime.

Anna was back from diving practice on the second Monday in June. Though school was out for the summer and Gary didn't torture her by sending her to summer school, Anna was still very busy. She had archery and rifle practice, diving, reading and outdoor activities, and of course language practice with Garret. Though her crush on him was a thing of the past, she had actually grown closer to Garret and began to like him as a person and not an object of desire. She wanted to know him better and was happy that Gary had invited him on a trip to Ohiopyle the next cloudy weekend or Friday afternoon. Today she'd make supper for her and her father and then do some light weightlifting. Tomorrow would be busier still: She would practice Irish with Garret at 8 in the morning, do the shopping and clean the house, and finally, drive with her father to Bill's and practice

archery. When Gary came home on Monday afternoon she was putting the finishing touches on supper and after planting a kiss on his cheek she went back to the chore.

Gary returned to the table with clean hands and face. She'd already chastised him once for not doing a good enough job in the shower. Anna served the meals and took off the blue plaid apron that was her mothers, and then took two beers from the fridge. Gary allowed her to have a beer three times a week. He made it clear that if she took advantage of his generosity there'd be hell to pay.

After supper Gary stopped Anna from clearing the table. She looked at him in anticipation of an important announcement. She waited in silence as he stretched and sipped the final drops of his beer. He was milking it in order to tease her.

"Well, dad?" she said after waiting with the patience of Job.

His face took on a serious look and she knew the joviality was over.

"Back in February when I went fishing with Jimmy Ford," he said, "We got to shootin' the shit about this and that, well, one thing led to another, and he told me about his brother Paddy. Paddy's a tattoo artist."

Gary could see her face light up.

"I paid him a visit last week," Gary said, "That's the real reason I was late. He showed me some of his work and I asked him about what you wanted. He said he was sure he could do it. It'd cost a lot, but he could do it. The place is really clean, hell, he just left the place he worked at to open this one with a group of other artists." Gary looks from the wall and into her eyes. "Honey, do you still want that tattoo?"

She gasped in shock and nodded a few times before saying "Yes."

"There are conditions, Anna," he said, "You have to cover it while you're in school. That's gonna get hot you know. You'll have to wear long sleeves all year and don't go takin' your shirt off because they'll suspend you and I'll kick your ass, OK?"

She smiled and nodded.

"I'll keep it covered," she said.

"Also - one more thing," he said, "You're payin' for it. I'll loan you the difference but you'll start payin' me back each month."

"Sure, dad," she said, "I wouldn't ask you to do that."

"I'm gonna call him on Wednesday," Gary said, "You have an entire day to think about it. It's gonna hurt like all hell, Anna and if you aren't 100% sure you better say so now. The laser surgery to remove it is expensive and it will damage your beautiful skin."

"OK, dad," she said. She looked deep into his eyes. "Thank you."

She didn't tell him that there was no way she'd reconsider. He already figured that out anyway. Gary rose from the table and patted Anna on the back before retiring to his room.

That Friday Anna had her first session with Paddy Ford. Paddy did not normally decorate underage clients but Gary provided not only written consent he was also present during the procedure. Either Gary or Anna's cousin Michael would be there during the follow-up sessions which took place during after-hours at the parlor. The ink job was legal with parental consent but Paddy took this extra precaution. He did not want to attract excessive attention from disapproving legislators and other busybodies. The sessions would number five in total, with the last one taking place in early July. Needless to say, Anna would be taking a break from diving until the beginning of August. Her first tattoo session was the hardest, since she was not used to the procedure, though she toughed it out and was very pleased with the result. Fortunately she healed quickly and without complications after each procedure. The cleanliness of the studio, Paddy's skill and Anna's diligence had a lot to do with that happy outcome.

Garret came by for language practice the day after her first session with Paddy Ford. She was a little crabby from the pain but was elated to see Garret as the dashing young man climbed the steps to the front door. Gary had begun to hug Garret when he entered the Murphy Home and so too had Anna. Today, however, Anna would be cautious. She limited her greeting to words and a handshake.

"Hi, Garret," she said as he entered.

Right away he noticed the ivy that wound around her left arm and disappeared under her black sleeveless top. She kept that arm back when she came up close and shook his hand. He didn't say anything about the tat. In fact, it seemed that he wasn't too thrilled to see it.

Gary came in from the basement where he was putting together a new gun safe. Anna didn't know it yet, but she'd be getting a .45 automatic pistol for her birthday. Gary wiped his hands and then shook Garret's, pulling him in for an embrace. After sharing a beer with the young man, Gary left the two alone and returned to the basement.

Once an hour had passed, Anna and Garret took a break from the Irish. Gary, too, had taken a break from his labors and sat beside Garret at the kitchen table. Anna was still in the living room. She could hear them talking and laughing. Her dad was very much at ease with Garret. He never tempered his speech or censored his words. Garret, too, was quite open. At one point the topic of conversation became the California county that the United States federal government hoped to forcibly integrate.

"They're not gonna rest until the only whites left are the traitorous pieces of shit that did this to us," Gary said, "the ones in the gated communities where the only nigger or spic is doing the dishes."

Anna hears Garret agree.

"I worry so much about Anna," Gary said, "Her generation, and yours too, son. What choice are they giving you? You can't talk about what's happening or you're racist and you lose your job. You lose your job, you lose your wife or girlfriend because they're told to hate you, their own race, and just look for an excuse to run away with the kids and the money. The rich anti-white whites took away all the safe places except their own fortresses where you can't go, and they look down on us from there. It makes them feel better about themselves when a young white man like you gets screwed out of a good job by some affirmative action nigger. They act like they righted some wrong when all they did was backstab one of their white brothers. Then they take money from our paychecks and give it to their niggers, and they force us to live alongside those violent sons-of-bitches, and when we flee the crime and rape and all the garbage that those sons-of-bitches throw in their goddamned yards, the rich man calls us racist."

Anna hears Gary take a drink of coffee. She sips her own cup. For several years Garret had been meeting with other Society members and was very close to Cristian and Johnny Bowen. Were they close friends, or did Garret have some ulterior motive? She hated suspecting him. He hadn't given her a reason. In fact, she admired him, and was beginning to feel a strong attraction to Garret the man. Still, she felt a growing fear. It had been there for a little while. Her father was opening up quite a lot to this young man.

"What choice are they giving you, or Anna, or Johnny?" Gary asked, "They're telling you to shut up and die, that's what they're doing."

"I appreciate your concern Gary," Garret said, "Few people will thank you for caring about the future of your race, but I will. Thank you, Gary."

When Garret returned for the final hour of practice, Gary went out to his truck. They could hear him drive off to the service station. Anna stared into Garret's eyes and the distressed look on her face troubled him.

"Garret," she said in a soft voice, "Are you a narc?" He was taken aback by her question. "Please don't narc on my dad!" She closed her eyes and put her hand over them. "Don't tell the fucking mine, they'll fire him."

"Anna, listen," he said, "I promise you I'm not. I know a traitor will tell you anything but as God is my witness I am not a traitor. It will take time

to prove it, but I will." He looked at her. She lowered her hand and looked into his eyes. "However long it takes, I will prove that to you," he said.

"Please don't be a narc," she said.

She smiled but a faint look of pain was on her face.

"I won't be" he said, "Now don't cry, or you dad's going to beat me up."

She laughed.

"I won't cry," she said in Irish.

It wasn't the first time someone had suspected Garret of being an infiltrator. In light of the FBI's entrapment and infiltration of pro-white and suspected pro-white organizations, the suspicion was justified. Not long after Garret met John Bowen, he and Bowen enjoyed a beer at Cristian's place in McHenry, Maryland. It was a lovely little home with a view of Deep Creek Lake and the three would pledge to meet there more often. It was a beautiful fall day and the men elected to sit on the little wooden deck that faced the trees and the lake. Cristian suggested that they build a fire and make supper in the little fire pit out in the yard. The conversation had been light, with good looking girls and trophy walleye figuring among the most important subjects.

Though Cristian had become a very close friend of Garret Fogarty and was like a brother to Johnny Bowen, who he'd known all his life, Bowen did not seem to appreciate Garret's presence. Bowen was quiet that day and seemed to stare a little too long at the young blond. Garret was finally wearing a t-shirt though this was not the reason for Bowen's scrutiny. The real reason came out soon enough.

"You seem pretty interested in everyone's business," Johnny said without any noticeable provocation, "How's that Van Dyke guy? What's he into, Garret? God knows you meet with him enough."

Garret looked into Bowen's green eyes. They were fierce and he knew Bowen was savage and powerful. He didn't need for Cristian to tell him; he could see it in his eyes. Garret didn't flinch.

"What the hell's the matter with you, John?" Cristi asked.

"Say what you're getting at," said Garret who still returned Bowen's stare.

"You're pretty quick to bring race into shit," Johnny said, "You know they call us racist, 'cause we give a fuck about our race. You want to know what I'm getting' at? I'm curious, are you a traitor, Garret, and if so is it money or some goddamned sense of doing what's right? Hmm? Are we the bad guys? Are we the fucking Nazis?"

"What the fuck John?" Cristian said, "Garret's not a fucking narc, he's been a friend of mine for years now. You think I'm that fucking stupid?"

"A guy doesn't have to start out as a traitor," Johnny said, "Maybe he found some Japanese pussy at Lycoming and he needs to strike a blow for the fucking 'slopes or else he won't get any."

"Do you have any paper handy?" Garret asked. Cristian looked at him. "Please, Cristi, could you bring a pen and paper?"

A bewildered Cristian O'Toole retreated to the kitchen.

"I love these people," Johnny said, "Cristi, the members of the Society and the Donnelly's. The enemy just won't leave us the fuck alone. They have to beat us into the mud until we give in to their genocide and then they beat us some more. They won't even let us have a fucking happy marriage, just a man and his wife, they have to poison her mind and turn him into a pussy so she's fucking some nigger and he's too weak to cut the fucker's nuts off. If that's what you serve, Garret, then goddamn you, you fuck!"

Garret looked into Johnny's flaming eyes but said nothing.

Cristian returned with a note pad and pen. He glared at Bowen. Garret wrote something on the pad and then handed it to Johnny. He glanced at the pad, upon which Garret had written two addresses and other information.

"Give that to someone who knows how to use a rifle," Garret said, "and tell him that if any of you get busted for hate crimes or hate speech or whatever excuse the government wants to use for destroying white people, he'll know where to find the narc. If possible, make sure it's someone I don't know. Take a picture if you need one. I'll be at each Society meeting and you can call me at either of those numbers and we'll get together for a picture if you wish. If you don't trust that, have someone at the Society take my picture and give it to you. That way your sniper won't screw up the job."

"You'll flee once you make the call," Johnny said.

"I have family all over these parts," Garret said, "You can hurt me in more ways than one."

"Those words don't mean shit to me," Johnny said, "but I will fucking check you out."

"I expect you too," Garret said, "To be honest with you, I've been dismayed at how easily some of our people have accepted a man like me into their ranks. But then, you have to take a chance sometime, or we'll all die by ourselves."

"We probably will anyway," said Bowen as he pockets the paper.

Needless to say, the three did not build a fire that evening. Garret did request another meeting the next week and Bowen did show for it. He was

true to his word; Johnny visited both locales that Garret had provided and even dropped by the small software company where Garret worked.

For two years Garret assumed that Bowen kept the paper. In reality he had destroyed it after two months. The day after he burned it, he mentioned a couple of ideas to Garret and Cristian. He suggested that they look for a small place between Pittsburgh and Cumberland. In time, they would purchase a small house in Markleysburg, Pennsylvania. Bowen also brought up the idea for a white-friendly musical club or venue. That, too, would become reality.

Once the language lesson came to an end, Anna walked with Garret out to his new Jeep. After he climbed inside she put her hand on the open door.

"I'm sorry," she said in Irish.

"Don't be," he said in English and winked.

She removed her hand and waved as he left.

There was an event of great joy and happiness late in the month of June - Bryce Murphy was born to Michael and Emily Murphy. He was a healthy baby boy with blue eyes and brown hair. Aside from the parents and grandparents, Anna was first to hold him. Gary watched her smile and saw the boundless love in her eyes as she held Bryce, and it reminded him so much of Mary that for just a moment tears of joy and loss began to swell in his eyes. He controlled them before anyone else could see.

Anna wouldn't mind babysitting the child. In fact, she'd ask to do so.

"He's precious, just precious," she would say, "He's a strong little man!"

At the end of June, the industrial metal band *Icarus Feather* played at Diamond Crossing. The Smyrna, New York quartet was the first truly professional band to play at the Murrysville venue. The crowd was the largest thus far and for the first time the new faces outnumbered the Diamond Crew, their friends and security personnel. This was the first show that Mason Walker and Austin Kelly attended. The two were putting their self-defense training to good use: they supplemented the security personnel at the gate and inside the venue. In time, Mason would pursue further training and become a part-time bouncer. He would continue to work at Diamond for as long as its doors remained open.

Mason Walker and Austin Kelly weren't the only new faces at the first "big" show. Among the decent-sized crowd was an intensely beautiful teenage girl with thick brown hair and blue eyes as bright as Anna's and skin just as pale. Her face was gorgeous and unique and if she had smiled from happiness it would have been glorious to behold. She did not smile;

though she enjoyed the music and had been a metal and hardcore fan for many years of her young life, there was great pain and tumult in her life. John Bowen noticed her as did Garret. She was wearing jeans and a tee like most other patrons. The two did not notice her lace-up boots, since her jeans hid the middle and tops of the boots. There was no opportunity to converse with her and when she left with another girl the two men had to return to the many tasks at hand. There would be another show on Saturday and the place would need to be in top-shape again. John in particular was preoccupied with thoughts of another mystery girl. It pained him that they could not contact the courageous girl from Uniontown High.

She must be going through emotional agony, Bowen thought, and we might as well be a million fucking miles away.

Actually, the distance had been twelve feet.

As June became July, Garret Fogarty had little free time to spare. The lawyers finally resolved his inheritance, and after they and the state stole their share, he received the remaining monies. It immediately opened doors for the young man. He met first with John Bowen to discuss a few of the possible uses for the money.

It was torrid outside. Bowen had just returned home from work. He'd been driving a rig since 5AM from Cumberland over Caddell Mountain and was eager for some good news. Maybe Garret knew the mystery girl's name. Maybe he'd contacted her.

Bowen had the air conditioner running full blast and still he wore a tank top and shorts. Cristian had repaired the central air unit after it suddenly failed and now it ran better than ever. Neither Bowen nor Garret Fogarty much enjoyed the high heat and humidity, so Garret hurried from his Jeep to Bowen's front door. He'd just come from work as well, and still wore his heavier office attire.

Bowen greeted Garret at the door. Garret could see the black rabbit tattoo on Bowen's upper right arm. He'd noticed it years before but had the courtesy not to ask.

"C'mon in," Johnny said, "I've got some beer on ice and they're good and cold."

In a bucket full of ice sat six bottles of Boston Ale. Garret sat on the blue couch opposite Bowen's arm chair. There was no TV in the house; in its place was a desktop computer.

"So, what's up?" Johnny asked, hoping for the best possible news.

Garret told him he had something important to discuss, and Bowen had anticipated his arrival. As usual, Garret did not go into details over the phone.

"I finally have money in the bank," Garret said.

Garret's hair was cut a little shorter than usual; it no longer crept down his neck. Bowen knew from Anna that she liked it long.

"Hey, don't cut your damn hair so short," Johnny said.

"O...K..." said a surprised Garret, "That's a little weird."

"Funny," Johnny said, "I couldn't care less what you do, but if you paid fucking attention you'd see that somebody else likes it long."

"How do you know?" Garret asked.

Johnny Bowen had spent a lot of time with Anna at the range and at the training room in the "Long Hall." With Gary Murphy and "Irish John" Boyle, they had practiced shooting high powered rifles in the forest around the Donnelly Homestead and also in the woods south of Parsons, West Virginia. Between Bowen and Garret, the latter spent the most time with her and received most of her attentions. Garret noticed it growing in intensity lately and tried to keep the relationship stable. It was futile and he knew it. Anna would be seventeen soon, and cross the threshold from girl to young woman. Garret's grandmother was seventeen when she wed and he often considered her the only sane one in the family.

"It's the third thing Anna said she liked about you," Johnny said.

"What were the other two?" Garret asked.

"Don't be ignorant," Johnny said. He grabbed a beer from the bucket. "So, are you gonna tell me why you're here?"

"Dullahan's going to need a safe house," Garret said, "In case things get ugly. Victims, victors, protectors alike will need a hiding place. It might not always be possible to end a threat and our people are going to need a place to hide."

"Good idea," Johnny said, "One problem though. Dullahan's gonna include a lot of people eventually. Some will sell out. There's no way we can keep a safe house secret if more than the Core know about it."

"I'm still thinking about that," Garret said, "But whether or not Dullahan comes to be, I still think it's a good idea to have that kind of place."

"So do I," Johnny said.

"Let's keep it between us, at least until I know more," Garret said, "I've talked to Bill about the idea, and he said as much. In fact, he said he didn't want to know the location if we build a safe house. He did say we'll need to talk to Gary about building a secret escape route, which of course is an excellent idea."

"Tell me, Garret," Johnny said, "Why'd you choose to tell me?"

"I trust you the most with things like this," Garret said.

Johnny looked at him for a few moments. Garret opened his beer and took a drink.

"Whose name is it going to be under?" Johnny asked, "If shit hits the fan, they'll figure out our names, then go right to the safe house.

"I'm going to talk to Van Dyke," Garret said, "He's a good young man who loves his race, and we'll need him. That, and I checked up on him as much as I could. Bill said there's no record of him associating with the Society, nothing."

"That's one reason you got close to him, isn't it?" Johnny said.

"I'd love to have the luxury of sitting down to a beer and just talking to people, just to have good friends," Garret said, "We don't have that luxury."

"No, we don't," Johnny said, "Anyway, there's something I want to tell you about Dullahan."

"Sure," Garret said.

"I don't think it'll work," Johnny said, "I think every white parent should have their children trained in self-defense, shit yes. This fucking world wants to devour them and they'll have to fight to survive. As part of a larger idea, it's great. But if it's all we have, I don't think it will work."

"Neither do I," Garret said.

Bowen raised an eyebrow. He didn't expect a challenge, but he did expect Garret to ask for time to consider his doubts. Apparently Garret already had doubts of his own.

"Michael doesn't think it will work, either," Garret said, referring to Michael Donnelly, "There are too few of us, and too many of them. And they're more and more ruthless. SWAT would come and destroy any group that trains white people to fight. They'd call it terrorism. It doesn't matter that it's for self-defense and protection. They don't want us to protect ourselves. They want us to go extinct."

"That's why Dullahan won't work," Johnny said, "You know, a safe house could be even more important if we change the way we look at this fight."

"How we look at it?" Garret asked.

"Everyone assumes we'll just react," Johnny said, "It doesn't have to be that way. Reacting surrenders the initiative to the enemy."

"Agreed," Garret said, "I'm going to talk to Van Dyke. If he's not in, I'll ask Austin Kelly or I'll see if Bill can come up with someone."

"Gary?" Johnny asked.

"Too risky for him," Garret said, "I don't want anything to put him and Anna in peril."

"I understand," Johnny said, "Don't forget, though, they are in peril. They're white."

Garret agreed.

"How much trust do you have in Van Dyke?" Johnny asked, "He's a good man, but his name will be on a safe house for God's sake!"

"It's getting late in this awful game," Garret said, "Sometimes all we have is desperation."

"Amen," Johnny said, "Speaking of desperation, have you heard anything about the mystery girl?"

"No," Garret said, "Don't you think I would have told you as soon as I walked in?"

"OK, cranky motherfucker," Johnny said, "But tell me the minute you find out something. Don't make me wait for some grand fucking entrance."

The next day Garret would work from the afternoon into the evening, as would Aaron Van Dyke. Garret called Aaron and invited him to his small apartment in Pittsburgh. He knew it would be near Van Dyke's route to work and as expected Van Dyke accepted the offer. Garret brewed tea and set out sourdough biscuits for a snack. He had hopes that Van Dyke would accept being the proprietor of a safe house. He had gotten to know each member of the Core and assessed Aaron as the most likely candidate. If he did accept, there would be ramifications for the future. For one, he'd have to distance himself from the Core. Garret saw this happening anyway, what with the young man's trips to distant lands. The mortality rate of high-altitude climbers troubled Garret, but Van Dyke was a serious and cautious climber as well as the perfect candidate for Garret's plan.

Aaron Van Dyke arrived a little early. When Garret's elderly neighbor Mrs. Derstine saw Aaron climbing the front steps of Garret's apartment, she assumed that Aaron was one of the Fogarty's relations, perhaps Garret's brother. Aaron was wearing jeans and a white t-shirt, with sandals on his feet.

He must be a student, thought Mrs. Derstine.

Garret invited Aaron inside the little Pittsburgh apartment that had been Fogarty's primary home for four years. The austerity surprised Aaron, as did the immaculate nature of what was obviously a bachelor's pad. The clean drapes were pure white and the kitchen - visible through the open door to the living room - had nary a stain or hint of soot. Even the window exhaust fan was spotless.

The two sat down to tea. After customary small talk, Garret got to the point. He expected Van Dyke to say he'd think about the offer, as he had done with Dullahan and the few previous suggestions that Garret had

made. Garret believed there was a good chance he'd agree. Aaron had pondered Dullahan and then, two weeks later, he asked when he could start self-defense training.

"Aaron, I have a huge request that I'd like to ask," Garret said, "It's not a simple one, but it is vitally important. I'm going to buy some property and build a safe house and I'd like your name to be on it."

"Why?" Aaron asked.

Aaron was tanned again from a recent mountaineering expedition that included technical ice climbing.

"Dullahan will get ugly," Garret said, "And if we figure out something better it will be the same. No matter what, if we have to fight we'll need a place to regroup, or even hide. I don't know exactly what's going to happen but I know that the status quo is unacceptable. Our people are disappearing from the Earth, and with them everything that we hold dear."

"I don't want any of this," Aaron said, looking into Garret's eyes. "But who does? It all fell on us and we can't keep wishing it away, can we?"

Van Dyke is very handsome; he's rugged and gregarious in a crowd without being impolite. His body is in peak shape and his lifestyle is exotic and exciting. He should have everything to look forward to in life. Most men and women like him would carouse about and seek enjoyment in every minute. Unlike them, he does not want the coming deluge to sweep away his descendants. One of the reasons Garret considered Aaron Van Dyke is because he appears to live not only for the moment, but for the moments beyond.

"One thing I can guarantee, Aaron," Garret said, "if anyone ever gets caught there, for whatever reason, they're trespassing on your property. That includes me. They can add breaking and entering and trespassing to whatever other crimes they accuse us of. You'll be living your life and climbing mountains, probably thousands of miles away."

"I try not to ask for too much," Aaron said, "I would like to climb at least a few of the eight-thousanders. That's not too much, is it? I'd like my children and their children to see Everest and Denali. I don't want trouble, but... But what has our elite ever done for us, so we can live in peace and leave those dreams for our children?"

"Nothing," Garret said, "If more whites had taken a stand back when it was easy, we'd be sitting here talking about our dreams, and how we'd already lived a lot of them."

Van Dyke peered out the window. He saw two young white boys walking toward a little barber shop two buildings down. One of the boys was tossing a football into the air.

What has this system and those who manipulate it ever done for our people? Aaron thought. They flood our white nations with non-whites.

They encourage abortions for white women.

They push miscegenation and demonize those who oppose the extinction of our race.

Anyone who criticizes their anti-white treason is branded a Nazi, and some are imprisoned.

They won't rest until people who look like me are gone from the Earth.

"I'll sign," Van Dyke said.

Anna's tat was finished and healed by the time Garret resumes regular language practice in mid-July. She was sure to wear a top that would show it off - a black sleeveless shirt with a single strap between her shoulders. Garret won't be able to see the entire work of art but he will see the majority, including the ivy winding around her upper and lower arms. Gary could tell she's excited and told her to settle down. He was aware that she would soon be seventeen, but that doesn't mean he wants her married off the day after her birthday. He likes Garret but he's going to have to like him a whole lot more before he would bless such a union. At least Garret has kept his distance when their friendship might be straying into dangerous territory.

As beautiful as Anna has become, and no doubt will continue to become, it is not an easy task. Since all men and women can fall into temptation, Gary will still be present when the two meet. He could tell Garret to leave and never return. In addition to being an uncalled-for rebuke of a decent and innocent young man, Gary would consider such a move short-sighted and rash. He would not mind seeing his daughter find such a man when she is of age. He does not wish to keep her locked in the house until urges and longings get the better of her and she runs off with a far less desirable mate.

Garret did not work today; he had business at the bank. Today he paid off the Markleysburg place. Garret's attire is sharp as usual. It's a sign of respect for his friends and hosts. When Garret sat down to begin practice, Anna stood to her feet. She turned around and pulled her ponytail over her shoulder so that it would not obscure her back or shoulders. Not only can Garret see the vines that encircle her arms, he can see the opposite ends approach and disappear under her shirt.

"Do you like it?" she asked him in Irish.

"I don't like tattoos," he said, also in Irish, "The workmanship is excellent, but I don't like tattoos."

Garret would never wish to upset her but he will not withhold or alter his opinion just to please her. He is a man, after all.

Anna turned around to face him. She should have considered this possibility but in her excitement she did not.

"No?" she said in English.

"Your skin was fine," he said in Irish.

She looked down. He hated seeing the disappointment but a man does not lie when his opinion is asked.

"Anna," he said, "I'd like to continue our practice. Do you want to take a few minutes first?"

She bit her lip and then looked into his eyes. Every time he stared into those blue eyes he was amazed at their beauty; it's not something a man can ever get used to, or cease to adore.

"Would you consider dating a girl with ink?" she asked in English, quiet enough so that Gary cannot hear from the bedroom.

"It would depend on where she got it," he said, "and the reason why."

"What if it's a symbol of who she is, and who she lost?" Anna said, "What if it reminds her of who she wants to be? Would it matter if it's on her arms? Could you date a girl like that, even if you don't like her ink?"

"I could," he said.

She looked down and a little smile came to her face.

"Let's talk about tools and appliances," she said in the Irish, "I think that's good stuff for a man to know."

Before Garret departed, Gary poured him a cup of coffee and the two went out on the small front porch. Gary leaned on the black metal railing and looked out at the horizon. The day's heat is giving birth to an angry storm.

"Gonna be a severe one," Gary said, "I already heard warnings down south at Audra Park and Preston County."

"Do you mind if I ask you something personal?" Garret asked.

A flash of heat lightning diverts his stare for a moment.

"Shoot," Gary said.

"Why'd you let her get a tattoo?" Garret asked.

Gary smiled as he looked at the furious skies.

"She's gonna be a woman soon," Gary said, "The law says she can get one in a year. I knew that she'd get that tattoo whether I want her to or not. It means that much to her. To be honest, Garret, if she's a good girl and loves her white brothers and sisters, and doesn't screw around or take drugs, doesn't smoke or do any of the big shit, it doesn't really bother me. I wouldn't have agreed to a tattoo on her rear or chest, or anything

that makes her body look ugly, but I knew she wouldn't want that kind of thing. I thought she wanted a mermaid, to be honest, that's what I'd have guessed, maybe on her ankle or arm or some shit like that. But then she surprised me."

Gary turned away from the approaching storm and looked into Garret's eyes.

"That girl lost her mother," Gary said, "and she knows that her mother risked her life for her to be born. The way I look at it, this is her way of showing the world that the love of her mother is with her forever. She certainly honors her by the way she acts and behaves. Anna's a wonderful girl and I couldn't be more blessed to have such a daughter. A man cannot have a better child to call his own, and such a beautiful one at that. White skin, blue eyes, red hair, that gentle smile and all that strength inside, and the ivy on her arms."

"Thank you, Gary," Garret said, "Your words mean a lot to me."

Gary squeezed Garret's shoulder with his ursine hand.

"Come over on Saturday," Gary said, "Bring Johnny too. We're going over to Laurel Ridge with Jesse and the Donnelly's."

"I'll be there," Garret said.

The next day, at the Markleysburg place, Bowen was cleaning up branches and leaves from last night's storm. It was late afternoon on a Friday and the weather was nice enough for Johnny Bowen to wear jeans instead of shorts.

At 5:30 Garret drove up to the garage and exited his Jeep. He was dressed for work, though it was sometimes difficult to tell. Tonight he'd be burning the midnight oil at Terradox Software. Bowen would be driving from 10PM until morning.

"I have news for you," Garret said.

It was all he had time for, and the fact that he drove all the way here from Pittsburgh made Johnny suspect that it related to the "mystery girl".

"What's her name?" Johnny asked.

"Kaylee Campbell," Garret said.

That night the band *Chironex* made their debut at Diamond Crossing. Rian Donnelly and John McShane agreed to fill in for Garret and Johnny Bowen. Anna attended the show and came away a huge fan of hardcore in general and *Chironex* in particular. Eventually she'd download all of their available music. Once Garret became well-acquainted with lead singer David Hill, the band would provide him - and Anna - with exclusive tracks. She still preferred metal to hardcore, but the distance had narrowed greatly.

The fearless lyrics of the band's songs impressed and energized Anna. They no doubt had the same effect on any other attendee who valued his race and resented the attacks on its survival. Hill was relentless and aggressive and at the same time possessed a very rare talent for hardcore music. As good as *Icarus Feather* had been, this band was extraordinary. If they had been willing to betray their principles and embrace political correctness, *Chironex* would have been a major force in the genre.

The crowd was large enough that Anna did not notice a beautiful blue-eyed girl in the audience. The girl wore the usual t-shirt and jeans, as well as a pair of lace-up boots and tight black gloves. She enjoyed the *Icarus* show, though her melancholy mood did not allow her to show it. Tonight she was invigorated by the music. On many occasions over the past three years she'd felt alone. Now she heard her thoughts and beliefs echoed in the extraordinary sounds and voice of a talented singer and his skilled band. On top of it all, hardcore was her preferred style of music. The night's show lifted her spirits and gave comfort to her tormented mind and soul.

Before the end of the show, she took note of a beautiful redhead in the audience. The redheaded girl did not seem to notice the mystery girl, and the two did not have an opportunity to meet.

It would be a little while longer before Anna Murphy came to know Kaylee Jane Campbell.

In August Anna Murphy returned to the pool. Two months away from diving will affect the results, and it was obvious from the large splashes and over-rotations that Anna wasn't as polished as she used to be. She had real talent for the sport, however, and by the end of the first practice after her tattoo had healed she was returning to her old form. Sinead had come along and tried her skills at diving. Her performance would have been disastrous had it not been for the enjoyment. Once, the Donnelly's became a little distressed when Anna dived in and failed to return to the surface. Gary wasn't the least perturbed; she did this often. She'd swim along the bottom and then rise up like a dolphin, all the while moving her body and legs like a mermaid. She broke the surface with enough force to propel much of her body above the water, and Megan and Bill breathed a sigh of relief.

A couple of days later the remains of Hurricane Beryl turned north after making landfall in South Carolina and the ghost of the once-powerful cyclone raced west into Ohio. Pennsylvania would escape all but wind gusts and bands of light rain, but the sky was breathtaking that evening

as the sunset illuminated the dead arms of the former hurricane. Anna and Gary had watched the sun disappear before going inside to make supper. Today, Gary was head chef, and the specialty was his "patented" vegetable and cheese spaghetti.

Anna had been quiet on the porch. She was quiet at the table as well. Gary mentioned work and the upcoming bow hunting season and how well Anna had done at yesterday's diving practice. The rust had certainly fallen off. It was to no avail. Anna remained quiet. She still had her appetite, so Gary left her alone until supper was over.

Coffee or teatime was always a good time to talk. Gary poured two cups of chamomile tea and rubbed his daughter's head before taking his seat. She fiddled with the little ceramic fish on the table. She'd forgotten to fill it with toothpicks.

"What's goin' on in that head of yours?" Gary asked.

Gary looked even larger than usual in his muscle shirt. The hurricane had jacked up the humidity and prompted Gary to dress accordingly.

"I've been thinkin' about a lot about things," Anna said, "Where we're headed and what I want to do, and, well, what I have to do. You know, dad, when you know what's happening you can't just close your eyes anymore."

"I know, honey," he said, "It's hard. Really hard. I watched you grow knowing what kind of world waited for you. I can't tell you how tough it is when you know that your child's gonna be worse off than you are."

She sips her tea.

"I was thinking about guys, you know?" she said, "Even that word, 'guys', I meant to say men. School and movies and all that worthless junk teaches us to be mean and bitchy, and they try to make us want other women more than a good white man. They teach men to be weak or to be players, not strong and decent like they should be. It's only one or the other and it's always aimed at us whites. Niggers are supposed to be strong and their women are supposed to love their men. It's all deliberate, there's no way it's a mistake or a coincidence. How could it be? How is it not genocide to do that to people?"

"We know that, honey," he said, "What's really troubling you?"

"I'm not just a woman," she said, "I'm a white woman. I want to have white children, and I can't even say that without being threatened or punished. How much can we take until, well..."

She did not finish the sentence. She shrugged in place of saying the words. Gary's enormous pride in his daughter filled his soul, but there was also pain - the pain of Mary's death, the pain of knowing that Anna had to

bear that loss as well. Hearing the desperation in his daughter's voice was damn near unbearable.

"All I can say is I'm sorry, honey," Gary said, "We left this mess for you. We could have stopped it, but we followed the obedient generation and we gave you a world that hates you. I'd give anything to change that."

"It's not your fault, dad," she said and smiled for the first time, "You showed me that I'm white as well as a woman. I wouldn't want to be what I'm not, and I don't want to deny who I am. Dad, thank you for that. Thank you."

"Sweetheart," he said, "What kind of father lets his daughter hate who she is? I promised your mother I wouldn't raise a man-hating, anti-white slave. And you're not. I'm no genius but I think I did all right."

"I'll take a white coal miner over an anti-white manager or professor any day of the week" Anna said, "This is one beautiful white girl they can't have."

Gary could read her smile; this one was more sly than innocent. He laughed.

"I did pretty well, huh?" he said.

"You did," she said.

Anna sipped her tea and her smile went away like the steam that rose from the cup. She sighed and continued to share her thoughts.

"What about the future, dad?" she said, "No one stands up for us. Really, I don't care as much about that, but no one's standing up for our children. Parents talk about taxes or debt or this legislation or that, but they never say anything about fewer and fewer white babies or us being bred out of existence. No one at school seems to care about the future. I know they'd get in trouble, but they should at least show signs of caring. And why do they get in trouble for caring about their race, anyway? You've heard how red hair is going to disappear forever." She stroked her thick hair, which she let hang loose today. "They never act like it's bad for red hair or blue eyes to die out. But if some Congo nigger's in danger, we have to save him. Do you remember that dirty Jew gloating about white people dying? Why didn't someone kick his ass? Some big Irishman? We're white too! I would have done it if no one else would. He had to be around white people sometime."

"He's surrounded by traitors," Gary said, "They're just like white celebrities who let kikes and queers use them for propaganda films. Treason is profitable right now, so they collect their big checks and betray their grandchildren. They're safe because they're surrounded by traitors and they think it'll last."

"Dad," says Anna as she looks deep into his eyes, "When is it OK to strike back?"

He looks at his daughter for a while. She waits for him. She'll wait for an hour if necessary; all night if he forces her to. She knows he'll answer.

"When it's a war," he says.

There's more. God, how he doesn't want to say it; but he must answer her. It's her life and her future, and her race as well as his.

"When your children are threatened," he says, "you have to fight."

In the wake of Beryl the weather moderates. There's a hint of fall in the August air and the starry nights are brilliant and a little chilly. John Bowen is enjoying a beautiful Sunday in Markleysburg. Yesterday he accompanied the Murphy's to the Donnelly Homestead where they shot guns and bows, enjoyed a lengthy bullshit session, and rode ATVs out to Dunbar Creek. Today he'll relax out in the open garage. Trouble seems a little further away than usual, though of all people Johnny Bowen knows it lurks around every corner.

Johnny can tell that his bliss will soon be over when a black Jeep Wrangler drives up to the garage. Johnny isn't expecting a visit from Garret and he's not optimistic enough to anticipate good news. When Garret walks over and sits on a bench beside him, Johnny can tell from his body language that he is bearing bad news. Garret rubs the back of his head and exhales sharply.

"What?" Johnny says, "Something happened, didn't it?" He sits up in his lawn chair. "Is everyone alright?"

"Yeah, we're good," Garret says.

"Is it Kaylee?" Johnny asks, "Did she apologize and make an ass of herself?"

Garret shakes his head.

"I visited my cousin yesterday, while you were at Bill's," he says, "Sandra's daughter said something about Kaylee Campbell. It would seem that a group of students pinned her - by that I think she meant attacked her, although I'm not certain. Kaylee called one of them a 'nigger' and was suspended for it."

Deanna actually said "n-word" rather than "nigger" when she told the news to Garret.

"So they attack her," Johnny says, "She uses a goddamned word, and she gets suspended. It's a fucking word! This goddamned country..." He shakes his head. "Fuck this place!"

"If what I've heard is correct, then, yes," Garret says, "They attacked her and she got suspended."

"What do you have on her?" Bowen asks, "Anything? Tell me something."

Garret stares into Bowen's green eyes.

"Nothing," he says, "Her Facebook hasn't been updated in over a year, there's no Twitter, no old Myspace page, no Jaiku, no Orkut no Netlog. Nothing. An image search gave me a picture of a girl who might be her, but no information. We can't call Uniontown High School without raising suspicion and we can't drop by. We're blind."

"Blind," Bowen says, "Just fucking great. You know, fuck Dullahan. One life, just one and we can't reach her. SWPL faggots won't send their kids to be trained in self-defense because they know it'll open their eyes to race and all the fucking shit our race is facing, and at the same time we can't fucking help a girl right here in our own goddamned backyard. When the fuck is McKenna going to start Dullahan, anyway? Outside of our group, I mean."

"It's going to take a while," Garret says, "You know as well as I do that he has to find people he can trust."

"I get that," Bowen says, "But how many times are we going to watch one of ours get hurt or killed? Kaylee's a perfect example. There's a reason they attacked her. We're exactly who she needs, and she might as well be on the bottom of the fucking ocean. How's the protection part of Dullahan supposed to work if we can't even contact someone?"

"How would we contact her anyway?" asks Garret, "You know, I was thinking about that, it's a bigger dilemma than we might realize. What do we say? Hey, how's it going, aren't you the girl who got suspended for using a word? Other than an email that may or not make it past the spam filter, we have to be careful not to scare her off."

"I don't think we'll scare this one off," Bowen says, "Not if what your relative says is true. It would be nice if Anna could talk to her, or maybe Jesse. Of course we'll have to find a way to get to her." Johnny shakes his head. "Fucking hell."

"We'll keep at it," Garret says, "There's nothing more I can say."

There is one more thing that Garret can do. On Friday he meets with Anna for language practice. He tells her about Kaylee, and asks that she be on the lookout for the Campbell girl. There's not much hope, considering Anna doesn't hang out with Uniontown High students. Still, there's Diamond and it's worth a shot in the dark.

On Saturday morning, Garret's private cell rings. He's getting ready for his usual morning jog before heading to the gym for weights. Later, he'll meet with Anna, Sinead and Rian at the Donnelly Homestead for a

bit of shooting and mudding with the ATVs. He checks the phone and discovers the call is from Anna. He hopes she isn't calling to cancel.

"Hi, Anna," Garret says.

"I hope it's not a bad time," she says.

"No, not at all," he responds.

It's going to be a beautiful day in the forest.

"Hey," she says, "I wanted to tell you about a girl I met last night. I don't know if it's Kaylee or not, I doubt it. She fit the description but her pal called her 'Jane.' I didn't get to talk to her much, just 'hello' and a few words or two about the band. She was really beautiful, but sad, you know? She wasn't crying or anything but she had this vibe of sadness. Anyway, I thought I'd tell you since I'm being alert for someone like that."

"Thank you, Anna," Garret says, "If you see her again, please ask her name."

"I'm sorry, Garret," Anna says, "I got like twenty seconds or so and it just didn't happen. I'm sorry."

"No need to apologize," Garret says, "We don't need to make her feel threatened. You're probably right, I doubt it was Kaylee."

The school year begins and for most of September the trail to Kaylee Campbell grows cold. Garret takes a trip north to Syracuse and Buffalo, where he meets with Michael Donnelly. After a year of practice and the required driving time, Anna earns her license. The Core continues to meet at the Homestead. McKenna's self-defense program moves forward within the group, though he has yet to find a trustworthy trainee from outside the Core. Sinead approaches seventeen; in late September, Anna reaches that milestone. She is no longer a girl. She is a young woman.

Anna rises early on the morning of the 14th of September. It's Friday and Gary is allowing her to stay home for her birthday. He's taken the day off to be with her. She'll open her gifts after diving practice - all except one. Gary gives it to her that morning and she opens it with anticipation. A year previous she'd asked for a special new swimsuit. It was shiny silver and made like a water polo suit, with full front and back coverage. Though not insufficient in material, it would hug her body in a manner that some might call provocative, and that combined with its attention-grabbing color made Gary decline. Now that she's older and has demonstrated her ability to resist temptations, Gary acquiesces; inside the box is the silver swimsuit. At first Anna believes it's the same one she chose. When she lifts the bright suit she sees otherwise. From the chest to the belly section is a mermaid's silhouette in black. He must have had it special-made because she's never seen anything like it before. She tries it on and it fits perfect-

ly. She feels gorgeous in the suit, like a real-life mermaid. Before they depart for the aquatic center she gives Gary a huge hug.

Inside the women's locker room, Anna takes off her jeans and As / Lay Dying t-shirt. She removes the silver crucifix she often wears, kissing it as she lays it in her bag. She has not lost her faith, just her respect for the corrupt clergy. Once she dons the suit she checks herself out in the mirror. She smiles at what she sees. There's nothing wrong with knowing you're beautiful, or with the pride you feel from working hard to be in excellent shape. Anna takes down her ponytail; the mermaid's hair is going to flow today.

On the 1-meter springboard she is spectacular, not only her ravishing beauty but her grace and talent while diving. She very rarely looks over at her audience during practice, and today her concentration is so thorough that she will not pay much attention until after the final dive. Then she'll run over and bask in the compliments. She likes those too, though she never says anything other than "thank you" and other words of appreciation. She nails the final dive, leaving behind a splash whose small size seems physically impossible for her womanly body. It's one of the best she's ever done. She comes close to laughing in joy while she's still underwater, and shoots up to the surface. There she looks at the small group of friends and relatives. Among them is a face she knows very well but has not seen here before: the face of Garret Fogarty. When she sees him she smiles. The single distraction she's had on the board today was the thought that he might see her diving someday, in this suit, with her hair down. Suddenly she plunges underwater head-first, her bottom rising above the surface and her legs splashing in unison like a flipper as she dives down. Her arms to her side and her legs held together, she undulates like a mermaid beneath the surface until she arrives a short distance from the side of the pool. There, she turns vertical and breaks the surface.

A father of one of the other divers wonders why Anna never became a swimmer. Some of the girls on his daughter's swim team can't swim underwater nearly as well as Anna, and they've trained with an instructor. He notices the ink on her arms and shoulders.

So that's it, he thinks, She's crazy.

Other than giving in to the temptation of looking at a stunning beauty in a swimsuit, he doesn't pay any further attention to Anna. Garret Fogarty, who is not divorced for cheating on his first wife and who is not a Neocon Republican shill for Israel and Big Oil, also admires the incredible redhead who rises from the waters. He, too, sees the ivy tattoo. Unlike the Neocon fool, Garret begins to see a beauty in the ink. Though his opi-

nions haven't changed, he can imagine a spiritual beauty written in her body art. Despite all the worries and looming hard times he allows himself a moment of bliss. Anna is real, and she is awake. She is also beautiful beyond words. When she emerges from the pool he thinks of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and is immediately embarrassed at the cliché, though in this case it is apt.

Once she's showered and changed back into her jeans and sneakers Anna returns to her adoring fans. She hugs Gary, shakes Rian Donnelly's hand, and then hugs Garret when he expects a handshake. On the way back the four stop for gas and Garret and Anna have a minute or two alone. He asks her a question that's been lingering on his mind.

"Anna, not that long ago you wondered if I was an infiltrator" he says.

"I know you're not," she says, "I was just in a mood, you know?"

"It's not bad to be vigilant," he says, "But I wanted to ask you, if I had been, what would you have done?"

"Please don't ask that," she says.

She turns to look at him. They're both in the back seat of Rian's FT Cruiser.

"It's important," he says.

She leans over and rubs his cheek. Her smooth white hand is quite warm. Anna smiles but he can tell in an instant that there's no joy in it.

"I would have had to kill you," she says, "I won't let anyone hurt my family. I won't let anyone hurt my dad or my family. You're one of them, now, you and Bill and Johnny, and everyone from the old club. You're part of my family."

"You're a good woman, Anna," Garret said, "Someday you'll make a man very happy."

She smiles again.

"Thank you" she mouths as Gary enters the passenger seat.

Again, Garret must work late into the night. He took the daylight hours off so that he might spend a little time with Anna. Anna, on the other hand, will be in attendance. *Chironex* is playing again and Anna has been eager to see them. Unlike Garret, Johnny Bowen enjoys hardcore and would really enjoy the show, but like his brother-in-law he too must work tonight. Rian, Mason Walker, Austin Kelly and Kevin Toomey will be in attendance, with Jimmy Ford keeping a watchful eye outside. Security will be heavier than last time; there's been an anonymous death threat by an "anti-racist" anti-white.

Anna puts on a pair of leggings but Gary tells her to change them. She does so; clothes are never worth an argument in her opinion. It was

one of the things she bought last year and she likes them, but she could see his point. She was going to a well-policed concert venue, but it was a concert nonetheless, and the leggings are very tight. She changes into a pair of black jeans.

"When you're married you can wear those at home," Gary said of the tight black leggings when he first saw them.

Since it's after dark, Gary drives Anna to Diamond Crossing. Mason lets her in through the side and Rian meets her inside the club. She has one of her birthday gifts inside her handbag: the .45 Smith and Wesson model 1911. Gary, Bill, Johnny, Jimmy, and Garret advised her to pack, just in case. She'd be a "final line" of defense and she accepted the role without reservation.

As *Chironex* finishes their first song "Rainelle," Anna notices a beautiful and melancholy face among the teens and twenty-somethings in the crowd. Her heart beats faster for a moment: it's "Jane." She works her way over to the girl, who is dressed similar to the first visit, except her lace-up boots are not obscured by loose jeans. This time the jeans are much tighter and are under the boots.

"Hey," Anna says, "What's up?"

The girl smiles for just a second. Her eyes are the same shade of blue as Anna's. She, too, has a few freckles; not as many, and hers are just across her nose. Her face might not be as striking at first glance as Anna's but it has a beauty that grows in intensity and is even greater in the end.

"Hey," Jane says, "How's it going?"

"Good, you?" Anna asks.

"I'm good," Jane says, in a less than convincing manner.

"You from around here?" Anna asks.

"Sort of," the girl says, "I live in Uniontown."

Anna swallows. Jane fits the description of Kaylee Campbell, and she's from Uniontown. Could this be the white girl who doesn't hate her race?

"I live right beside you!" Anna says, "I go to Laurel Highlands. Do you go to Uniontown?"

"Yeah," says the girl, who then sighs.

Anna hears.

"That good, huh?" Anna says. "Oh, I'm Anna Murphy," she says as she extends her hand.

The melancholy girl takes it.

"Nice to meet you, Anna," she says, "I'm Kaylee Campbell."

Chapter II

Angel

Christmas never came to the Campbell House, neither in Kirkland, Washington, nor in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. There hadn't been a death in the family on the 25th of December. No son lost his life fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan. No daughter died in a car accident or plane crash flying in for the Holiday. Erica and Gene Campbell simply ignored the celebration. Superstitions were for white trash, and that was that. Neither Stephanie nor her younger sister Kaylee felt the loss. Their parents never honored the holiday that is most dear to white children, and the two girls never learned to lament that which they had never known.

They did know a great deal about oppression and intolerance, however. The white male deserved most of the blame for those evils, which included the two worst crimes against humanity: racism and sexism. White men even deserved the blame when public accusations of racism invariably led to a violent response from non-whites. If blacks beat a white child at school, he had to understand that he was responsible for his own beating.

His white privilege gave him unfair advantages, so that he deserved every blow struck by the "oppressed." Since Stephanie and Kaylee were females, they, too were victims of white male oppression. Since they were white, they, too, profited from white privilege. The rules were never fixed; one day being female made them righteous. On another day, the two were just as guilty as white men for someone else's real or imagined suffering. If the problem was racism, they were guilty as sin. When it came to rape and domestic violence, they were saints. Rapists were always white men, of course, as film and television demonstrated. For their part, the media would show the race of a criminal when he was white, and withhold that potentially vital information when he was not. When he was not white, they referred to him as a "youth" or a "young man." If the authorities had no choice but to admit that a non-white was a criminal, it was invariably

because of a white man's evil. Throughout their entire childhood Stephanie and Kaylee heard these sermons.

The anti-white proselytizing was prevalent but not constant; the two girls had lives outside of the politics and propaganda. They went on nature walks and biked, Stephanie went swimming and learned to surf, Kaylee hiked around Mt. Rainier with her uncle, they went to barbecues and rode horses and hung out with friends. Both of them learned to speak French and to read and write music. Though some friends disdained the Campbell's consumption of meat, Erica rejected the Vegan lifestyle and the four-some had a nutritious diet. The girls were very active and physically fit, though their very fair complexion and blue eyes kept them out of the sun. Rather than fight a losing battle against its burning rays, the two stayed indoors on those rare sunny days. Kaylee enjoyed exercise and began lifting weights. Neither girl seemed to tire of new experiences. Kaylee learned to prepare food and not only enjoyed the art; she began to excel at it. Stephanie and Kaylee both became skilled in the use of various electronic gadgets, iPods, iPhones and personal computers. They also learned to hate white people who didn't agree with mom and dad.

Stephanie was an excellent student. That is, she repeated what teachers wanted to hear and often she was zealous in doing so. She smoked weed on occasion and hung out at coffee shops. She followed in the footsteps of her feminist mother and supported "alternate lifestyles" like her hipster father. She never got a tattoo, though on a whim she had her nipples and tongue pierced. She slept with a half-Asian male and a full-Asian female and a white male who talked revolution and served coffee. In time, she became a student of anthropology and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Kaylee Jane Campbell was more intelligent than her sister though she started down a parallel path. She would have smoked her first joint at twelve, but fate intervened and Kaylee was caught by the father of the boy who offered her the ugly cigarette before she could take her first drag. The man grounded his son for two months and revoked all of his internet privileges; Gene Campbell giggled when he found out what had happened. Until Kaylee was sixteen, fate would deny her, or she would decline, subsequent opportunities to get stoned. Fate did not prevent her parents and those around her from continuing to mold her opinions. Up to the age of twelve, she could parrot her parents in specific and the left in general on myriad topics, from abortion to nuclear energy.

Kaylee's life began in Kirkland, Washington. Her father - though she would come to see him as the male who impregnated Erica - was Gene

Campbell, a teacher in the Washington State school system. In high school he was a notorious stoner who would have had three children by his early 20's had his first three girlfriends not aborted the pregnancies. When he chose to clean up just enough to graduate college and become a teacher, it was more from a fear of poverty and loneliness than a desire to lift himself from the smoke-shrouded ruins of his life. Even in his twilight years he would fantasize about banging the stoner girls he once knew.

Gene was not a puny male nor was he ugly. He was not assertive either. It was his access to marijuana and their frivolous attitudes toward sex that helped Gene to score with stoner girls in the back seat of his Mazda GLC. His brown hair was usually long and his eyes were bright blue and that, together with a body that he managed to keep in decent shape, got him plenty of looks from the opposite sex. His successes were numerous though the girls he dated always seemed damaged or shallow. The few serious girls and good young women who got to know him always turned down his advances.

Though she was neither a good woman nor level-headed, Erica Chapman was certainly serious and aggressive. She and Gene went to the same high school though they had very little interaction. Erica was a stunningly attractive brunette with blue eyes and ample physical assets. She also had a vicious mean streak that would last long after her physical beauty had vanished. Erica was a feminist from her early days. Like most feminists, she had no desire to work in a sewage treatment plant, though she wouldn't have minded a high-paid Human Resources job for some sanitation department. When she denounced sexism the condemnation came from a lofty pedestal unconnected to her life or her behavior. She acted just like a typical unaffectionate feminist: she pursued the hyper-aggressive males who she pretended to condemn, while recoiling in disgust from those who supported her ideology and played the role of the subservient "modern man."

Unlike many of the deeply flawed females that lived similar lifestyles, Erica had enough sense to plan for middle age. She knew that none of the "alphas" who fucked her would take her as a wife, and even if they did they'd cheat. To a feminist like Erica, it was her right to betray, not his. Erica and Gene crossed paths for a second time at the University of Washington. She was in law school; he was in the education program. After a few short weeks of sizing him up, she asked him out on a date. He would have to understand the rules, of course, so she openly flirted with other males and danced with multiple other partners when the two went to clubs. Sometimes she did not leave with Gene. But she kept coming

back to him, and he kept accepting her. Gene was liberated; it was OK for his “girlfriend” to experiment, to find who she was. The promise of sex with a girl who was out of his league did motivate him to some degree.

The lucky night for Gene Campbell came later that year. Erica was drunk and amorous and actually went home with him. One thing led to another, and the two fucked in his apartment. If she had not gotten pregnant, it probably would have been the one and only time. Erica considered having an abortion but a thin fiber of humanity kept her from doing so. Nine months later, Stephanie was born. In the meantime, Erica and Gene were wed, first in a sterile state procedure and then in a huge woodland ceremony that included a pagan blessing.

The Campbell’s should have moved to a more affordable location but Erica demanded to be near Seattle and the nightlife that she would not abandon for anyone, especially a child. The thin thread of humanity could not compete with her career or her pleasure. As time went by, her meager benevolence would all but vanish.

Three years later, Erica was working for a law firm and Gene was a substitute teacher. Erica did not usually deny him her body though she always denied him her affection. Not long after she landed her job, Erica became pregnant again, and she was furious. This time she was supposed to have a boy. A decade later, when Kaylee was a child, her parents told her that her brother died shortly after birth. There were whispers and questions that Erica would not answer, but at the time Kaylee had no reason to doubt her mother.

Kaylee was the result of Erica’s first planned pregnancy. It was a year after Erica’s second pregnancy came to an end. Earlier that year she had obtained a large increase in her salary. She also spent much more time at work. Gene’s sister Cristina questioned Kaylee’s paternity, and though Gene dismissed the rumors the accusation cut him to the bone. Even a weak-willed stoner male has a visceral reaction to cuckoldry. When Kaylee entered the world she had the fair skin and blue eyes of both her parents. She was a brunette, though her hair color was a little lighter than Erica’s. In fact, it was chestnut-brown and incredibly thick, just like Gene’s. As she grew it became obvious that he was, indeed, her father. Her hair wasn’t the only attribute that the two shared. Kaylee took after him in the general shape of her face and in her body’s propensity for excellent physical conditioning. Her blue eyes commanded immediate attention, yet her face would be her most amazing physical attribute. It was always unique and beautiful. On rare occasion another girl might seem a little more attractive in the face, but after a closer observation the

curves and size of each attribute came together and the conclusion was almost always the same: No one could compare to her.

Unlike those cases where a girl begins as a handsome child and fades by the time she is a woman, time continued to enhance Kaylee's beauty. At first she was very cute. As she grew she became lovely. By seventeen, both her face and her body were gorgeous, and it was apparent that her mother's side deserved little credit. As Kaylee soared and Erica faded, that fact contributed to a growing jealousy on the part of the mother.

When Kaylee was ten, the Campbell's - minus Stephanie - moved to Pennsylvania. Dean Parkison was opening an office in Western Pennsylvania after years of itching to escape from his Kirkland partnership. As was usual in her marriage, Erica made the decision to move without conferring with Gene. Gene and the girls opposed the move, but only Kaylee voiced an objection. In order to spare Stephanie the loss of her friends, the eldest daughter would remain in Kirkland with her Aunt Lillian. Erica wanted Kaylee to be close since she was younger and, Erica reasoned, less attached to familiar surroundings. So Erica put her foot down and Kaylee bid farewell to the places she held dear. Erica did acquiesce on one point: she permitted Gene and Kaylee to bring the family dog to Pennsylvania.

There were other reasons for the decision: Erica had high hopes for Kaylee and she did not want her daughter wasting time like other pre-teens. Kaylee had shown her brilliance in school and she'd already started singing lessons. The instructor told the Campbell's that their daughter had real talent. He wasn't the only one who said so. Friends who were in the industry agreed.

Gene accepted a position at Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, not far from the law office where Erica would work. Though many wealthy leftists preached the virtues of public schools while sending their own precious children to private institutions, the Campbell's chose the public school system over the private Catholic schools in the region. They planned on making up the difference in lost education after school hours and on weekends.

During Spring Break and summer vacation, Kaylee would spend as many days as possible back in Kirkland or with her Aunt Tiffany in Seattle. Other than the late spring climate with its heat and humidity, there wasn't anything in particular that she hated about Western Pennsylvania. She liked the green plants and beautiful rivers among the hills. It was just different for her.

Gene hated Pennsylvania. He didn't like football that much, but he acted like a Steelers fan to impress his bosses. He considered the people unenlightened and downright uncivilized. There was opposition to homosexual unions, and he even heard "faggot" used as a derogatory term. Those who did so seemed to have no fear of punishment. Though he did not hear any whites use the word "nigger", he was sure they did so in the privacy and secrecy of their homes. They were no doubt incorrigible racists, and they probably owned guns, too.

Erica raised her daughters to be feminists. Gene raised Erica's daughters to be rebels. Stephanie was the trial run; fruition would be reached with Kaylee Jane. Gene introduced her to hardcore and alternative music. She took to them immediately. He taught her to "fight the power," which to him meant supporting various liberal or leftist causes such as abortion, bombing white Serbia, and preferential treatment for non-whites. Gene considered these and other positions to be controversial and in opposition to the "oppressive" white majority. He never mentioned that the Democrat and Republican Parties, as well as then-President Bush, embraced or at least tolerated these "rebellious" beliefs.

Kaylee learned what her parents considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior though in the case of Erica the rules could change overnight. Gene didn't care if she swore, although it was dangerous to curse around Erica. Kaylee had difficulty gauging her mother's mood at first. She knew her father all too well. She had witnessed Gene smoking weed back in Washington, though he either quit or was better at keeping it secret when they departed for Pennsylvania. The smell was common back in Kirkland but aside from a few whiffs, it disappeared in the new house on Kimberly Drive. Kaylee's parents told her that the use of drugs was a major infraction, though she knew that if she limited herself to marijuana they would not come down on her.

Sex was a big deal for now. Kaylee could see that by the time she was sixteen that would change. At twelve, she had a boyfriend, though it was brief and never progressed beyond the holding of hands. Pregnancy would be a huge infraction, even at sixteen or seventeen, but sex was lower on the list. By eleven Kaylee had learned about traditional and oral sex. It was a "liberated" household indeed.

What was arguably a mental illness seemed like a virtue in the Campbell household. Gene called homosexuality as natural as a man-woman relationship. Erica told Kaylee that it was her choice; Kaylee was ten at the time. There was one thing that she must not do, however. She must never disparage homosexuals or homosexuality. Kaylee, who came

to feel a natural attraction to men in spite of her parents' conditioning, would learn this rule the hard way.

It was not as if her relatives in Washington held different beliefs. Only her uncle Michael was less of a radical leftist. He'd moved to Pullman when Kaylee was three. Michael owned guns and was anti-abortion, but still voted Democrat because Republicans were, to him, "racists." It didn't matter that they pandered to non-whites as much if not more than the Democrats, or that they were equally anti-white in their policies. Michael's anti-white (he would call them "anti-racist") beliefs meant nothing to Erica. She virtually disowned him for his opposition to abortion.

The vast majority of girls in Kaylee Jane's position would have internalized their parents' views and become willing followers - "rebels" as Gene called these tools and traitors. Kaylee was different. She was very intelligent, though that did not make the final difference, since her parents shared a similar level of intellect. She did accept much of what her parents preached though this was unavoidable as she was but a child. But deep in the intellectual darkness a spark flickered. It was nagging and when Kaylee began to notice something was wrong, she tried to ignore or suppress its growth. For over a year she'd fight her rising doubts, hoping to return to the numbing bliss of her once-easy existence. Her parents bought her most everything she wanted. She was excelling at singing and at school. She was becoming a very beautiful girl, and would no doubt become a drop-dead gorgeous young woman. If she played her cards right, she'd have wealth and popularity, perhaps even fame. But a mind awakened cannot sleep again without self-betrayal, and Kaylee abhorred the idea of suppressing her true self.

The "perfect daughter" tore the first brick off of her mental prison when she was twelve. The Campbell's were in Washington for the summer. To everyone's surprise and to the ire of Erica's colleagues, Dean Parkison allowed her to travel to Washington for two months to maintain contacts should the firm return to Kirkland or Seattle. The Washington and Pennsylvania bars were compatible, and early on there was a chance that Parkison's firm would return. Erica used the time as a vacation, which Parkison knew she'd do all along.

On the Fifth of July, Erica took Stephanie and Kaylee to a speech presented by a former pornography star. The event was replete with the usual complaints about actresses and singers earning less than their male counterparts, receiving less respect and less chance for success. There were monotonous jokes about young male penises being small, which were accompanied by monotonous laughter and "whooping" from the

mostly-female audience. The ageing harridan harangued the very industry that she once used to make a fortune, and which she helped to destroy the lives of young white women the world over. As is typical with such proponents of female empowerment, her own role in the degradation of young men and women never came into question. Some members of the audience noticed this massive discrepancy. Fewer noticed that the targets of her wrath were white males, sometimes individuals but usually the entire population. Only one member of the audience seemed to be bothered by the ludicrous propaganda, and she was but twelve years of age.

Gene taught Kaylee to question authority. While her father gave examples like “the Church” and “the moneyed class” Kaylee interpreted this to mean that all authority was a legitimate target. The music she enjoyed most was rebellious and outspoken. Sometimes her father didn’t agree with the message, or said that it went a little too far. Still, he told her, she should speak truth to power. She would heed his advice. She would challenge what she had witnessed during the presentation. What would it hurt if she were wrong? She’d ask a question, and those who knew better would answer the question and satisfy her inquisitive mind. Problem solved; they would all move forward.

Erica, Kaylee, Stephanie and Aunt Tiffany remained for the entire event, leaving after midnight. The route back to Tiffany’s house took them through Cascade. Through the window of Tiffany Chapman’s Range Rover, Kaylee could see the imposing city skyline. It was a familiar sight, but tonight it did not bring back fond memories or stir a longing to return. Kaylee Jane had something else on her mind.

“Mom,” she said, “Every guy Miriam was talking about was white like us. Doesn’t the same shit apply to, like, African-American men?”

It was an honest question that no doubt crosses the mind of many girls who hear such one-sided condemnations. The examples of stupidity, buffoonery, evil and sexual predation are always white men.

“Where did that come from?” asked Tiffany from behind the wheel.

Tiffany resembles a fatter Erica, though she’d dyed her hair red.

Erica glared at Kaylee from the front seat.

“It’s easy to be racist, Kaylee,” Erica said, “Sometimes a person is racist without meaning to be. Try to think before you open your mouth.”

Kaylee felt the sting of Erica’s warning.

It was just a question, Kaylee thought, *I can’t even ask a question?*

“I just meant...” Kaylee started to say.

“People are different,” Erica said, “We might perceive their mannerisms as bad, but that’s soft racism on our part. It’s ignorant to judge mino-

rities based on your own privileged sense of right and wrong, especially if you don't consider what they've been through. They've been abused and discriminated against for so long; it's like an underprivileged and abused child lashing out. I was hoping that tonight's presentation would be enlightening for you and your sister. Was I wrong?"

Erica turned again and stared at Kaylee.

"No," Kaylee said.

"All you need to remember is that Miriam was correct," Erica said.

"OK, mom," Kaylee said in order to avoid further confrontation.

Kaylee realized that Erica would punish her for her impure thoughts if she continued.

That night Kaylee crept downstairs to sneak a piece of red velvet cake, since she was denied at suppertime. She heard Erica's voice from in the kitchen and she froze. Erica was expressing her disappointment in Kaylee. Of all the things to take from the porn actresses' presentation, instead of learning the proper lessons about sexism and female empowerment, Kaylee was drawing conclusions about race. She was asking questions that Erica found unacceptable. This troubled Erica, who noted that Kaylee had not asked a single question about rape or discrimination.

"She'll come around," Tiffany said, "At least Stephanie was open-minded."

In time, the meek challenge to the anti-white, anti-male presentation would cease to affect Erica's behavior toward Kaylee. That did not mean that Erica forgave her or would ever forget the transgression. Life went forward and Kaylee was relieved by the relative peace. When her birthday came, Erica fulfilled her desires. Kaylee received the jeans, boots, gloves and iPod that she wanted. An avid reader, Kaylee also received numerous books, including the botany and natural history guides that she had requested, as well as a huge book on astronomy. There was one major surprise among the pre-approved gifts: Erica bought Kaylee a laptop.

With her birthday money, Kaylee bought more clothes and a set of free weights. She'd always exercised since she was a small child and was active in and out of doors, clouds permitting. Kaylee learned to climb trees by her eighth year and became quite good at the task. Her look, which was not entirely unusual for the Northwest, was somewhat out of the ordinary for Western Pennsylvania. Of course, as an early teen with normal urges and desires, Kaylee relished in her "originality." She might have credited her look for her instant popularity, though it was natural that her comeliness factored more. Boots and gloves and t-shirts with band logos and unusual symbols became standard in her everyday attire.

Her feminism notwithstanding, Erica was an excellent cook. Her daughter Stephanie had no interest in learning the art. At sixteen she decided it was beneath her as a woman. Actually, she was too lazy. Kaylee, who enjoyed doing things on her own, learned the fundamentals from Erica and refined them with practice. The mistakes happened, the good ideas that failed came and went, but in the end Kaylee became a rival of her mother in culinary abilities. Those abilities began to flourish after the move to Uniontown. On sunny days, Kaylee would exercise inside and then, when suppertime rolled around, she would put her talent to good use in the kitchen.

If it wasn't raining or cloudy, Kaylee was usually inside the house or deep in the woods. She kept the rays of sun from her skin and the result was worth any inconvenience. Her skin was as white and flawless as skin can be, and even the small patches of freckles were well-placed and beautiful. If there was a chance the sun might burn her or sting her eyes she would remain inside, busying herself with exercise or her many interests.

Or she would be singing; her professor, Mr. Batchelder, was tall and thin with the white hair of middle-age and enough pride not to dye it. He hailed from Sayre in northern Pennsylvania and studied music in Pittsburgh and New York, a city which he loathed. He'd had capable students before; one became a successful tenor. Kaylee Jane was by far the greatest student he'd ever known. When she arrived in Pennsylvania she could already read and write music and was versed in the difficult art of singing. Over the next few years, Mr. Batchelder would watch her capabilities grow to a level that was extraordinary to witness in person. Batchelder was a genuine lover of music, and although he did not favor hardcore or alternative, he recognized them as legitimate styles. Kaylee had the power to sing hardcore, which is very rare for a female. She also had the clarity of voice to sing a moody alternative piece.

With Kaylee's agreement, Batchelder ran an experiment. He had her cover *Mazzy Star's* "Halal" and the results surpassed his optimistic suspicions. When she heard his approval she almost wept with joy. One of Gene's colleagues drove her home, and upon arrival she flew to her parents with the good news. Gene seemed to be pleased, though not nearly as pleased as he had been that morning. His Kos diary was still among the most popular for the week. Erica was even less excited than Gene. She desired for Kaylee to become a soloist or a folk singer. Rock, metal and punk were fine, as long as the message met with her approval. Two years ago, Erica would have trusted her daughter. After Kaylee noticed

the anti-white nature of the porn actress' speech, Erica no longer trusted Kaylee to say the "right thing."

Kaylee felt a tremendous urge to rebel and loved the passionate voice of rebellion inherent in hardcore. She didn't know what was wrong with her world, but she could feel that something was terribly amiss. Gene supported Kaylee's desire to write music, while Erica was selective with her encouragement. She told Kaylee that she would have to approve a song before Kaylee would be allowed to sing it. This angered Kaylee and provoked her to challenge her mother.

"So what if the message doesn't meet your approval?" Kaylee Jane asked, "Not everything has to conform to what you think is right."

Kaylee had rebelled before, though not against her parents' ideologies. She'd thrown a tantrum when her mother wouldn't take her out for a coffee. The result was a two day proscription on internet use. She'd broken a window with the slingshot her uncle gave to her. She lost a month's allowance for that.

This time her rebellion was against her parent's politically-correct tyranny, and it would be more costly. She'd be grounded for a week and lose her laptop for a month. Worse, Erica barred her from taking singing lessons for two weeks. That night Kaylee wept in her bed. She understood why Erica punished her for breaking a window. What did it hurt Erica to hear a different opinion? Wasn't Kaylee supposed to rebel? Nearly everyone around her held the same opinions, from grandparents to cousins to her parents' friends. Why couldn't she ask a simple question, or challenge a single belief without facing punishment?

Kaylee did not suffer isolation at school, even though she was from far-away Kirkland and most of the children at Ben Franklin School knew one another from the first grade. Within the first few months of the move she would have several friends and even more admirers.

Kaylee's best friend during middle school was Jordan Trzeciak. Jordan was a lovely young lady with brown-blond hair and doleful brown eyes that ignited when she was happy. She was thin in spite of eating healthy but she was also lively and intelligent. Jordan was a devout Roman Catholic. At the time, Kaylee might echo her parents and say that she did not believe in God, though she had never given a definitive answer. Jordan did not push her religion upon Kaylee; neither did she deny her faith or hide it from sight. Kaylee did not attack or try to belittle Jordan. The two got along superbly because of mutual respect and a rare decency that was central to both girls' characters. Erica didn't like Jordan or the Trzeciak Family because of their religion. She allowed Gene, who

abhorred the Catholic family, to forbid Kaylee from inviting her friend to visit. They did permit Kaylee to go to the cinema or eat supper with Jordan at Pasta Lorenzo.

One Friday afternoon the Campbell parents were attending a dinner party in Pittsburgh and Kaylee was free to do as she pleased. Jordan's father Mike took them to Caileigh's for dinner and the three sat down to a pleasant meal. For Kaylee it was a joy and a relief. There wasn't the tension that had been rising at the dinner table with Erica and Gene.

Near the end of the meal, Mike went outside to fetch his wallet which had fallen out of his pocket, and Kaylee asked Jordan a question that she deemed a little awkward to ask in Mike's presence.

"I've been thinking," Kaylee said, "I wanted to ask you something about the Pope. If you're not OK with talking about it, that's cool."

"I'm OK with it," Jordan said, "What's up?"

"I was wondering," Kaylee said, "If the Pope told you that gay marriage is fine, I mean if he recognized it as acceptable, would you drop your opposition?"

Jordan looked at Kaylee and sat down her beverage.

"He's a human being like us," Jordan said, "He can make mistakes, too."

In late May, Kaylee saw an advertisement on television that troubled her. It did not insult her as a female or as a leftist; it insulted her as a white person. That was the first time it had ever happened. The ad appeared on an Italian station that Gene picked up via satellite. He'd watch Internazionale play Milan or Juventus and on occasion Kaylee would join him. On that particular day, during a commercial break, the station ran an ad for a liquid detergent. In the ad, a white wife forced her white husband into a washing machine, and when the timer rang, opened the machine to reveal a muscular Negro, who she then showered with affection.

Gene paid absolutely no mind to the obtuse propaganda he'd just seen. Kaylee felt appalled. Her parents hadn't ever impressed upon her the virtues of fidelity and romantic love. She learned and internalized them from the books she read - like *The Bride of Lammermore*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Tristan and Isolde* - and myriad experiences and glimpses she'd encountered in public and among the families of her friends. It disgusted Kaylee that a wife would betray a husband in an outrageous and arguably violent manner, and then shower the usurper with the affection that she had not shown to the man she married. The writers and director did not choose the subject matter at random. It may have been just a commercial, but it opened Kaylee's mind a little more to the reality of psycho-

logical warfare. She began to notice similar propaganda on American television and in films. White men were always stupid or wicked or both. At first it troubled her that the replacement "husband" was black because film and commercials never seemed to insult blacks like they did whites. To Kaylee it wasn't fair. But there was a flame that burned deep inside Kaylee Jane, beneath the years of Gene and Erica's anti-white proselytizing, and for a moment that intellectual flame cut through the darkness of lies and Kaylee could see with eyes wide open. There was a reason that the new and improved man, the muscular replacement for the "flabby" white husband, was not white, and that reason was deliberate and evil.

If we obey this shit, Kaylee thought, someday there won't be any more white children.

Kaylee did not voice her anguish to Gene. She didn't think her father would say what she needed to hear, so she kept quiet. He'd been disappointing her as of late. Just the day before he let Erica punish her for something Stephanie had done during a visit. Erica knew full well who'd broken the nice china plate and who hid the shards. It began to hurt Kaylee when Gene didn't act like a father. Kaylee's "cool" melancholy act wasn't so much an act anymore. She stifled her desire to complain and felt a little shame over her "racist" thoughts. Before the end of the soccer match she had returned to her room, where she used her astronomy book to chase away the forbidden thoughts.

During the summer, the Campbell's returned as usual to Washington. For half of the visit they stayed with Gene's sister Lillian and her family. Lillian was a solid and attractive woman who cut her hair too short, or else she'd have been captivating. Her husband William Keck was from California. He'd been trying to convince Lillian to move to Eureka, and within a year she would acquiesce. This would be somewhat of a blow to Kaylee, who had an excellent rapport with their daughter Ashley. The two would ride bikes, climb trees and hang out downtown on a beautiful cloudy day. Ashley, who was three years Kaylee's senior, was old enough according to the Campbell's to look after Kaylee, who was thirteen at the time. Ashley wasn't as attractive as Kaylee though she, too, was in excellent physical shape. She was a musician - she played the guitar - and a fan of much of the same music as Kaylee. Kaylee never seemed to be too happy, and Ashley's outgoing and fun-loving style was an excellent complement to Kaylee's distant, sometimes somber comportment.

But Ashley's gregariousness was a shroud that hid her inner demons. There was darkness behind Ashley's carefree manner that California may have exacerbated but did not create. Six years after the move,

the lovely girl who could have had a family and found happiness with a decent and honorable man, would take her own life. Her parents, too wrapped up in their own lives, were shocked at the news.

The summer after Kaylee finished eighth grade, Ashley did not show the slightest sign of depression and she and Kaylee would spend more time together than either would with their respective families. The exception occurred in mid-August, just before Kaylee returned to Uniontown. Her uncle Robert Chapman hosted the four at his estate near Issaquah. Ashley Keck would not be there, but Robert's live-in girlfriend Belinda would. Belinda was an avid environmentalist and although Kaylee's belief in preserving wild places was no less adamant, Belinda showed clear antipathy toward the young teen. Kaylee wondered if Tiffany had told Robert and Belinda that she'd asked a racist question.

Robert had a barbecue at the lake on the last full day of the Campbell's visit. He and Gene drank a little too much, and the topic of conversation eventually moved from college memories to Kaylee Jane. Gene mentioned the one time he tried to teach her to swim. He said she was so difficult that he was forced to give up. It was a lie; she was timid, since she did not know how to swim, but her fear was not powerful enough to stop her from learning and she followed her father into the deep water. When she had some predictable difficulties he gave up on her. She even begged him to try again, but he always found excuses for avoiding a second attempt. Now the much cruder Robert decided to take matters into his own inebriated hands. He grabbed Kaylee from behind, lifted her into his massive arms, and threw her into Lake Sammamish. She floundered and sank, remaining on the bottom for what seemed an eternity. For years she'd played around in the tub and ducked under for long periods, increasing her breath holding ability in the process. If not for that ability she might have drowned; two minutes later Robert dived in and pulled her from the waters. When she looked at Gene, tears forming in her eyes, he was laughing.

"Worthless," Robert said as he walked away.

That night Kaylee lay in bed at Robert's huge house. She felt like crying but the anger was too great. At 4:30 AM she crept downstairs and dumped all of his beer down the sink. The next morning Robert discovered what she had done. Only an intervention by Erica prevented Robert from physically assaulting Kaylee, though he vented some of his anger by calling her names usually reserved for females much older than 13. Before they boarded the plane home, Erica informed Kaylee that she'd lose her internet privileges for a month and would have to send twice the

cost of the beer to Robert. That meant two month's allowance, since Robert lied and inflated the price.

An unpleasant surprise was waiting for Kaylee when she arrived home. There was a week before the start of the new school year, her first year of high school, and she was excited to be leaving behind Benjamin Franklin Middle School. So was Jordan, except she would not be attending Kaylee's school. There was a Catholic school near Uniontown and Jordan's parents decided to send her there. Increasing oppression on the part of Erica and Gene ensured that Kaylee would have little opportunity to meet with Jordan after school, and she would not be seeing her in class or in the halls of Uniontown High. The two promised to stay in touch but they both knew that their unlikely friendship was at an end.

That year Kaylee started the ninth grade. She was a freshman at Uniontown High School but unlike most other freshman the year did not start out badly. Exercise and a healthy diet were making her strong enough to hold her own against older girls and her natural beauty, untainted by cosmetics, made the boys much less inclined to torment her. It's not that the boys avoided her; on the contrary, the pursuit of Kaylee Jane became a serious hobby for some of them.

Fourteen-year-old Tyler Marchant was from Uniontown, though he acted more like he was from the west coast. He liked many of the styles of music that Kaylee enjoyed. There were many things that he liked about her as well. She wore boots and often wore gloves. She'd wear a toboggan in the rain rather than hold an umbrella. She was clean but wore little if any makeup. He liked her tees and hoodies and her backpack with the names of hardcore and metal bands written in sharpie ink. He wore hoodies and jeans and his hair, though clean, often went uncombed. His face was manly and his body was athletic from years of skateboarding and snowboarding. He had pale white skin like Kaylee, though his eyes were amber-brown. Among Tyler's friends was Justin Harris, an amiable fellow but a known pothead. Kaylee didn't mind that once, but it had begun to grate on her that so many young whites were finding refuge in artificial happiness. Tyler, however, seemed clean. He was not outspoken in his politics nor did he challenge the status quo, except on occasion to cheese off a teacher and impress the more rebellious girls, who he found the most interesting. One such girl was Kaylee Campbell.

Christmas was approaching for everyone but the Campbell Family and Kaylee had just turned fourteen on the 1st of November. Boys her age were noticing her with increasing frequency. Tyler decided to act before Jeremy the linebacker or Steve the guitarist could steal her from him. He

couldn't take his eyes off of her as they sat in Mr. Staley's boring history class and he noticed that beneath her knit cap, which Staley hadn't told her to remove, she was wearing a pair of ear buds. Tyler laughed at the thought of Kaylee listening to music the entire class period. That's exactly what she did, so Tyler was sure to hurry out before she could exit the classroom. Calling out from behind her - as much as he'd enjoy the view - would be futile. Out in the hall he confronted her face-to-face. She removed the ear buds but did not seem annoyed to do so. Tyler was forthright with his hopes that they'd meet sometime after school, and to his joy she agreed.

The contradictions that troubled Kaylee did not magically go away, no matter how many times she tried to bury them. Music exacerbated her doubts because it stimulated thought. When she read, she'd think about the content of whatever book she was reading and would find herself drawing parallels to inconvenient truths. Her parents told her that white skin privilege gave whites an unfair advantage in hiring and advancement. Her relatives, the media and the great majority of celebrities preached the same message. Kaylee had heard of several white persons who'd lost their jobs over innocent comments that non-whites and zealous anti-whites construed as "racist." She knew that affirmative action would help non-whites find employment even if they were unqualified, while working-class whites lived paycheck to paycheck, in mortal fear of a layoff or suspension. If anything, the anti-whites and non-whites were the privileged ones. Once she heard a black student mock a professional white athlete, and white males in general, by saying that he has "good moves for a white boy." Kaylee felt like saying that the student had a lot of brains for a "black boy." A year ago she'd have thought the same thing, but she would have been ashamed back then. Now there was no shame. The only reason for her silence was fear of the severe punishment that was certain to follow.

That's what white privilege means, she thought, A non-white insults us and it's funny. If I respond, or worse yet, if a white boy responds, we get punished.

The inevitable happened on a Saturday in November. Kaylee confronted her father with some of her rising doubts. Though Gene was an overt anti-racist (anti-white) and a hipster, much more so than Erica, Kaylee knew that he was ever so slightly more open to discussions than his wife. Erica had all the answers and any dissent on the part of Kaylee was a borderline sin. Kaylee was wise enough to know that Erica would never change. In her heart she knew that Gene would not either, but she hoped he would. He was her father and like any daughter she needed him

to act like one. Hope springs damn near eternal in the soul of a loving child, though in time the spring can go dry. At fourteen, Kaylee's hopes in her father were still alive.

On the fateful day Gene was reading in the den and Kaylee was using her laptop. Erica was working that Saturday, which was not an uncommon occurrence since the move to Pennsylvania. With rising anger, Kaylee read a quote from the magazine *Newsweek*, which declared that "... [i]t's horrifying to imagine kids being proud to be white." The quote enraged Kaylee. She recalled her own observations, and how they contradicted everything her parents and the school system had taught her about race. Routine perusal of the internet failed to suppress her outrage over such a blatant anti-white statement. Quite by accident, Kaylee clicked a link to a YouTube music video from the late-1980's, several years before her birth. When she saw that it was a rap song she hit the "mute" button but let the clip play without sound. In the video, a group of heavily armed black males gun down white legislators in Arizona. That was enough for Kaylee Jane; it was time to talk to her father about American racial reality.

Gene saw Kaylee approach from the hallway between the kitchen and the den. She was wearing the oversized anti-Bush t-shirt that Gene had bought her. The letters spelled out "bullshit" when examined closely. The more she awoke to racial realities, the more she liked this shirt.

When Kaylee entered the room Gene was the first to speak. There was something troubling him as well.

"You know, Kaylee," he said as he put his bookmark between pages 92 and 93 of *Band of Brothers*, "I never see you wear the shirt Liz bought you." Untouched since she hung it in her room for the first time, the white tee featured the slogan "I love Obama" across the front.

"I'm not going to wear that shit!" she said, "It's fucking lame!"

Not to mention he's a nigger, she thought. She almost laughs at the thought. It actually felt good to use a taboo word, even if it was only in her mind.

"OK," he said, "Fine, it is a little lame."

"It's funny you mention that, though," she said.

Kaylee sat on the sofa, bouncing a couple of times for fun.

"I don't know if you should be wearing boots in here," he said.

He didn't care that she wore them all over the house, even while she was using the laptop in bed.

"Mom told you that, didn't she?" she asked.

She must have, because he never cared before.

"What did you want to ask me?" Gene said.

Here it came.

"I just watched a music video that I wanted to ask you about," Kaylee said, "In the video, a group of white guys goes into a government building and kills all the black congressmen."

"Who the fuck made a video like that?" Gene asked.

He didn't know what to think. He suspects a ruse, since any group that would participate in such a video would lose their recording contracts at the very least.

"Just some shit band," she said, "Do you think that's OK? It's free speech, isn't it?"

"Advocating violence isn't speech," he said, "Especially advocating hate crimes. Why don't you show me the video?"

"No need," she said, "You answered my question."

She slapped her thighs and jumped to her feet. Gene watched her jog out of the room. He returned to his reading, but could not help feeling a little annoyed with Kaylee. He questioned her at dinnertime, but she told him she was wondering what he'd say about free speech. He seemed to remember a similar video; perhaps this was a spoof or a remake of that one?

As the two finished eating and Gene started to believe that the unusual conversation was finished, Kaylee questioned him again.

"Is it true that Arizona voted against having a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?" she asked.

"Yes, they did," Gene said.

"Why?" Kaylee asked.

"I'd have to say racism," he said, "I can't imagine any other reason."

"Maybe they didn't agree with his ideas," Kaylee said.

"A color-blind society? Other than a fucking racist, who wouldn't agree with that?" he said.

"A lot of African-Americans," she responded.

"What's gotten into you?" he asked.

She could see a little red creep into the otherwise pale color of his face. It always happened when he got angry.

"Nothing," she said, "It's just that they always talk about their race, and you say only racists are against a color-blind society."

"As a minority, they have to be conscious of race," he said, "They've been victims of oppression and racism and it's a form of protection for them to stick together, to make sure it doesn't happen again."

"That makes sense," she said.

Gene was relieved. He left the table and Kaylee started to clean up the kitchen. Once she loaded the dishwasher she looked at the empty kitchen doorway.

Will we ever stick together? she wondered.

On a Saturday in late April the weather was exactly what Kaylee preferred - overcast, drizzle and warm but not hot. She had hopes of hiking the heavy woodland east of Uniontown. Since she might not be back until evening, she added a thick flannel shirt to the usual jeans, tee and boots. She'd take her iPod Nano, her digital camera and her cell. She wanted to text Tyler and ask if he'd like to meet her somewhere. If not, at least the two could converse in silence as she enjoyed the tranquility of the forest. Toboggan on her head and backpack on her shoulder, Kaylee walked the hallway toward the front door.

Her dreams for the day died before she could turn the doorknob. A voice called out her name. Kaylee cringed when she heard, because it could only mean one thing. Erica had some design on how her daughter would spend the day. Erica and Gene were going to a friend's party after Gene's conference with the superintendent. Kaylee would have to remain at the house. Disappointed, she retired to her room and hung her clothes in the closet. She'd have to figure some other way to spend the Saturday.

Erica and Gene had been gone for an hour when Kaylee's cell phone began to vibrate. She opened her eyes and turned off her iPod. She took the call and jumped out of bed.

"Hey, Ty, what's up?" Kaylee asked.

"Hey, Jane," Tyler said, "I'm goin' to the Yough with Bryan and Kat, you wanna come?"

"Shit," she said, "I can't. I have to house sit."

"I'm not goin' with those two by myself," he said, "I'd look like a loser with those two makin' out. You know how they are."

She didn't. In fact, Kaylee thought they were a little cold toward each other. Maybe they showed a different side when she wasn't around.

"Do you want to come over here?" she asked, "Erica won't be home until late."

"That'd be cool," he said.

The first time Kylee and Tyler went on a date they went to a movie with Angie Galusha, Kat Decker and Kat's boyfriend Bryan. This would be their second date.

Tyler arrived on his bicycle and Kaylee greeted him at the door. He praised the *Dead Kennedys* music; the band's name was on her t-shirt. She told him to come in and have a seat, which he did. He watched her

jeans move as she walked to the kitchen and she thought about how good he looked in his open long-sleeve shirt and tight white tee. He was growing some facial hair, too, and he looked larger and more mature than he had a few weeks ago.

Kaylee returned with two bottles of her mother's Faygo soda. She climbed on the sofa and wasted no time in embracing Tyler. During their first "official" date, as they watched the film *Kick-Ass* in the mall theater, Tyler put his arm around her for the first time. It had been a time-honored tradition between boyfriends and girlfriends since the birth of cinema, and Kaylee found it much to her liking.

Tyler touched her nose and played with her copious brown mane.

"This feels so nice," she said, her head against him.

"Yeah," he said, "It is nice."

Why deny him this? she thought, *Why deny myself this?*

The feeling was so good that the growing oppression of the Campbell Home seemed to fade away. Kaylee felt like talking, even mentioning the concerns and contradictions that haunted her mind. Some of those concerns were taboo to the great majority of Americans; they were less and less off-limits to young Kaylee Jane.

"Ty, you feel like talkin' about shit?" she asked.

"Sure, babe," he said, "What's on your mind?"

She leaned back a little to look into his face.

"You're a white dude," she said.

Tyler expected some liberal plea, perhaps a question about white racism. Tyler would sympathize. It was something he was good at.

The rest of her words stunned him, to say the least.

"Don't you ever get sick of seeing white guys portrayed as stupid?" she asked, "Just about every fucking movie belittles white guys."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

She had to be getting at something deeper than what the sum of her words indicated.

"Like that Old Spice commercial where the white guy's a wuss and the big black guy punches him out?" she asked.

Kaylee almost said the most forbidden of forbidden words - the "n" word. Freedom of speech has its limits in the Land of the Free.

"You didn't think that was funny?" he asked.

"No," she said, her brow furrowed with displeasure.

"Don't take it too serious," he said.

"What if some white kid takes it seriously?" she asked, "That's the message they're going to internalize, that white guys are lame and stupid."

His expression changed to a sly smile.

"What?" Kaylee asked.

"I love to hear you talk," Tyler said.

She laughed.

"You do?" she asked.

"Yeah," he said.

He was not lying, though he soon changed the subject. The topic of her choice was swaying into territory that threatened his happy-go-lucky notions of life.

A little later they watched *A Beautiful Mind*. As the credits rolled Kaylee neglected to stop the DVD player. Tyler was caressing her hair. Then he pulled her close and kissed her. It wasn't deep or intense, though their mouths were open. More important, it was her first kiss.

Kaylee touched his cheek and smiled, and then she ejected the DVD and returned it to the den. Tyler watched her ass as she moved.

Both Kaylee and Tyler enjoyed coffee, so she brewed a pot after the movie was over. She curled up beside him on the couch as they drank from their cups. His cup was a plain white one; hers was black with a stylistic white skull on the side. He put his arm around her and she snuggled up against him. They did not speak for a while. She was content to feel him there, and he seemed content to hold her.

It was around 10 PM when she realized that he better leave. Gene wouldn't care if he was there; hell, as long as she didn't get pregnant he didn't care what they did. Erica didn't either, but for the shame it might bring down on her. If the office found out her fourteen-year-old daughter was promiscuous there'd be hell to pay. None of them wanted their daughters to practice what they preached.

For Kaylee, the need for Tyler to depart went beyond the risk of punishment. It was dark out and they'd already taken a few steps forward in their relationship. She wasn't ready or willing to take any more. They were still kids after all, and something about crossing the final line gave her great pause. She'd get one and only one opportunity to share her virgin body, and she decided that it should be one of the most important events in her entire life. If she gave her body to a boy while she was too young, or if she allowed things to go too far with a man she did not love, she could never relive the experience. She knew she'd be a young woman soon enough. She didn't know if Tyler would be the man who'd share that most intimate of moments with her.

Kaylee's thoughts may not have been quite that coherent, but a combination of natural impulse and deep romantic notions told her to wait until

the time was right. For years, the entertainment industry and its willing followers had tried to smother sentiments of loyalty and belittle the beauty and power of chastity, offering cheap sex and ephemeral pleasures in their stead. Kaylee was beginning to reject the prevailing attitudes of frivolity, though she would not reject the idea of sharing herself with her true lover. Such a life of both chastity and openness was destined to have its share of stumbles and heartache, but the result could be far more beautiful and significant than any cheap thrill or momentary ecstasy. The result could fulfill the soul and wash it free of pain and regret. Even at that early age Kaylee could imagine the power of an eternal union between one man and one woman. She could imagine the power of unfettered love.

Kaylee accompanied Tyler to the door. There, Tyler took her in his arms and kissed her once more.

"Next Friday Justin's having a pool party at his stepdad's place," Tyler said, "You wanna go?"

"I don't do pool parties," she said. She didn't tell him why. "Do you want to go to the conservatory in Pittsburgh? It's pretty nice. Dad will take us there and then he'll leave us alone."

"Nah," he said, "I'll think of something."

He rocked her a little in his arms.

"Kay," she said, "Let me know."

In May, breast cancer awareness came to Uniontown High School in the form of little pink ribbons. Many of the students elected to show their solidarity by wearing them, although no one cared to explain how a symbolic gesture could cure a cruel and killer disease. Kaylee Jane didn't really think of it on that level and she, too participated. Being Kaylee Jane, she made her own ribbon. By the time she'd completed her chore, hers was a little different from the rest.

Kaylee wore a pink ribbon out to the minivan. She knew that Erica would disapprove of her modified version. As it was, Erica was too busy to harp on Kaylee. Lately she'd criticized her daughter for wearing tee-shirts and jeans that were too tight.

Kaylee had grown and her body had gotten much stronger. Her jeans needed to fit a healthy young body that was no longer as small as it was when she bought them. The irony of Erica's criticism was not lost on Kaylee. Her mother's tight sweaters and ass-hugging skirts were legendary at the law office.

As soon as Kaylee exited the minivan and Gene sped off, she removed the pink ribbon and pinned the homemade one to her plain black tee. She'd done a fantastic job - its shape was exactly like the others. Half of

the ribbon was pink out of homage to breast cancer awareness. The other half, however, was blue.

It wasn't until the last class of the day that anyone said anything about Kaylee's ribbon. The other teachers had probably noticed. Some might have even realized the significance. Most just figured it was a typical act from Kaylee Jane.

A few years before, when her art teacher asked the class to paint flowers, Kaylee came up with an interesting and unique offering. Among the portraits of roses in glasses and daffodils on hillsides, there was one with Indian pipe and a fisher spider. She'd done that kind of thing since she'd arrived in Uniontown, and most likely before.

Ms. Koeller the Civics teacher chose not to ignore Kaylee's display of male-female sexual solidarity. If Koeller had interpreted its meaning correctly - which she did not - she would have realized that the modified ribbon was not an insult, or at least it should not have been taken as an insult. Dolores Koeller was in her 50's, with dyed blonde hair and a sharp, humorless face. She had two sons and a daughter. One son was a homosexual; the other was in prison for breaking and entering. She was a petty and jealous woman, and self-righteous to the core. She would allow no deviation from pre-approved behavior.

"What's the point of your ribbon, Ms. Campbell?" Koeller asked.

"Both sexes get cancer," Kaylee said, "Some men even get breast cancer."

"That's noble of you," said Ms. Koeller, "but you're supposed to wear pink to show your awareness. Take that one off and I'll give you mine to wear."

Kaylee didn't move. Tyler, who shared two classes with Kaylee, cleared his throat. Her rebelliousness was greatly attractive to him and stirred his wild side, but she'd gotten heavy with it lately and Tyler began to get a little unnerved. He hadn't told her his feelings. He wasn't even sure why he was upset.

"Take it off, Kaylee," Koeller said.

"Why?" Kaylee asked, "What does it hurt if I sympathize with both sexes?"

"Either take it off or go to Mr. Weem's office," Koeller said.

Tyler hoped that Kaylee would obey. In a huff Kaylee removed her pin and looked out the window, away from Koeller and the class. She held the ribbon in her gloved right hand. Koeller returned to the lesson. It gave her pleasure to triumph over a female student who dared to express an alternative opinion.

After the school day, Gene was late in arriving, so Tyler stayed with Kaylee before departing on his bike. He put an arm around her and she smiled at him. He didn't tell her about his dilemma with her behavior, or his own. Was it her rebellion against the authorities that began to rub him the wrong way, or was it his increasing conformity to the anti-white establishment that made him resentful of her defiance?

"I'll see you tomorrow," he said as Gene pulled up to the front of Uniontown High School.

Tyler didn't remove his arm until Gene stopped in front of Kaylee. She smiled at Tyler before hopping into the minivan.

Stephanie Campbell was five years Kaylee's senior. She had blue eyes that were darker than Kaylee's, and brown hair that was lighter. While Erica's hair was very dark, and Kaylee's could be described as chestnut, Stephanie's hair was light brown in color. It was just as thick as her sister's though she chose not to let it grow long like Kaylee's. Stephanie's nose was smaller than Kaylee's but this was not an improvement; Stephanie's was common and uninteresting. Still, she was in that "upper 7" range on most men's 10-point scale. Males would think of the rating as an honor; women would dread the score. It means you are very attractive beside those who are obviously unattractive, until a girl like the future Kaylee Jane comes along, and you become mere background clutter.

Stephanie would be staying the weekend at the Campbell House. Once, Kaylee would have welcomed the development. Now she wasn't so sure.

Kaylee was listening to *Celtic Frost* on her iPod when Stephanie entered her bedroom. Kaylee heard her sister when she demanded that Kaylee turn off the iPod, but Kaylee acted like she could not hear.

"Turn it off!" Stephanie yelled.

Stephanie used to dress like Kaylee but that ended when she started college. Now her wardrobe leaned toward sweaters and blouses, except for those nights when she went bar-hopping.

Kaylee pulled the ear buds from her ears. In the last five years, the only time Stephanie troubled her sister in her room was when she wanted to argue or reproach Kaylee. The look on Stephanie's face told Kaylee that this was another one of those occasions.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Stephanie asked.

Kaylee looked a little dumbfounded.

"Listening to music," Kaylee said.

"Funny," Stephanie said, "I was referring to your growing racism."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Kaylee asked.

"Don't act stupid," Stephanie said, "How could you let yourself become ignorant like all these rednecks? Mom and dad should have left you in Kirkland. This place is fucking ruining you."

"So these people are dirt to you? Is that what you're saying?" Kaylee said, "If I said that shit about any other people you'd come into my room and tell me off."

"It's your boyfriend, isn't it?" Stephanie asked.

Kaylee shook her head and reached for her ear buds. Stephanie grabbed them. Kaylee was already stronger than Stephanie. Being a younger sibling made Kaylee back down. That timidity would not last for long.

"I wonder what his parents are like," Stephanie said.

Stephanie could picture guns and a hunting dog, and the father's fury when his youngest daughter got knocked up by a black man. She liked that last image. If Stephanie had pictured a white baby she'd have been unmoved, perhaps even aggravated.

"His father works for a newspaper in West Virginia," Kaylee said, "and his mother's an insurance agent. They're both Obama supporters."

"Quit going to Stormfront!" Stephanie said.

She changed the subject to overt confrontation since the boyfriend angle wasn't working as well as she'd hoped.

"So you fucked with my computer," Kaylee said, "Thanks for looking out for me."

A look of annoyance was on Kaylee's face. Kaylee had visited Stormfront out of curiosity, but had found it terribly depressing. True, it helped her awaken to some facts, but it always left her in a funk. It seemed that most honest posters to the site had given up all hope. There was nothing left to do but accept the death of their race, and moan - on a webpage - with a pseudonym. The lack of resolve annoyed Kaylee and she hadn't returned to the site in over a month.

"It's my business what I read," Kaylee said.

"I thought you'd say that," Stephanie said, "Mom!" she yelled.

Kaylee wanted to strike her sister right in the face.

On a deep and emotional level, Stephanie had felt that Kaylee was a favored child. Kaylee's fall from grace was exhilarating to the older sister.

Erica was wearing a blouse that's too tight. She would surely attract the eye of any amorous male but those who knew her personally would have no desire for more than a fuck. Sex with Erica Campbell would have

no deeper meaning than any other biological function that brings temporary gratification.

"What's wrong, Steph?" Erica said upon entering the room, her arms crossed in spite of her whimsical tone.

"Kaylee thinks it's her business what websites she visits," Stephanie said, "But you and I both know that's not true. Tell her she has to be more careful with the family's reputation. That disgusting shit she's reading could hurt her future."

"Your sister's right, Kaylee," Erica said, "I blame myself for this. I failed you and I apologize."

Kaylee dreaded the words. Erica never blamed herself. Stephanie never worried about Kaylee's future. In some way, there would be retaliation.

Erica left without another word.

"You know, *Agnostic Front* is an anti-racist band," Stephanie said, pointing to the words on Kaylee's shirt.

No shit, Kaylee thought, I just like the music.

Kaylee continued to listen to the songs, which she'd downloaded from BitTorrent. She did think about the plethora of bands that sang uncontroversial songs against white racism, while ignoring white suffering. A few days later she stored the t-shirt. She would never wear it again.

When Gene arrived, Erica brought him to Kaylee's room. As Kaylee watched, powerless to intervene, Erica directed Gene to remove the laptop. From then on, she could use the desktop in the den. If she violated the rules and visited an unapproved website, the result would be a permanent banning. A blockade against opposing opinions would smother Kaylee's impure thoughts, her parents hoped.

Kaylee began to use the internet at the public library. It limited her choices but did not eliminate access to some of the websites she preferred to visit. She tried to buy an iPod Touch but Erica forbade it, even though Kaylee would pay the entire price. If Erica thought she could end Kaylee's awakening she miscalculated. Her sharp mind yearned to escape its intellectual imprisonment.

A week before the Campbell's made their annual trip to Washington, Kaylee attended her final singing lesson until she returned at the end of August. This time Mr. Batchelder allowed her to choose the song. She'd told him a month in advance so that he could prepare. To his surprise she chose *Muse's* "Guiding Light." He expected a *Phinius Gage* song, or something from *Black Flag*. She laughed when he mentioned it before the performance.

"I want to broaden my range," Kaylee said.

"You're really good at that genre of music," Batchelder said, "And I mean really good. But go for it, you impressed me with *Mazzy Star*."

She impressed him with "Guiding Light." Again his congratulations and praise was profuse.

"Have a nice time," he told her and she thanked him.

This time, Kaylee did not tell her parents about Batchelder's praise.

The night before she left for Seattle, Kaylee and Tyler met at a bowling alley not far from the Campbell Home. Tyler bowled on occasion and Kaylee tried her luck at the game, but found that she really didn't care for it. She was a good sport, however, and did not let Tyler know her true feelings. As the evening ended, Tyler walked her home.

"I'll miss you, Ty," she said somewhere toward the end of a conversation that mostly dealt with what they wanted to do in the future. Kaylee was modest; she said she'd like to write music in her free time. Tyler said he'd play drums in a band; that, and hit the surfing circuit. They were old enough to know that these were summer dreams, but young enough to still have them.

Gene greeted them at the front door and Kaylee waved as Tyler walked away.

"You seem to smile a lot when he's around," Gene said.

It was true; Kaylee did not often display her positive emotions. It was a trend that began four years previous. She went upstairs without responding.

The flight to Seattle was unpleasant. In the crowded Airbus, Kaylee sat between an Arab and an Indian female who smelled of powerful spice and smelled even more of perspiration. Though the Arab did not stink, he and a companion to his front jabbered the entire trip in voices so loud it was impossible for anyone in the vicinity to sleep or relax without in-ear headphones. After the flight, Kaylee felt what most whites are too afraid to admit to feeling: she wanted to take a shower.

During the course of their stay, the Campbell's lodged with Kaylee's grandparents on Gene's side. Gene's father Jackson, a retired professor of psychology, lived with his wife Elizabeth in the Maple Leaf neighborhood of northern Seattle. Jackson was a soft-spoken man who, much like the rest of the Campbell's, did not need eyeglasses, even at the age of seventy. He was shorter than average but strong in stature like Gene. He, too, had blue eyes. Elizabeth, his third wife, was a forgettable woman who opposed hosting the Campbell Family before they arrived and then acted like their greatest proponent once they were in the house. She was short-

er than Jackson and was very thin. She'd been a vegetarian most her adult life and converted to Veganism at the age of fifty, though five years later it looked like she might abandon that lifestyle. All in all, she behaved well during the Campbell's visit, which made her more tolerable than Robert or Belinda.

For Kaylee the change was welcome. She wouldn't face the brutish mannerisms of Robert Chapman or the forked tongue of Tiffany. She would miss her cousin Ashley Keck, who'd moved to Eureka, but her cousin Nicole Chapman came and filled the void. She'd be staying for the first half of the Campbell's visit. If Stephanie was very attractive, Nicole was simply beautiful. Her hair was similar to Kaylee's in color, just as thick and nearly as long. Nicole, whose eyes were green, was the only member of the immediate Campbell clan not to have blue irises. Nicole had known Kaylee since the latter's birth and despite Kaylee's younger age, Nicole bonded with her rather than Stephanie.

Nicole was seventeen at the time and she had a boyfriend named Cameron Holyoak. He was handsome but too thin for his height. His eyes were a similar shade of blue to Stephanie's. Like Nicole, he was a vegetarian. Neither were Vegans, and they did not give Kaylee a hard time when she ate meat. Nicole and Cameron spent a lot of time at coffee shops and the Northgate Mall but didn't mind when Kaylee accompanied them. This suited Kaylee fine; she'd get to be one of the "older teens" during the day, and then listen to music, read, lift weights and exercise, or just plain hang around in the evening.

On the surface, Nicole and Cameron seemed like an ideal couple. That was one of the main reasons that Kaylee enjoyed being with them. Unfortunately, the impression was erroneous. It may have been born of Kaylee's euphoria from being back in her home state, or from her romantic notions and desperate hopes that somewhere a white man and a white woman actually rejected the feminist and anti-white lies and loved each other without reservation. Sadly, it would become apparent that Nicole and Cameron were not the exception that Kaylee hoped they'd be.

It was the little things that made Kaylee realize that Nicole's relationship with Cameron was more or less commonplace. Kaylee hadn't seen them fighting or arguing and there were no insults between them. The two disagreed from time to time, but they discussed their differences rather than attacking one another. It was not any single act, but the lack of an act that began to trouble Kaylee. In fact, it was as if Nicole held something back from Cameron. When they were together she would draw him in to her, and then shut him off. No doubt it wounded him. He did not

appear weak and did not back down from disagreements or adversity. If he had been weak, although it would have no doubt been sad for him, it also would have been an understandable cause for Nicole's indifference. But he was not submissive. Cameron never showed his pain, even when he tried to hold Nicole close and she wriggled away from his embrace with an annoyed look on her face. How could he not feel rejected? Strong and powerful men have fallen because of the deceit and disloyalty of their beloved mates. If Nicole felt some sadistic satisfaction for withholding love and intimacy, it was a fleeting and soulless pleasure. Probably she felt none. She'd learned to be cynical even on this basic human level and didn't know any other way to behave.

They're killing us, thought Kaylee with deep sadness, They're dividing men and women and killing our love for one another. They're making us into enemies when we should be united as one. 'You go girl!' You go, white girl, let them drive a wedge between you and your soul mate.

Kaylee resolved never to deny her man, or herself, the affection and love they both would need - and that they both deserve. There was enough sadness and pain in the world, and enough adversity that she didn't need to increase the burden. She was dismayed that she hadn't noticed these terrible realities years ago.

During a break in an otherwise unrelated conversation, Nicole asked Kaylee what she wanted to do someday. Her answer left Nicole perplexed.

"Fall in love," Kaylee said, "And when I do, I won't keep myself hidden from him. I won't hold anything back."

That afternoon, while Kaylee and Nicole had coffee at Cloud City, Gene and his father stayed at home. The pair sat down in the smaller of two kitchens and Jackson made green tea. Gene had a lot on his mind and from his nervous fidgeting his father could see that none of it was pleasant. Jackson served his only son a strawberry muffin he'd bought that morning. Gene played with it before trying a bite.

"Dad," he said, never looking Jackson in the eyes, "I'm worried about Kaylee."

"Oh?" said Jackson as he took a bowl of sugar cubes out of a wooden cupboard.

It was a little blue bowl with a chipped lid. Gene couldn't understand why his dad kept it all these years.

One of Elizabeth's four cats walked up to Gene and began rubbing his leg. Gene wanted to buy a new dog or a cat, ever since their old Akita died last summer, but Erica reminded him that they were too busy to take

care of one. He didn't tell her that Kaylee for the most part had taken care of the previous dog, and would probably be willing to do so again.

"She's been talking a lot about race," Gene said, "I'm worried she's becoming, you know."

For one so eager to label a fellow white with the destructive term "racist", Gene couldn't bear to use the word to describe his daughter.

"What is she saying?" asked Jackson, his concern evident on his face.

"Nothing really big," Gene said, "Just little questions, mostly. And she visited Stormfront, though she didn't lie when she said it was a couple of months ago."

Jackson stirred his tea. He was sitting on one of the ornate white chairs beside the little round table. This room was more about solace than cooking. Jackson called the larger kitchen "Elizabeth's." This one was more like the welcoming little kitchen that Gene remembered as a child.

"She's curious and rebellious," Jackson said, "I realized that the moment she walked in the door. She's doing this to get a rise out of you. Did she stop caring about the environment? Did she start talking like a teabagger?"

"Not to my knowledge," Gene said.

He felt a little hope for the future. His daughter might not actually love her race, after all.

"I know you can't stand for this kind of rebellion," Jackson said, "But in the bigger picture, it's just a phase. Tell her how a real rebel doesn't support a prehistoric and barbaric notion like racism."

Gene followed his father's advice. That evening he confronted Kaylee in her room, which was a small guest's bedroom down the hall from the second kitchen. Erica and Gene's parents were out shopping and Stephanie had gone back to Penn. Kaylee had just finished exercising and was cooling down before taking a shower. She was heading for the door when Gene entered.

"You OK, dad?" she asked because it was the first time since they arrived that he'd come into her room.

She looked wild and beautiful with her hair all around her and her piercing blue eyes staring into his. For a second Gene worried what might happen if Tyler saw her like this, but the enlightened male in him laughed at the sexually-repressive thought.

"We'll be going back soon," he said, "Before we leave I wanted to make sure we're on the same page. You're not a racist, are you?"

"No," she said.

If she had fully realized that “racist” meant white, she would have demanded a definition from him. Then, she would have excoriated him for using a word that is meant to stifle those who oppose white genocide. She was on the path to a complete awakening but had yet to arrive at the final destination.

“I am so relieved to hear that,” Gene said, a smile on his face.

It was premature.

“Are you racist, dad?” Kaylee asked.

There was no emotion on her face and Gene did not like it.

“No!” he said, “Why the fuck would you ask that?”

“I was worried,” she said, “But I guess I don’t have to be now. I guess you don’t have a problem with someone loving their race and wanting it to survive, as long as they don’t hate other races. Right?”

“We’re one race, Kaylee,” he said.

“So you want blacks...” she began to say.

“African-Americans,” he interrupted.

“So you want African-Americans to disappear in one mixed race?” she asked, “That sounds a lot like fucking ethnic cleansing.”

“When the fuck did I ever say that!” he exclaimed.

“You didn’t,” she said, “But you say it about my race. We’re not a race, we don’t exist, mixed marriages are a good thing, all that bullshit.”

Gene stared at her in silence.

“Why are you rebelling?” he asked, “Of all the ways you can rebel, you choose this barbaric, stupid and fucking hateful manner. If we’re too hard on you, it’s because we love you. Fuck, I went through it too, Kaylee. I was there. I’m old enough to know all this shit.”

Now it was her turn to stare at him in silence.

“Are you nervous from school?” he asked, “Are you worried about our marriage, or are you worried about the future? What is it? Talk to me, sweetheart. There are ways you can relax, not bad ways but...acceptable ways. You can’t be perfect. Shit, I wasn’t either. I wouldn’t have a problem with it, Kaylee,” he rubbed the back of his head and looked down, “I used to do it. We could make it happen, you know. Just as long as you don’t move on to something that will hurt you, it’s OK. I don’t even think your mother would mind. No, I’m sure she wouldn’t. Do you need a little help? I could show you how; I wouldn’t ask you to do something I’m not willing to do.”

Nice, she thought, *Better to be a fucking stoner than a racist, huh dad?*

“I don’t want to suffocate my identity,” she said.

Kaylee moved closer to the door.

"I haven't told you to go yet," Gene said.

"I need to take a shower," she said, "We can talk after, alright?"

"Not yet," he said. "Stay here until I return."

Gene walked out of the room. Kaylee sat on her bed. She could be taking a quick shower in his absence. She looked down at her black army boots, which she shined a few hours ago without missing a spot.

Gene returned after a half hour.

"We can't stand for this kind of rebellion," he said.

She figured that he called Erica. As bad as it would be for her father to discipline her for loving their race, his inability to make a decision without Erica's permission made it worse.

"I know you're not a racist, Kaylee," he said, "You still support most of what I support. Maybe that's it, huh? You feel like you're conforming. Please, Kaylee, please choose some other way to rebel. This could destroy your future. I'd rather you be a teabagger or Republican than an overt racist."

"It has to be something you approve of, right?" she said, "Should I make a list of what I want to rebel against and you can circle what you think is alright?"

"I have no problem with you being an open-minded teen, even if it means rebellion," he said, "So find something less ignorant and more important, like I used to do."

"I can support the working man," she said, "I can help save the environment, and, you know what, dad? I can still love my race. They don't exclude each other."

"Yes they do," he said.

"How?" she asked.

His lips tightened before he responded.

"If you insist on being this way, keep it to your damn self," he said, "From this moment on, if you show any sign of racism we'll have to punish you for your own good."

"Can I take a shower?" she asked.

"Go," he said.

He didn't say a word to her on the return flight, even though their seats were adjacent.

When they arrived at Pittsburgh International, Erica informed Kaylee that she'd receive no allowance money for six months. Erica added several more chores to Kaylee's work load, and the website ban list grew by at least twice its previous size.

Wounded by her father's behavior and the heavy punishments, Kaylee kept a low profile for a while. Her time with Tyler would become a great release; so great that in her joy of having someone she could talk to, she began to miss the little signs that all was not well between them.

The school year began with an unsettling start. One of the requirements for graduation was the completion of an Aquatics class, and the first quarter of the year would be Kaylee's turn. Again, she was not afraid of the water. Again, luck turned its back toward her. The teacher for the first half of the year was a substitute who would move on to a different school district. At the time, she had other things on her mind and had little patience with Kaylee. Kaylee learned very little and managed to pass with a "D" in the class. Up to that point it was the worst grade she'd ever gotten, by far. Nothing less than an "A" had graced her report cards until that unhappy and mostly worthless class. What Kaylee did learn about swimming was minimal and she could only tread water under strictly controlled circumstances. Yet again an instructor failed her, and when the class was over she still could not swim.

In October, a new face appeared at Uniontown High. He was a good-looking young man with short brown hair and steel-gray eyes that were expressive and intelligent. He was also strong, much more so than most of the other boys. His father was a pilot and the young man was used to having to attend new schools. He had done so six times previous, and would have to endure the change once more. His hometown was Idaho Falls, though he hadn't lived there in nine years. For the time being, his father would fly out of Pittsburgh and he would attend Uniontown High School. His name was Donald "Donny" Patrick.

Kaylee turned fifteen in November. Unlike other years there was little celebration in the Campbell Home. Stephanie didn't come at all. Kaylee mostly received clothes and some money. At least they bought her the kind of clothing she liked. Later that day she met with Tyler. He'd asked to meet at his place, but Kaylee hesitated and he proposed that they meet at Dairy Queen. It was cloudy and cool but Kaylee was comfortable in a hoody and toboggan, so she dressed accordingly and hopped on her bike. She was hoping they would sit outside so that they could talk in private. Tyler didn't mind. He ordered two sodas and a barbeque sandwich for himself - Kaylee had eaten - and they took a seat at a table out front.

"Did you have a nice birthday?" he asked after sipping his Sprite.

Kaylee nodded.

"It's better now," she said. "Did you go somewhere yesterday? I tried to call but no one answered."

"Yeah," Tyler said, "I went with my brother and his kids to the zoo. We went through Duquesne, that's where dad's from. I told him Duquesne looked like shit, and he said we should have seen it in the 70's. That's when all the mills were still running, I guess."

"I don't think that could happen anymore," Kaylee said, "Even if we still had steel mills. As long as we had environmental regulations no one could pollute like that. But I guess it doesn't matter, the companies shut down the steel mills and just import shit from China. I was using a Craftsman screwdriver the other day, and when I torqued a Chinese screw it stripped the fucking thing. It took me a half hour to drill it out."

He looked at her for a moment, and then laughed.

"That's one of the things that's so fuckin' cool about you, Jane," he said, "You aren't afraid to cross lines."

"I was just using a screwdriver," she said, an embarrassed smile on her face, "I'm not trying to be a dude, you know. That's your job."

"Don't get angry," he said.

"I wasn't, Ty," she said, "I meant that I can do that kind of thing and, like, still be who I am. A girl."

"Forget about it," he said.

She was surprised at his irritability, but then everyone has their days.

"OK," she said. She took a sip from her straw. She couldn't forget about all of it. "You know, we could protect the environment and still have jobs. We could clean up so much with the billions we give to Israel, like the Berkeley Pit or all these AMD streams I see around here. We should keep the regulations, but keep the fucking steel mills, too. Just put a tariff on foreign steel. A big fuckin' tariff, on coal and steel and everything else. I swear to God the next asshole who says outsourcing isn't a problem, I'm going to punch him right in his fucking cock."

Tyler began to laugh.

"That's another thing I like about you," he said, "You have all that passion."

She smiled and looked down. It lasted about as long as one of hers usually lasted, i.e. about a second.

"We have to look out for each other," she said, "The upper class, the companies and the government all profited from killing our industry, which of course didn't hurt the big fucking companies. They just got rich off some Indian doing the work or from Chinese shit flooding the market. Everything's made in China and even the prices didn't go down like they promised. Of course the fucking rich got richer. It was the white working man who got fucked."

It just slipped out, or maybe she was just fed up with an American anti-society that forbade any positive mention of the word “white”.

“What, are you racist now?” Tyler asked.

“I love my people,” Kaylee answered.

Everything became quiet.

“That’s cool,” he said without much conviction.

It was enough for Kaylee and she smiled again.

There was no Thanksgiving at the Campbell Home. Holidays of a superstitious or imperialist nature had no place there, though there usually was a feast. Erica, who was an extraordinary cook when she cared to be, made various seafood dishes and a beautiful apple layer cake for dessert. She invited several colleagues from work as did Gene. Seven of the twelve showed up for supper. The others would have, had they not had familial obligations on Thanksgiving. Word had spread about Erica’s culinary abilities.

For the Thanksgiving feast, there would be jicama and oyster salad and Pacific-style muscles, lobster thermidor and Vietnamese squid stir-fry, and a shellfish seviche that would become legendary. Erica spent almost the entire day Wednesday in Pittsburgh, running from gourmet shop to gourmet shop and passing through the fish market there and finally in Wheeling, West Virginia. The meal would be worthy of a five-star restaurant. Erica’s talent showed in the beauty and taste of the food, which sealed her reputation as a chef of the highest capability.

Kaylee wanted to help, not so much because she enjoyed working with Erica, but she loved creating dishes almost as much as writing and listening to music. To her, it was a test of skill, patience and creativity. It was also a pleasure, knowing that you succeeded in making something that, while fleeting, would bring so much joy and contentment to you and to those you loved. For whatever reason, Erica forbade Kaylee from aiding her in the kitchen. Instead, Kaylee waited upstairs for the call to dinner.

It never came. When the clock showed 5PM, Kaylee removed her ear buds and slipped a turtle neck sweater over her tee. She also put on her best jeans and actually removed her boots, replacing them with a pair of slippers. Kaylee could hear the dinner in progress and wanted to be ready when Gene came to fetch her. As time went by, Kaylee sat on her bed and continued to wait. How could they forget her? No, they hadn’t forgotten.

Fuck them, she thought, I’ll make my own later. Maybe I’ll call Ty and take off for a while.

An hour later, Gene crept away from the guests and brought Kaylee a plate of food and a bottle of spring water. She was sitting on her bed when he entered, her back against the pillow and the wall.

"I brought you something to eat," Gene said.

He was wearing a tie under his gray sweater. This was the guy who said he'd only wear a tie at his funeral.

"You can't do it, can you?" Kaylee said.

She refused to look into his eyes.

"Do what, Kaylee?" he asked as if nothing was wrong.

"You can't love your daughter if she's racist," she said.

"Don't start," he said.

"They're still here," she said, "I know." She finally looked at him. If it had been Erica she'd have done a better job of hiding her pain. Though she hadn't cried, there were tears in her eyes. "Don't worry, I won't come down."

Gene laid the plate, the bottle and the silverware on the dresser beside her body-sized mirror. Then he left. In a way he'd left a long time ago.

That night, Erica was downstairs having coffee. Kaylee, wearing pajamas, crept down into the kitchen. It startled Erica when she looked over her shoulder to see Kaylee standing there, ghost-like, within touching distance.

"What?" snapped Erica.

Kaylee took a seat beside her mother. The daughter was more and more beautiful by the week, and Erica began to feel jealousy in addition to rising resentment over Kaylee challenging her worldview. In two years, Kaylee would cross the threshold to womanhood. As physically beautiful as Erica was, Kaylee would far surpass her mother.

"You want to know why you couldn't come to the dinner table," Erica said.

"I want to know what you told them," Kaylee said.

"I didn't tell them you're a little Nazi," Erica said, "That's for sure."

"I'm not," Kaylee said.

"Close enough," Erica said.

"And only white guys rape, like in the PSA," Kaylee said, "Right, mom? Blacks never rape white women. Is that close enough to what you believe?"

Back when she was the darling of her mother's eye, Kaylee attended several feminist speeches and symposiums, some of them when she was so small her mother had to carry her. She knew this was a subject

dear to Erica's heart. It was uncanny how rape and assault could be such horrible crimes if the perpetrator was white, and all but forgotten if he was not.

Erica leaned over and stared into Kaylee's eyes. As strong as Kaylee's arms and body were becoming, she had to look away for a moment.

"One month," she said.

Kaylee knew enough not to say a word.

"No internet, no allowance, no seeing Tyler Marchant," Erica said, "One more word like that and it will be never."

Erica didn't storm off. She waited for Kaylee to respond, and then she'd hammer her. Kaylee sat there, framed in the soft light of the hallway. When it became clear that she would not speak, Erica finished her coffee and rose to depart.

"I had such high hopes for you," Erica said from the doorway, "If you want to redeem yourself it's going to take all the energy that you have."

Kaylee did not see Tyler again until the New Year. When they met, it was at the Carmike Cinema. Gene dropped them off; Tyler's father would take them home after the movie. Tyler's arm felt especially nice around her during the film. As they walked from the theater, Tyler rubbed her back and she closed her eyes for a few moments. She felt a little bit of freedom, or at least a little less of the hopelessness she was feeling at the Campbell House. Kaylee could spread her wings but she could not yet fly. At least they weren't folded tight against her anymore. Tyler's father hadn't arrived yet, so the two stepped inside the double row of doors at the entrance and stood between the inner and outer doors.

Tyler looked to see if his father was coming, and when he did not see the Infiniti SUV, he kissed Kaylee. She squeezed him tight and he rubbed her back again. Then he went farther and put his hands on her rear.

"Don't, please," she said, "Not yet." She pulled back. "Let's not ruin this, alright? I kinda need to be in your arms right now, but I don't need the heavy stuff. There's a lot of shit going on right now and I'm not ready for it. Can you just, like, put your arms around me, without that other shit? Kay?"

She showed him a painful little smile, but he looked away from her. She could see that he was annoyed.

"I don't get you, Jane," he said, "Sometimes you're righteous, and then you get all frigid on me. I mean, look at you," he puts both arms out for emphasis, "You look cool but you're acting like a stuck-up bitch. Or a fuckin' tease!"

Kaylee was stung by his words.

"I'm not a tease!" she said, "I'm not a skank either! It's just not the right time." She looks around and then down before staring into his eyes. "What the fuck, Ty? Do we have to rush this? If you want to hold me, please do it. I want you to hold me. I ...I just want to keep it at that for now. Aren't you cool with that?"

She saw the anger fade. He touched her cheek and she smiled for two seconds.

"I'm sorry, Jane," Tyler said and then hugged her.

"Thank you, Ty," she said.

"You still my girl?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said, "Of course I am."

He was still holding her when his father pulled in.

For Kaylee, someday meant something other than it did for Tyler. She never hid her affection from him, but that did not mean she would cross a line from which they could never return. The intimacy she showed by embracing him and rubbing her head against his chest was just a hint of what she might give to a strong and patient man once she became a woman. Tyler was too far away from manhood to realize how special his girlfriend could be. In some ways he was very, very far away.

Again Kaylee kept a low profile in the Campbell Home. She kept up her usual exercise and study routines, and listened to music. She attended singing classes with Batchelder and excelled in her studies. Otherwise she was quiet and melancholy. A jealous female student made a remark about Kaylee's appearance - comparing her attire to a lesbian's - and Kaylee just walked past her, though she did give her the finger from down the hall. Kaylee couldn't afford to get into a fight right now. Erica would punish her with severity and would bar her from seeing her boyfriend. The weight of loneliness made it easier to resist the temptation to fight. Other than Tyler, she had no one to talk to about the ideas and observations that were important to her and Kaylee would not risk being separated from him by her wrathful mother.

Tyler gave her exactly what she needed when he embraced and kissed her, and she hoped she gave him what he needed when she held on to him and nuzzled his chest. It was what he needed on an emotional level, though it was not what he coveted. In April the two went biking at Ohiopyle. Tyler liked sunny days, but he understood that Kaylee would burn if she stayed out for too long and the rays were not healthy for her eyes. She was a winter dove, with her pale skin like snow in harsh sunlight. Anyway, she'd told him that the bronzed look didn't do anything for

her, and she didn't want to look that way, either. It was warm for early April and the sky was cloudy. It was excellent weather for the both of them.

After following the trail toward McKeesport, Kaylee and Tyler biked up to Cucumber Falls. They left their bikes near the parking lot and walked the trail down to the base of the falls. The only witness a black-phase gray squirrel, Kaylee and Tyler hugged and kissed in front of the little cascade. Tyler removed her toboggan and threatened to throw it into the water, and then almost fell into a shallow pull when he faked the throwing motion. She jumped over to help him but he recovered before she could arrive. A little later he reached for her and she hopped away on the stones. Her boots helped her make better time than his loose-fitting sneakers. Once she reached a dry slab of rock she let him catch her. This time she laughed, and it lasted longer than two seconds.

An hour later they sat on a similar rock along the bank of the Youghiogheny. The water was quiet there, though it was building tremendous force. Within sight were the rapids that had claimed many lives over the years.

"I don't think I'm gonna be able to take you to dinner like I promised," Tyler said.

Kaylee put her arm around his shoulder.

"That's OK," she said.

Tyler promised to take her to Caileigh's. Based on its name he said she had to go.

"I didn't piss my allowance away," he said, "My dad gave it to some disaster relief fund. Don't get me wrong, I feel bad about what happened in Japan, but don't they have a lot of money?"

She nodded.

"Guys here work overtime just to raise two kids," she said, "Who helps our children when something happens? That big oil spill is fucking up the Gulf, everybody on the coast is going to suffer and no one even talks about it anymore. Where the fuck are the celebrities on that one?"

"I was thinkin' about that spill," Tyler said, "Nobody ever went to jail, did they?"

"No," she said, "When something bad happens, the assholes who get paid to predict it usually have no idea it's coming. Then they're promoted after they fuck up."

He laughs.

"I'd like to take you to a Republican convention," he said.

"They'd get pissed off," she said, "but it'd be boring. I'd rather go to a Democratic convention."

"Why?" Tyler asked.

"I'd ask them why they want to destroy white working families," Kaylee said, "The Republicans are shills for big business, but the Democrats used to represent white workers. I'd like to ask them why the fuck they stabbed white men in the back."

It was time to drop the politeness that only whites adhered to, and in doing so it was costing them their future. Kaylee decided to reject the suicidal politeness by using the most taboo word imaginable.

"I'd like to ask them why it's fine for a nigger to love his race but it's so fucking wrong for a white girl to love hers," she said.

Tyler's amused smile disappeared. The raging Yough could not have wiped it off with more efficiency.

"I thought you said you weren't racist?" he asked.

"It's a word, Ty," she said, "Like the word 'racist.'"

"Yeah, but you shouldn't say that word," he said.

She stared at him. The rushing of the river and the downstream roar seemed louder in those moments of silence. He looked away from the river and into her eyes.

"I've had black friends, you know," he said.

"Do you tell them to stop using words, too?" she asked, "Like 'cracker' and 'white boy'?"

"My dad would freak if he heard you," Tyler said, "I can take it, but he'll go fuckin' nuts. Don't say that kind of shit around him."

She sighed.

"Alright, Ty," she said.

He put his arm around her and kissed her head.

"C'mon, I don't wanna fight," he said.

She looked into his eyes again but this time did not smile. She nodded and looked down.

At 6PM the two were to meet Tyler's father near the old train station along Route 381. With an hour left, Tyler rode off of the trail and into the woods. A surprised Kaylee followed. Even with her toboggan on her head, her omnipresent hair waved from the motion. Out of sight of the trail Tyler skidded to a stop. When she arrived he pulled her off of her bike and they embraced. Again, they kissed. Again, he put his hands on her rear. This time he pulled her long-sleeve tee out of her pants and begin to slide his hand up underneath the shirt and up her back.

Kaylee broke free and looked at him with surprise and pain on her face. She wondered if she did something to provoke this. She wasn't foolish or conceited enough to think that her actions would not elicit a res-

ponse. She knew that men and women, boys and girls responded to each other, and that many times things went too far because both parties pushed the envelope. It wasn't always the case, to be sure; this time it most likely was.

"Ty, please, I can't do this," Kaylee said, "It's too much."

Tyler looked and acted more frustrated than angry.

"You keep pulling away from me," he said.

"If I led you on, I'm so sorry," she said, "I am so sorry, Ty." She could understand how powerful the signal must have been if she had. "I'm not cutting you off, I swear I'm not."

"Then what is this?" he asked.

"I only get one 'first time.' It has to mean more than anything," she said, "It has to be, like, forever. I can't play with that. It's too important to me." She looked down. "I don't want to end up like all those girls who can't love anymore."

He looked at her but said nothing. He'd had offers recently; Kimberly Diehl, who was not quite as beautiful as Kaylee but who was the closest among his peers, had asked him if he was "still wasting time with that Campbell dyke."

Kaylee approached him and looked up into his eyes.

"I have to ask, Ty," she said, "Are you OK with that? Will you wait for me?"

He looked around and then back at her. He sighed and rubbed his now-longish hair, and then he nodded. She embraced him. He embraced her. Her arms, which were stronger and stronger from curls, squeezed him like never before. His embrace was tight as well, though it was only a response to hers. His chin on her head, he wasn't thinking about eternity or even next week.

Though he hadn't been an eager participant, Tyler Marchant was a shoulder to lean on and a living person with whom Kaylee could share her thoughts and concerns. Everything else had gone from bad to worse, and now their relationship seemed to be in trouble. By the end of April, Tyler was a little more distant, though when inquired he would tell her he was fine; nothing was wrong. Her senses told her otherwise. It was hard to listen to them. She felt the emergence of a terrible loneliness. She knew no one else with whom she could share her hopes and fears. Her parents would condemn and punish her if she dared speak to them. Kaylee could go on alone, a final rebel against an omnipotent authority, but she'd be lying to herself - anyone would be - if she thought that route would bring anything but pain and sadness.

On the 25th of April, Gene drove Kaylee to the local grocery store. One of her new chores was to do the weekday shopping. On Mondays, she'd buy groceries for Tuesday through Friday, and then Erica would take care of the other days. That Monday afternoon, Kaylee loaded up Gene's minivan and then told her father she'd prefer to walk home. It was cloudy and windy out, and drizzle came and went, but Gene was from Seattle and so was Kaylee, so he understood and let her go.

Kaylee took a circuitous route that included rows of houses and a large golf course. As she passed the fairway closest to the north-south running street, her cell phone came to life. Her ringtone - "Supermassive Black Hole" - began to ring, prompting Kaylee to pause and check the number. It was Tyler. He'd told her that he would be gone for the afternoon and that he couldn't talk. She might have figured his plans changed and they'd be meeting or talking or even texting, but she was not optimistic. She was already in a funk, and just today Erica had complained about the basement which Kaylee had cleaned over the weekend. Gene was late in picking her up from school and the obnoxious pothead Matthew Rayner chose then to put his moves on her. Her refusal was polite but very firm. She could tell that he wouldn't take the hint.

"What's up, Ty?" she asked.

A loud PennDOT truck passed by, forcing her to turn away from the road so that she could hear Tyler's reply.

"Kaylee," he said and then there was a pause, "We need to talk."

He didn't need to say the rest. When he used her first name instead of "Jane" it told her everything.

"OK," she said, and her voice told him that she knew.

The only surprise came when he proceeded to break up with her over the phone. She thought he'd tell her in person, but it was easier this way. She did not erupt in either rage or tears, nor did she try to shame him or act like it didn't matter. She accepted the fact and closed the phone call after echoing his simple goodbye. There wasn't any point in dragging it out. As bad as it hurt to see it end, he had done her a favor in the long run. It would be a while before she'd see it that way.

The ending of their relationship would have been painful enough, since most of the memories were good ones. Kaylee's isolation at home and increasing alienation at school made matters even worse than they otherwise might have been. Once, she was a novelty and her aloof style and unique mannerisms intrigued those students accustomed to the average high school attitudes and dress. Now that they were used to her, many saw her as somewhat strange - different in a damning rather than

intriguing way. Some of the males showed a high level of interest in her looks and her body but were never interested in Kaylee Jane the person. She was already the most beautiful girl at Uniontown High yet interest in her waned. Most girls in her situation would have conformed to her parents' and classmates' ideas of proper behavior. Had she done so, Kaylee's return to popularity would have been rapid. Kaylee Jane held on to her identity. She would surely suffer for it.

Four days after Tyler called Kaylee and ended their relationship, while Kaylee was reading in her room, a call came in on the land line in the kitchen. Gene hesitated to answer. After six rings, he picked up the receiver. On the other end was Clark Marchant, Tyler's father. He introduced himself and asked to speak to Kaylee's father.

"Speaking," Gene said.

The reasons for the call flashed through his mind. Had Kaylee caused some trouble? She wasn't pregnant, was she? Gene couldn't swallow when he thought of that one. She knew about protection; she'd known about it for at least six years. Had she forgotten, or had it failed?

"How may I help you, Mr. Marchant?" Gene asked.

"I don't know what kind of house you run, Mr. Campbell," said Marchant with self-righteous indignation, "and honestly I don't care. But keep that Nazi daughter of yours away from my son!"

The command rendered Gene speechless.

"Am I making myself clear?" Marchant asked.

"What makes you say that about my daughter?" Gene asked.

He believed that he knew, but he didn't have anything else to say.

"She was trying to fill my son's head with racism and lies," Marchant said, "That kind of horseshit can ruin a young man's future. So keep your daughter away from my son, or I'll be forced to resort to legal measures."

Marchant hung up his phone.

Gene stared at the receiver for a minute, and then he went upstairs. He opened Kaylee's door without knocking and barged inside.

"I just received a call from Tyler's father," he said.

His face was red. Kaylee closed her book and prepared for his worst.

"He told me to 'keep my Nazi daughter away from his son.'"

"I'm not a Nazi," she said.

"They think you are!" Gene yelled, "My fucking job is on the line here!"

She looked into his eyes. His face looked like it was going to explode.

"No it's not," she said.

"It's easy to be flippant when everyone takes care of you," Gene said, "What if you had to pay the bills? People get fired for being racist; a lot of them have said tamer shit than you do!"

"Tell them I'm crazy and I need help," Kaylee said, "You can lie out of it, that's why I'm not worried about your job."

"Why..." he said, then looked down and exhaled. "Why would you talk to Tyler Marchant about this kind of thing?"

"I didn't tell him to be a Nazi," she said, "I didn't even talk about Nazism. We just talked about different things, all kinds of shit, really. You know, I told him I like bacon. Maybe that's why that old faggot said I'm a Nazi, he's a closet Jew and he's offended by bacon."

Abject horror replaced fear and anger on Gene's face.

"You're like a little monster," he said.

She watched him walk out of the room. With Gene gone, she could think about what had actually happened. Why would Clark Marchant call her a Nazi? Tyler had betrayed her. It was hard to swallow. She'd had happy moments with him, and then he broke up with her, and now he'd told his father that she was a racist. Whether true or not, whether it was of such vital importance to him and whether he realized that she loved her race but had not expressed a desire to harm others, none of that mattered; he'd aired her intimate words to his father and now she would pay for opening up and sharing that part of her life with him.

When a woman in Texas drowned her three sons, Clark Marchant told his wife that it was more important to understand why she might do such a thing rather than punish her for it. Racism was a different matter. If he could, he would have racists - white racists, of course - interned for "psychological treatment." That would include Kaylee Jane, based on the testimony of his son Tyler.

Kaylee put on the tightest top she had and a pair of tight jeans that showed the full form of her legs and rear. She would be doing battle with Erica and she would be at an enormous disadvantage. She was wounded and in no position to challenge Erica's authority. At least the tight jeans and top would irritate her wrathful mother.

"Get down here right now!" was the invitation for a dialogue.

Erica remembered a time when Kaylee was perfect. Her daughter breezed through her studies and excelled at most everything that Erica wanted her to accomplish. At the age of seven she could help Erica in the kitchen. By nine Kaylee filled the role of *sous-chef* for the less complicated dishes. She had a clear and unique voice that she could unleash in leonine fashion or reign in to a soft yet penetrating utterance. She didn't mi-

mic when she sang. She felt the music and her voice joined it; maneuvered with it. She had real talent. Erica wished she could do the same, but as long as Kaylee was perfect she felt pride instead of envy.

Erica recalled concerts at The Gorge. She could still see the various art exhibits, most often avant-garde or nonsensical but to Erica it was vitally important for Kaylee to appreciate them. She took Kaylee to the office and watched as fellow feminist assistants and even attorneys fawned on a future member of their sisterhood. It was fine for females to feel solidarity. This was the message they gave to Kaylee from her very first year.

How could the little girl who never complained about attending the various feminist speeches and anti-racist rallies turn out to be such a racist herself? Had she been a child murderer, there would have been some sympathy. They would have called her sad or depressed; or at worst, insane. They would have blamed her crime on "post-partum depression" or some other modern affliction. Now, in the best-case scenario they would call her insane. Most likely, Erica's peers would call her daughter a monster.

Years ago, in the bedroom of their apartment, Erica held Kaylee and looked into her blue eyes. She was certain she was looking into the eyes of a protégé. This one would not make the mistakes she had. Kaylee would make a name for herself before having children. Her career would be the envy of everyone she would meet. Whether a lawyer or songwriter, activist singer or model, Kaylee would be the daughter Erica dreamt she'd have and the woman she could never be. It was a summer evening by the lake. Baby Kaylee was sleeping tight at Jackson's place. Erica could hear the *Foo Fighters* coming from Robert Chapman's monster stereo and Gene was nowhere in sight. Dashing young Zachary Laning was making eyes at her. The world was so much younger and better then.

The perfect little girl was gone. Kaylee, who Erica had planned on having, was ripping apart Erica's little world. Erica could see Kaylee descending the stairs. A little later she'd feel some remorse, but at that moment Erica hated this young person who stood before her.

Kaylee didn't ask why Erica was upset. She stood before her in silence. Kaylee was a little shorter than average for a girl, though she was as tall as her mother.

"I am appalled and insulted, Kaylee," Erica said, "It was my understanding that we had an agreement. For the continued use of the internet, which we pay for, the utilities and water in this house, which we pay for, you would cease this madness that you've allowed to infect you. Since

reasoning did not work with you, we now have no choice but to make good our threats. You did not take us seriously. Well, we were serious, Kaylee. When I said never, I meant that as long as you live under our roof you will no longer have internet access. You can do your school work at the library. I don't care. No more boyfriends until you prove you're not a racist. Everything you buy will be inspected. I'm not going to ask you if you understand. I know that you do. If you think I'll relent, try me. Your next stop is a school for troubled teens."

Kaylee never doubted Erica's wrath. Her mistake was having too much faith in Tyler Marchant. It would have been easy for Kaylee to let this experience ruin her. She could become distrustful and resentful of men and forsake her love for her race. She could surrender in exchange for an easy, anesthetized life. She did neither. She was too strong to surrender her identity and too honest to surrender her love, though she did shed a few tears in bed that night.

Saturday dawned with partly cloudy skies and a little fog that evaporated by nine. Kaylee was up by then. She was about to roll out of bed when Gene came into her room. Kaylee pulled the sheet up as he entered; she was wearing a thong that Erica gave her for her birthday. She liked wearing them, though her humility and common sense made her do so with discretion.

"Hey," he said, "I'd like to talk to you."

Gene was dressed in jeans and a short-sleeve shirt. He must have planned on doing some lawn work after wrapping up this loose end. Gene took a seat at the foot of her bed.

Kaylee said nothing. She sat up and looked into his eyes. He turned to look out the window but the closed curtains blocked his view.

"You'll be angry with me for a while," he said, "It's OK, I can deal. But, you know, Kaylee, I agree with your mother. You're letting a few losers influence you. We have to step in and stop that." His Erica-approved speech over, he looked at her. "Honey, I don't want to lose you."

Gene raised his eyebrows and hoped for a little sympathy from Kaylee. Her face remained expressionless; her body unmoved.

"I don't like it here, either," he said, "Just between you and me, I wish we hadn't left Kirkland, and I think this has been really hard on you. These people have different attitudes than you and I. I don't know, more primitive, maybe even backward. I can't isolate you from the influence; all I can do is try and help you fight it. You're not like them. You're better. Please don't let them pull you down, OK? You're my daughter and I don't want to lose you."

Gene reached over and touched her cheek. Kaylee did not react to his touch. He pulled his arm back and sighed.

"If I love my race, you lose me, right?" she said.

"Kaylee, please, stop this fucking charade!" he said, "We both know what that means."

"What?" she asked, "Tell me!"

"It's racist to favor your race over another race," he said, "Especially when race is a social construct. It's a social construct, Kaylee! Do you enjoy hearing me say that? You must."

"White is a social construct," she said, "Black isn't, Mexican isn't, Yellow fucking isn't, is it?"

"White doesn't exist, Kaylee," he said.

"Until we're accused of racism, or having 'white privilege' or something's whitey's fault; we fucking exist then," she said, "Don't we, dad?"

"There's a legacy of racism, Kaylee," he said, "For fuck's sake, Kaylee, you should know that as a woman, living under the burden of what white men have done."

"Are you going to save us?" she asked, "Or does that happen when there are no more white men?"

"Oh, Kaylee," he said, "Kaylee, Kaylee... I wish we'd stepped in earlier. I'm sorry we missed the signs."

"Why?" she asked, "So you could teach me to deny who I am? I am white, dad. I'm white and so are you!"

She could see his hopes fade. His breathing and expression, even his posture told her that he actually hoped to return to the old days when her mind slept in the darkness.

"You will stop being racist," he finally said.

Or Erica will force you to stop, he thought. A shred of masculinity prevented him from saying it.

"If I obey you and stop loving my race, I deny who I am," she said.

"We're thinking of your best interest, Kaylee," Gene said, "Racism has no place in the civilized world or this house for that matter."

Gene recalled his road trip to California to protest Proposition 209. It was more like a party than a life-and-death political struggle. Kaylee knew how high he was the entire time; he bragged about it. There were other memories from that trip that he didn't share with Erica and Kaylee.

"You're becoming the wrong kind of radical," he said, "The kind that gets into real trouble."

She looked into his eyes. Her stare brought him back from the smoky fantasies of years gone by.

"You force me to rebel," Kaylee said.

Gene stood and glared at her. She'd been perfect once. She would sit beside him at their camp in the Cascades and help him make breakfast. He'd carry her on his shoulders on the path to Rainier. He read to her from the proper books and watched her read them and many more. She excelled at school and at her hobbies. She could sing like the mythical angels; except she sang like an angel of war, with a voice that could rage better than any he'd heard from a person so young, male or female. He could see her having wild years and controversies and then becoming a proud authority on the various struggles that he and most men like him pretended to be real and their own. Someday, her name would join some other man or woman's name, and she'd finish her days content and beloved by people she knew and many that she did not. Those hopes were dying. His daughter mocked their wishes and beat them with their broken dreams. Gene left without another word.

Easter was out of the question at the Campbell House. Uniontown High School agreed, as it was called "Spring Break" by the administration. Kaylee had little peace over the four-day weekend until Gene and Erica left on Sunday to have dinner at a friend's house. Kaylee made her own meal and then took a long walk under the gray April skies.

When Tuesday came around, Kaylee dreaded going to school. That morning she took a bath instead of the usual shower. It was nice and warm. She closed her eyes and slipped under the water. There she lay, trying to fantasize about a happy future while exhaling now and again to enable her to stay under for a while longer. About two minutes later she rose to breathe. For a moment she felt like crying, but recovered and climbed out of the tub.

Kaylee dried her hair but left it a little damp. She'd made her own breakfast for some time and today she made a mushroom and cheese omelet. For lunch she prepared a sandwich and packed the macaroni salad she'd made the day before. Erica had finished the apple juice, so Kaylee grabbed a bottle of water. She brewed coffee and had a cup before going outside to wait for Gene. Drizzle fell upon her toboggan and black hoodie as she waited by the garage door.

The two did not exchange a word on the way to UHS.

Today's mission would be unpleasant but necessary. Kaylee felt the need to confront Tyler and ask him why he had betrayed her trust. It would be easy enough to find him. The two shared classes, though she hoped to see him beforehand. She was in luck for once. Tyler was standing by his locker. There were other students milling about, but he was more or

less alone. It was the perfect time to ask. Tyler saw her coming and looked away twice before staring into her face.

"Do you know what they did to me?" Kaylee asked when it was obvious he would not speak, "Do you care?"

"I had to tell him," Tyler said, "He found a message on my cell."

Tyler hoped she'd buy his lie.

"I made sure I never did that to you!" she said, "You said your father would freak, so I never compromised you like that!" She looked away for a while before she could continue. "Don't lie, Ty, just, tell me why. You owe me that much."

He looked into her eyes.

"My cousin told him," said Tyler, whose cousin Ed was a senior at Uniontown High. "How could I tell Ed that you keep turning me down, huh? Do you know what his friends would say? I got enough shit as it is. It was easier to tell him we broke up because you're, well, racist. You are racist, Kaylee. What was I supposed to tell him?"

"Just because I wouldn't let you fuck me?" she asked, "You fucked me over for that? Because I'm not ready and I want it to be special? You knew what they'd fucking do to me!" She looked down, stifling the obvious hurt on her face. "Never mind."

She turned away from him. He said nothing. She began to walk away.

"Kaylee!" he finally said.

She raised her hand and continued walking.

Kaylee paid no attention during her first and second classes. When lunch arrived she plodded off to the cafeteria and removed her sandwich and salad from the refrigerator. Once she found a spot that was less likely to be next to someone, she went to the serving lines to get a cup of ice water. She'd forgotten the water bottle in her locker. As she walked to the cup and ice dispensers she passed beside three girls who had surrounded a fourth.

Kaylee sat her cup on a counter and took out her iPod Nano. She could use some music right now. As she walked toward the table with her lunch, the three girls were still standing around the fourth. Kaylee would have to pass beside them.

One of the girls was Kat Decker. Another was bleach-blonde Janet Guerry, a senior who went on double dates with Kat. The third was basketball player Donna Kretschmer, who was on a "how's it going" basis with Kaylee. Donna was tall and plain, with long but rather thin brunette hair. None of the three had been excessive in their rudeness or antagonism of

other students, at least as far as Kaylee knew. She assumed they were normal. She did not know that as a group they could be as cruel as any male bully, especially when they found an easy target for some crude amusement.

Their target was the fourth girl, a small and quiet blonde named Emily Lefevre. Emily kept to herself most of the time. Her friends were few in number but very dear to her. She was neither comely nor homely, though her long blonde hair was lovely. Like Jordan Trzeciak, she was a devout Roman Catholic. She also kept her religion private, though unlike Jordan she would walk away rather than defend herself if attacked.

Emily's brother Paul was outgoing and athletic. He'd run track in middle school and kept up the conditioning. His hair was dark but his eyes were just as blue as Emily's. Most boys that got along with him and the few who did not knew that he could and would fight. He, too, was a devout Catholic, but more in the vein of a good Irishman than a conscientious objector. He was seated with his friends, fellow seniors all, far enough away not to see the commotion surrounding his sister.

The week before, Donna set up Emily for ridicule. Unaccustomed to the pernicious routine, Emily answered Donna's questions about life and love, including which boy she liked best of all the boys at UHS. Donna and the other two were now tormenting Emily. Careful not to lay a hand on her, they goaded her with words and insults of a sexual nature and threats to tell each and every boy she had named of her true feelings. The torment escalated as Kaylee approached.

Kaylee's iPod malfunctioned. She reset the Nano, hoping it wouldn't die on her. That would be all she needed. The stress and nervousness was shoving her toward the edge of self-control. She wanted to tell Gene and Erica to fuck off. She wanted to leave that place forever. She didn't want to be alone in the darkness, a solitary intellectual prisoner in a society that made anti-white hatred a virtue and pro-white love an unspeakable sin. Kaylee felt like throwing the iPod to the ground. She pressed play three times and then, not certain if the iPod registered only two presses and was paused, or if the display was still frozen, she pressed play again. It was like she was holding on to a reed for dear life, and the iPod was the fly that landed on the stem and snapped the reed.

Every soul has a limit and Emily was near hers. As Kaylee approached, Donna pushed Emily beyond that point. She got in Emily's face and asked her what she might care to do about the mockery. Emily did something she had never done in her 11 years of public school - she responded in a physical manner, shoving Donna as hard as she could.

Off-guard, Donna stumbled backward and would have fallen had she not collided with Kaylee. Kaylee's water shot out of her cup and doused the iPod. She looked up in outrage, ready to snap - ready to fight.

"What the fuck!" she said loud enough for the students at a nearby table to stop talking.

"She shoved me!" Donna said.

"Did you?" Kaylee asked.

Emily hesitated. She didn't have a reason to tangle with Kaylee, and she feared the moody and physically powerful Seattle transplant.

"Yes, but she wouldn't leave me alone!" Emily said in her own defense.

Beyond simple musings, Kaylee had never truly contemplated God. Before she began to challenge their opinions on race and the sexes, she accepted her parents' belief that there was no such being. By the age of fifteen, atheism was one of the last of her parents' beliefs that she had not challenged. She had not examined the evidence and her own life experiences before deciding that atheism was the answer. Like most children who grew up in households similar to the Campbell's, Kaylee's atheism was a leap of faith.

Kaylee rubbed the iPod against her t-shirt and snorted in anger. She looked at Emily. Kaylee was never inclined to vent her frustrations on an innocent person but emotions were overcoming coherence and the thought that she might be doing something wrong didn't enter her mind.

"Stupid fundie bitch," Kaylee said and glared at Emily.

Emily said nothing; she just stared at Kaylee, who looked back down at her iPod. None of those present knew how close to tears Kaylee was at the moment. Truth be known, Emily was not nearly as distraught as Kaylee Jane.

Donna said something to Emily but Kaylee wasn't paying attention and had no idea what it was.

"I'm not afraid of you!" Emily said to Donna.

Kaylee wasn't watching. When she heard the words, she looked up in an instant.

"Is that right?" she asked.

"I wasn't..." Emily began to say.

"Fuck you!" Kaylee said.

Kaylee sized up her opponent. She saw the crucifix around Emily's neck. It felt good to release her pent-up rage. She didn't try to withhold it any longer. Her blue eyes alight with fury and pain, Kaylee was ready for a fight.

"Fuck you and fuck your God!" Kaylee said.

Erica and Gene would have been proud.

Kat shoved Emily toward Kaylee. Emily barreled through Donna and ran through the cafeteria.

Paul Lefevre saw his sister run past the tables and into a main hallway. He jumped from his seat and went after her.

Kaylee would begin to come down from her adrenaline high some time later. A new pain would join the loneliness and sense of betrayal. This one was worse. She had brought it on herself. Kaylee knew she'd get little sleep that night.

As she lay in bed, Kaylee stared out the window. The curtains were still open. She wanted it to storm, but the pin oak sat still and there was no sound beyond the panes of glass. She looked at the clock. It was midnight. She stared at the ceiling and summoned the energy to swallow.

Kaylee thought about what she had done. She thought about what Emily had done; or, rather, had not done. She'd never had any trouble with Emily. In fact, the two hardly shared a word, nor did they share any classes. Emily was reserved and shy. Kaylee had a daily struggle against her own shyness though she had fought it less and less in recent weeks. In a way her shyness insulated her from the closeness she once felt for the other students and her parents. Had she been an extrovert, it is likely that Kaylee would have caved in the face of the mounting pressure. Her shyness became an ironic shield.

None of her struggles or pain gave her an excuse to lash out at Emily, and Kaylee knew it. How she wished it would storm outside! Kaylee looked at the ceiling again. What had these Christians done to her? Wasn't Jordan Trzeciak one of them, and wasn't she arguably the best friend Kaylee had ever had? Did Jordan force her to kneel before an altar? Had they held her head in a tub of Holy Water? Had they ripped her iPod from her ears and purged it of all heavy metal and punk music? Did they ban jeans or thongs or those nigger pants that hung below a person's ass? In her free time, Kaylee wrote music. Did Christians force their way into her room and censor her lyrics?

Did Christians surround Donna Kretschmer and humiliate her? Were they the easy targets? Was Emily an easy target for Kaylee's wrath, when Kaylee should have beaten Donna for instigating the confrontation? It didn't matter what Emily believed. She was a fellow white girl and she was innocent of any wrongdoing. Kaylee had behaved like her parents and all the others who took her to anti-white rallies and speeches. She had insulted an innocent white sister and was prepared to harm her physically.

The last realization was the breaking point, and Kaylee covered her face with her hands and wept.

The next morning Kaylee Jane had a mission. She looked for Emily but could not find her, and her heart sank. She might not be at school that day. Kaylee hoped she had nothing to do with Emily's absence. Near her locker, Kaylee saw Samantha Nowaczyk. Sam was a pretty brunette who was one of Emily's friends. She asked Sam if Emily was in school and the location of her first class. Sam was hesitant to answer.

"I have to apologize to her," Kaylee said.

Sam was surprised. After considering a refusal to answer, she told Kaylee where she might find Emily. Kaylee thanked Sam and proceeded to Mrs. Gaetano's geometry class.

Gaetano, an otherwise tolerable person, was quick to give detention for tardiness.

Emily noticed the second Kaylee entered the door of the classroom. As beautiful as Kaylee was, the sight of her made Emily fear a continuation of yesterday's altercation. Kaylee's lace-up boots and the short sleeves that showed her big arms gave her a battle-ready look. Emily wasn't sure that petite Mrs. Gaetano could restrain Kaylee should she be there to fight.

Kaylee knelt in front of Emily's desk, which was first in the third row from the door. The look on Kaylee's face was anything but combative, though Emily did not trust the impression. Kaylee often had little expression on her face and was moody enough for Emily to doubt her intuition.

"What's the meaning of this?" asked Gaetano, who was preparing a Power Point presentation for the class.

Kaylee looked over her shoulder at Gaetano.

"I need to talk to Emily for a minute," Kaylee said.

Kaylee looked back at Emily. Though she felt more shame than she ever recalled feeling, Kaylee would not let herself whisper or weep. This had to be done right. It could not look like she was after pity or sympathy; it couldn't be about her. Kaylee had tremendous inner strength though she had to pause a few times to breathe, lest she lose her battle with her emotions. She looked into Emily's incredulous eyes.

"What I did yesterday, and what I said," Kaylee told her, "it was so wrong. It wasn't your fault what happened. I'm so sorry, Emily, I...I know everyone says that, and, like, they think it's all OK then. But I'm not doing that right now. It's not about me. What I want to say is, it will never, ever happen again. I'll never do that again, not to you or anyone else."

The tardy bell rang.

Kaylee looked down at the floor and breathed deep a few times. She swallowed hard. She must not weep or this will seem contrived. She looked back at Emily.

"I'm sorry, Emily," Kaylee said, "I'll never let it happen again."

"Get to class, Kaylee," said Gaetano, who had decided not to give her detention.

Kaylee looked down and nodded before leaving the room.

From that day on, Kaylee Jane would be in Emily Lefevre's prayers.

Kaylee didn't feel any better at lunch, but at least Emily no longer had to fear her. Kaylee ate her beef and spinach salad in solitude. As she finished a student approached. It was Kat. Kaylee looked up at her. She could guess what was about to transpire, and she was ready to defend herself if necessary. Kat leaned on the table with her palms flat on its surface.

"So, are you gonna tell on us?" she asked.

"No," Kaylee said, "I'm not going to say anything. I'm just going to feel sick for a while."

"You better not tell," Kat said.

Kat turned to leave. Kaylee watched her. If Kat had tried something, Kaylee was ready for the challenge and most likely would have destroyed her. She might be taller, but physically and mentally Kat was no match for the strong young rebel.

At the end of the school day Kaylee waited under one of the large silver maples in front of the school building. Gene was late again. Kaylee was usually observant. She felt the need to be even more vigilant as time passed and other students began to see her uniqueness as an oddity or instability. Today she was not so vigilant. As she waited for Gene, she let her powers of observation lapse a little. The maple's branches swayed in the breeze and Kaylee half fancied climbing up and sitting astride its massive boughs.

"Kaylee Campbell!" yelled a masculine voice. It brought her back to reality. She looked around and saw a young man approaching from her right. It was Paul Lefevre. She could tell he was not pleased. Perhaps he didn't know that she spoke to Emily. It didn't matter. Kaylee knew that she deserved a tongue-lashing.

"Yeah," she said.

She looked into his eyes and took a deep breath. This was going to be ugly.

"You think you're somethin', huh?" he said, his blue eyes alight with anger. "You came all the way from your cool city to put us rednecks in our

place. Yeah, real hardcore, raggin' on my sister when you know she won't fight. You know something else? I don't care if those losers think you're cool. I don't give a fuck how you look, you're nothing but a piece of shit to me. You understand me? You're a piece of shit. If you were a dude I'd fuck you up right now. Remember that, Miss Bad Ass, your pussy pass gets you out of an ass whipping. What you did was fucking cruel, and you're goddamned lucky you're a girl."

He turned and shook his head and it looked like he might leave, but he had more to say.

"And I don't care if you tell," Paul said, "It wouldn't surprise me; you're so fucking tough you go after the nicest girl in class. The one you know won't jump you from behind. You fucking bitch."

Kaylee watched him leave. She could see Gene coming up the street in the minivan, but she kept her eyes on Paul.

That's how I'd want my brother to act, she thought, But I lost him and now I'm alone.

At least Kaylee slept well that night. She still felt terrible, but exhaustion and a sense of closure allowed her to slumber. The next morning she lingered outside of UHS, hoping to hear that school had been cancelled for whatever reason. In her daydream she went back to the Campbell House long enough to grab her bike and then take off. Since there was no way the dream would come true, she imagined never coming back home.

"Kaylee," Paul Lefevre said.

He'd approached much closer this time before she noticed him. She told herself to stop daydreaming while she was at school. It could be dangerous. When Paul stood face-to-face with her she looked into his eyes but said nothing.

"I heard about what you did yesterday," he said, "It looks like I was wrong about you. I want to apologize."

"Don't apologize, I deserved it" she said, "You took up for your sister. If more of us were like that, none of this shit would be happening to us."

He must have been surprised though he did not show it.

"I appreciate you telling her in front of the others," Paul said, "I can understand someone getting pissed off, but you did the right thing in the end."

"Thank you Paul," she said, "I meant it."

"I believe you," he said, "Take care, Kaylee."

Paul would be graduating in a few short months. Kaylee could imagine her dead brother walking like him, with the pride and strength of a man.

Benjamin O'Brien was an esteemed member of the faculty at UHS. He was tall, with white hair and moustache and a body far too thin for his height and far too frail for good health. He taught World Cultures, which happened to be Kaylee's third class during the spring semester. Outside of the classroom, O'Brien was an outspoken Democrat and crusader for so-called "women's rights." That meant that he would not appreciate a girl like Kaylee Jane, one who challenged the politically correct orthodoxy. Thus far the two had not collided, since he hadn't given much reason for a confrontation. Their neutrality towards each other was living on borrowed time, however. Kaylee was more and more awake, and O'Brien more and more aggressive in his proselytizing. By April he'd begun quoting persons he did not agree with and criticizing them in front of his captive audience. He strictly forbade any recording devices and cameras or camera-cell phones. O'Brien was one-hundred percent white, being of Scottish descent, though his allegiances were with anyone who shared his hatred of his own flesh and blood.

The day after Kaylee and Paul made peace, Kaylee hoped to have an uneventful end to the week. It was Thursday, a day she normally liked, since it heralded Friday and a two-day escape from the oppressive destroyer of independent thought and creativity that is the American public school system. Kaylee breezed through the morning and found her lunch - crepes that she'd made by herself - to be quite delicious. She also had the satisfaction of taking the last seltzer water from the refrigerator, an honor that usually fell to Erica. Until O'Brien's class began, she'd gotten her wish for a pleasant day.

The start of his class marked the end of her tranquility. O'Brien mentioned some anecdote from his past that meant something to him alone. At the end he made a clichéd remark about whites being lame, and quoted a black friend who said that "...he (O'Brien) was prejudiced against white people." O'Brien laughed in a nasal manner that would have made him repulsive had he not been repulsive to begin with. On most days class would then begin. Anti-white comments such as O'Brien's had become unexceptional; from the mouths of teachers, the government, the media and entertainment figures, they had become commonplace. Usually no one objected, and even those opposed kept their mouths shut.

That Thursday was different, however. Kaylee wasn't willing to let this one slide.

"You don't like white people, do you?" she asked.

The question took O'Brien by surprise. From his perch on his desk, he did a double-take and then stared at Kaylee.

"How long have you been anti-white?" Kaylee asked.

O'Brien slid his behind off of the desk and stepped in front of the row where she sat.

"I'm not anti-white," he said after some mental deliberation, "I'm anti-racist. Sorry if that means criticizing whites so often. But you know what they say, if the shoe fits."

"Anti-racist is the same as anti-white," she said, "You just proved it. Whatever whites do or don't do, or even if we're an innocent target, anti-whites like you are going to put the blame on us."

"Whites usually deserve it," he said.

"You admit to being anti-white then?" she asked.

He sighs.

"Once more, I'm anti-racist, Kaylee."

"I thought if the shoe fit," she said.

"Can we move on, Kaylee?" he asked, "Or do we want to make this a debate about racism. I'll warn you, don't go there."

He laughed again through his nose.

"Yeah," she said, "I'd like to go there."

The other students began to stare at her.

"Who benefits from the color of their skin, huh Kaylee?" he asked.

"Who gets affirmative action for the color of their skin?" she asked, "Who stifles free speech when they feel insulted by innocent comments and words like 'black hole?' You called every white student in this school 'lame.' If you'd said that about blacks you'd have to kiss hella ass or you'd be out of a job."

She came very, very close to saying "fucking job" but stopped just short. It's fortunate for her that she did. O'Brien's hand was on his chin and his face showed an arrogant smile.

"I didn't think your type still existed," he said.

"And what might that be?" she asked.

He leaned over and hissed, "Nazis." When he straightened up he still had that arrogant smile. He turned his back toward her and walked to the desk. She knew he wouldn't tell the principal that she'd made racist comments because she'd fight fire with fire, and accuse him of insulting her for being white. In her heart of hearts she knew he would retaliate. That thought did not dismay her; what bothered her much more was the fact that of all the white students in the cultures class, she was the only one to stand up for their race.

It was only later that Kaylee realized her argument could have been much more effective. She could have demanded that he justify his support

for white genocide, and when he predictably tried to dodge the question, she could have insisted that he answer. He would have avoided the question, and attacked her, or perhaps he'd have admitted to his desire for the white race to disappear. In any case, her target - the students whose minds still slept - would have heard the true feelings of an anti-white traitor.

On Friday O'Brien sent her to the office for being "disrespectful of authority." As she walked out of the room in silence, she looked at the class. No one said a word. The principal, Nathan Weems, gave her three day's detention.

Of course Erica grounded Kaylee for the entire month of May. She could still take walks, but could not ride her bike, and she had to be back by a certain time or Erica would ban walks as well. Erica would be at work all day Saturday, and Gene was out having breakfast with a fellow faculty member at Benjamin Franklin School. After reading her the "riot act," Erica left Kaylee alone in the house.

The second she was sure that Erica had gone, Kaylee ran into the den and opened her laptop. She turned on the computer, hoping they hadn't made it password-protected. Her hopes died in an audible sigh when the log-in bar appeared. Kaylee turned off the laptop and went to her parents' bedroom. There, she turned on the brand-new Dell. To her delight the computer did not require a log-on. Kaylee was free to use the internet, for all of two hours.

There were news and events that interested her; some she read with gladness, most with sorrow or outrage. None of them surprised her. She hadn't been to the library and shuddered at the thought of using it for school projects, though she would have to do so. She wondered what level of censorship she would encounter there. Near the end of her two hours, she visited some of the sites she used to frequent. All of them refused to obey the Marxist rules of political correctness. Most of them were proponents of free speech. Some of them were pro-white. She also checked out several of their links. Most of the sites she visited were echoes of one another. She cleared the cache and internet browsing history and prepared to turn off the computer, when a link near the bottom of the list caught her attention. It was a link called "BUGS."

Kaylee followed the link, and began to read the entries at the site. It was a blog whose very top line read "Fighting White Genocide." Within five minutes Kaylee could see that this was no Stormfront or American Renaissance. The tone of this site was optimistic and courageous rather than defensive and hopeless. More important, the information and observations on the site verified what Kaylee had begun to fear. Her race was,

indeed, facing genocide. She'd noticed it in the overt support of race mixing and encouragement of non-white immigration and assimilation into each and every white nation. She'd even mentioned it to Tyler, who could not mount a serious challenge to her logic when she presented him with the facts. Now she read the Mantra, and her own observations over the past years began to make complete sense. Kaylee tried to commit the words of the Mantra to memory. She'd always had an excellent retentive ability and could bring back facts and verse for a great measure of time after she memorized them.

For another hour, Kaylee read as much as she could from the BUGS site, losing track of time in the process. When she heard a car pull up to the garage and the door begin to open, it startled her into action. She exited out of Firefox and clicked for the computer to shut down. The computer began a routine update before shutting off and Kaylee stood there, incredulous and increasingly nervous. She ran out into the hall and peeked back inside. She realized that she'd visited the Whitaker's BUGS site without clearing the browsing history. She didn't worry too much. The odds that Gene would check the browser history weren't all that high. The computer shut down before Gene slammed the minivan door. Kaylee went upstairs for some light weight training, and Gene was none the wiser.

As she performed bicep curls with her dumbbells, Kaylee thought about what she'd read on the website. She liked the simplicity of the Mantra and its sharp ring of truth. It would be a new weapon for the next time she defended her race or trolled anti-white websites. If only she could regain internet access... Perhaps in the coming weeks Gene and Erica would leave her alone for a few hours.

At 7PM, after Kaylee had eaten and Gene made an espresso in the kitchen, he retired to his bedroom. Gene fired up the Dell and waited for the programs to load. Once Foxfire was up and running, he began to type in the address for the University of Washington's website. When he hit the "W" he waited for the website to automatically appear in the address bar. It did; but so did something else. He clicked on that unknown link. Kaylee's gamble was about to lose her a lot more than money.

This time Erica gave no indication of displeasure when she called Kaylee downstairs. Kaylee closed her French III book and climbed off of her bed. She was still wearing her newer pair of lace-up boots in the hopes that she'd be able to do some stargazing, and was dressed accordingly. She walked the hallway and descended without a clue to the ambush that lay in wait. She would soon learn never to trust her parents; she should have learned that lesson already.

The first sight that greeted Kaylee when she entered the den was the screen of her laptop, turned toward her, with the BUGS site logo across the top of the window. She looked at Erica, who was sitting behind the computer at the desk. Gene was standing to Erica's right, but Kaylee did not look at him.

"Look familiar?" Erica asked. Kaylee didn't answer. "Your father found this on the desktop. Interesting, huh? I should have guessed that your irrational hatred of anything non-white would lead you to a cult."

"It's not a cult," Kaylee said.

"So you admit to visiting the site," Erica said.

Kaylee felt an intense desire to slap her mother.

"You'd have punished me whether I admitted to it or not," Kaylee said.

"You're damned right," Erica said, "Unfortunately, what you're doing doesn't just hurt you. It hurts others as well. I've discussed this with your father. He'll be staying in Pennsylvania this summer. And so will you."

The blow was a heavy one. Kaylee cared less and less about her anti-white relatives, but she still adored her home state. In spite of the galling attitudes of the majority, she could find solace there. For the first time in her life, she'd go the summer without visiting Kirkland or Rainier.

Kaylee finally looked at Gene. He could barely suppress his rage at her. She could imagine him asking why he, too, would have to stay behind, like a child protesting a parent's punishment. He wasn't against leaving Kaylee in Pennsylvania, of that she was certain. He was furious that he'd have to stay behind as well.

There was one cold comfort for Kaylee: at least she'd be free from Erica for two and a half months. She would not stop using the internet, though it took a few weeks for her to find the new log-in password for the desktop. Erica took Kaylee's laptop with her to Seattle. Kaylee learned to be much more careful in the future. If she thought there was any chance Gene would catch her, she would forsake using the computer for that day. When summer came to a close and Erica returned, the risk became too great, and Kaylee's internet use became limited to the public library.

When the new school year started at Uniontown High, Kaylee kept to herself. She sat alone at lunch and those who used to leap at any opportunity to talk to her became reticent and often steered clear. In September, however, she noticed someone approaching her corner of the table. She looked up from her lunch to see a handsome boy on the verge of manhood. It was the new student, Donny Patrick. Lunch break was more than half over and he wasn't carrying anything. He must have eaten already.

"How's it goin'?" Donny asked before sitting at the table.

Kaylee couldn't help but peek over her shoulder. She didn't want to answer if he was talking to someone else.

"Yeah, you, Kaylee," he said and chuckled.

She looked into his bright gray eyes.

"I'm good," she said.

Donny sat opposite her. She wondered if this was some kind of a bet between him and his friends. She felt a little depressed at the prospect, and took a bite of her zucchini ravioli. Donny wondered what restaurant it came from, not knowing she made them that morning.

"And you?" she asked without looking up.

"Good," he said, "Hey, Rob Kochanowski said you're from Seattle, is that right?"

She nodded.

"I lived there for two years," he said, "I'm from Idaho Falls originally, but we move around a lot. Do you like this place?"

She looked into his eyes again.

"Yeah, it's OK," she said.

"Except when someone asks a lot of questions, huh?" he asked.

"It's cool," she said, "I'm just in a little funk right now. It'll pass. Hey, did you like Seattle?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't remember it much," he said, "I was three."

"How often do you move?" she asked.

"About every two or three years, on average," he said.

"Damn," she said, "where else have you lived?"

"San Antonio and Charlotte," he said.

"Shit," she said, "You don't have many friends either, do you?"

She smiled for the first time. It lasted a little less than two seconds.

"No, not really," he said.

"Do you mind if I ask why you move so often?" she asked.

"It's cool," he said, "My dad's a pilot. Right now he flies out of Pittsburgh, but they're talking about lay-offs again."

"Another white man loses his job," she said.

The bell rang for the students to head to their third class of the day. Donny rose first from the table. Kaylee could see his solid arms and shoulders in his short-sleeve shirt. She'd noticed his confidence and masculinity long before he'd talked to her. He wasn't brash or abusive, but he could obviously take care of himself.

"Don't give up, Kaylee," he said as he looked down from his 6-foot height, "Not everyone thinks you're wrong."

Despair's heavy weight seemed a little lighter that night.

On the 1st of November, Kaylee turned sixteen. There was no party or special event to commemorate the date, nor where the gifts wrapped or topped with bows. More had come from her Washington relatives than her parents, and her sister gave her nothing at all. Most of her gifts were clothes, including several pairs of tight and shiny black leggings that angered Erica. There were new boots and jeans, and even a dress from her expat grandmother. Ashley sent her a card with money, which Kaylee hid from Erica. That evening Kaylee baked a chicken and pasta dish and had a bottle of unpasteurized cider she'd bought at Chalk Hill during a long Saturday walk in October.

Just before going to bed, Kaylee accosted Gene while the latter was alone in the kitchen.

"Dad," she said. He looked up from his MacBook. "I want to get a stud."

"What?" he said.

It was a stunning request from a person who he expected to make unusual requests.

"A stud," she said, "I want to get a piercing."

She'd wanted a labret piercing for over a year. Anti-white punks and lesbians often sported them, and rebellious Kaylee Jane was in no mood to surrender labret piercings or anything else she liked to the enemy.

"No," he said, "Why?"

"I never had my ears pierced and I'm not into cosmetics," she said. She hadn't needed them, either. "It'd look cool. A lot of punks have shit like that, and I think it'd look good on me."

"No," he said, and shook his head as he returned to the MacBook.

In truth, he didn't care, but he knew Erica would never forgive him. Kaylee walked away as quietly as she had come.

Stephanie Campbell came in for the entire week of Thanksgiving and it was a bad omen. When Kaylee was a small child, Stephanie grew to resent her for the attention her parents lavished on the younger daughter. As time went by and Kaylee fell out of favor, Stephanie took out her pent-up frustrations and anger on her younger, planned sibling. Erica and Gene didn't seem to mind.

When Stephanie arrived the Saturday before the holiday, Kaylee happened to be in the garage working on her bike. Kaylee had difficulty suppressing her laughter at the sight of her older sister: Stephanie's once-lovely hair was now short and dyed deep red. The punishment for laughing at Stephanie would have been exceptional in its severity, and Kaylee

still had a few things left to lose, so she concentrated on her bike until Stephanie disappeared inside. Then, with her gloved right hand on the bike, she closed her eyes and laughed.

There was no party this Thanksgiving. The Campbell's would dine as a family, of sorts. The menu would be far from traditional but at least Kaylee wouldn't have to eat at a small desk in her room.

The menu wasn't the only part of the feast that defied tradition. It turned out that Stephanie had a big announcement. Erica told Kaylee to wear something better than a t-shirt, then sent her back to change again when she came downstairs wearing a pair of snakeskin-pattern leggings from her birthday stash. Stephanie showed up in an olive green t-shirt and jeans. She'd been out the previous night and all day Thanksgiving. Before they sat, Erica pulled Kaylee aside.

"Don't say a word," she said.

She seemed perpetually angry at Kaylee, or at least a hair's width from it.

The meal was of excellent quality, as usual. Smoked salmon with a white sauce was the main course, with several delicious sides. Dessert rivaled the other dishes in taste. Erica had made a chocolate-cranberry cake that was stunning in appearance and even more incredible to the tongue.

As the four drank coffee and ate dessert, Stephanie rose to tell the family the news that had her smiling with pride.

"Mia and I are considering going to California so we can finally have a proper union," she said.

Mia Giang was a half-Chinese student at Penn and Stephanie's roommate. The two had been involved in a so-called lesbian "romance" for three months.

Gene was all smiles, and Erica's expression was ambivalent. Neither protested the speed or the nature of the two females' relationship. This was news to Kaylee, who had never heard of Mia or suspected her sister of engaging in a homosexual relationship. Five years ago, Kaylee would have blindly supported their union. Now she increasingly viewed such partnerships as frivolous, possibly mentally unstable, and usually anti-white.

Kaylee kept quiet. At the time, she had no idea what to do about the darkness that surrounded her. If not for Stephanie, the announcement would have ended the conversation. When Stephanie looked at Kaylee, her younger sister knew that she would not let it end.

"Don't you have something to say, Kaylee?" asked a smug Stephanie.

"Not really, no," Kaylee said and it drew a glare from Erica. She looked at her mother and shrugged, mouthing "what?" without making a sound.

"I thought you'd object," Stephanie said, "What, with you being a Christian bigot and all."

"That'd be my business if I was," Kaylee said.

She didn't care what they thought, though she had nowhere to go if she had to run away.

"Oh no it isn't," Stephanie said, "It's just like your racism."

"Or your treason, I suppose," Kaylee said. *Fuck it*, she thought. "Tell me, as a dyke, why do you and the other faggots always join sides with anti-whites? You know that non-whites will kill you faster than they can say 'Allah Akbar.' And yet you still join the non-whites in pushing for our genocide."

"Kaylee!" Erica said, "Go! Now!"

"No, mom," Stephanie said, "It's fun to talk to her. Our own cute little Nazi! As long as she keeps her insanity in the house, it'll be kind of neat. Like a boa constrictor or a krait snake, kind of neat to look at and all fierce and cute in her cage."

"As long as you keep your faggotry in the bedroom, it's alright," Kaylee said, "But none of you ever do."

"How many of us do you know?" Stephanie asked, "Or is that more hate from Stromfront?"

"I've seen enough at those marches," Kaylee said, "I remember the fat, disgusting old queers with their dicks out, and all the sick shit they did in front of children. It makes me sick to think of it."

Stephanie didn't remember that Gene had taken pre-teen Kaylee to a few "homosexual rights" marches.

"How did you end up like this?" Stephanie asked. She looked at Erica. "Did that Neanderthal boyfriend do this?"

"His father said she filled his head with that crap," Erica said.

"Great," Stephanie said. She folded her arms like Erica often did. "You stupid little bitch, you've been spreading your Nazi bullshit, haven't you? Don't you dare fuck up my future with your stupidity!"

Kaylee didn't say a word. After a few minutes, Stephanie sat down and drank her coffee.

The inevitable happened at eleven that night.

Kaylee waited in her room for the call to come downstairs. This time, Erica came to her. She entered the room and stood just inside the doorway.

"I can't see any way to save you from the choices you've made," Erica said, "Honestly, the only thing I can see doing is to discourage you from ruining our reputations."

Kaylee stared at her. There was no use mentioning that Stephanie instigated the argument or that Stephanie had made it personal. She kept her mouth closed.

"Every time we punish you we hope you'll take us seriously," Erica said, "And every time you throw it back in my face. One of these days it'll get through that thick skull of yours. Tomorrow I'm going to call Mr. Batchelder. Tomorrow's lesson will be your last."

It had been understandable and innocent foolishness on Kaylee's part to think that her parents would not terminate her singing lessons. She couldn't help showing a wounded expression on her face. Erica couldn't help showing a contented one on hers.

Batchelder knew that this would be their last meeting. After the previous suspension of lessons, he'd anticipated this moment. He could see Kaylee's sadness though her façade was stoic. He'd hoped someday to hear her sing "Wild Horses," a song he knew she could own, and it looked like now or never. She didn't mind the suggestion. By the time she was finished, Mr. Batchelder sat in silence. He was no weak soul. He had a wife and three children who he had raised to be men and women, and for many years he'd been a volunteer firefighter. He admitted without shame that her performance, so full of passion and beauty and deep sadness, had very nearly moved him to tears.

She wiped her cheeks at the end of the song but did not break down. Batchelder stood and walked to her.

"Don't let this be the end, Kaylee," he said, "Join a band, practice on your own, and pick it up again when you're eighteen. You have a very special gift, and I don't doubt that you're a very special person."

She smiled through the tears.

"Thank you, Mr. Batchelder," she said.

"It's been a pleasure, Miss Kaylee Jane," he said as he shook her hand.

That night she wept. Above all other losses, this one wounded her the most.

Kaylee spent the Sunday evening thinking about the music. She listened to songs she considered triumphs of talent and passion, such as "Any Port in a Storm" and "Scorpion Flower." She listened to "Night on Bald Mountain," one of the few classical pieces that she enjoyed. She perused the collected works of Shakespeare that she'd bought at the Con-

nellsville used book store and recalled the tremendous works of art she'd seen, with *Still Life with Dead Game* and Waterhouse's *My Sweet Rose* still strong in her mind.

When Erica stayed late at work and Gene was in bed napping, Kaylee looked over the titles on the large oak bookshelves against the walls. Among the law treatises and the assorted and forgettable anti-white screeds, she read the titles *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *War and Peace*. Other great works sat buried under stacks of what were once beautiful trees, mowed down so that Marxist Literary Theory could deconstruct another work of art. The readable novels and compilations were mostly for show, though Kaylee had read each and every one of them.

To some, her recollections were aimless musings with no demonstrable link between one medium of art and another. Kaylee, however, saw the connection with ease. There was a divinity that bound each work of passion and creativity, from the best hardcore tune to the most precise sculpture. There was a racial connection as well.

Maybe Jordan wasn't a well-meaning fool. Perhaps her religion wasn't all superstition and bullshit. And even if it was, how could it be worse than her parents' dogma? Jordan's Christianity had inspired generations of artists. What art had the modern religion inspired? Where the globs of paint and religious symbols in urine actual art, or a mockery created by the untalented and the resentful? Gene and Erica's atheism was no less a religion. There were gods and devils. It required a leap of faith to accept its own creation myth and the means by which *Homo sapiens* came to be. It required the adherent to believe that genetics and evolution were crucial to all species except the human being, who mysteriously - dogmatically - ceased to evolve as the races appeared.

The atheistic anti-white dogma was not without its gods and devils. Martin Luther King, Karl Marx, and Betty Friedan were among its many deities and prophets. Its devils were equally plentiful. Any white man who stood up for his race was a demon incarnate. Nothing he said could be valuable; his mere presence could corrupt. Precise academic research meant nothing if performed by the hands of a white racist. Politicians and businessmen would distance themselves with vehemence from alleged white racists as if they carried some terrible plague or mark of the beast.

Erica and Gene's atheism had its own inquisitions and heretics. Any white guilty of offending a non-white was a target for the cult's wrath. The accused would forever be on the blacklist of the fallen, their names cursed with more venom than the name of Satan. The relentless pursuit of a he-

retic would not end with his professional destruction. Zealots would publish the racist's address, putting him and his family's personal safety in jeopardy.

The American religion had its own hierarchy of holiness. Skin color, sex and sexual orientation determined one's place in the caste system. The inquisitors censored any speech they deemed offensive to these holy groups. The caste had its untouchables, to be sure. To be white and male meant impurity. As Kaylee was finding out, even white females would suffer the fury of the anti-white religion if they dared violate the rules. Kaylee could see the hatred reserved for proud whites. She could see that the self-proclaimed rebels were among the most ardent supporters of the system, while any real rebel would face severe retaliation for the slightest infraction. This new, atheistic American religion was giving birth to the darkest of tyrannies. It was nothing new. Its methods existed during the Inquisition and at the trial of thousands of supposed witches.

Kaylee knew that there were Christian criminals and charlatans. Most were as anti-white as the atheists, though they could not compete with the viciousness of the anti-white left. Most of the time, race was all that mattered to them. Kaylee agreed with environmental protection and the enforcement of occupational safety regulations. She desired strong unions and aid for the destitute, and supported universal health care. None of that mattered to the anti-whites. Kaylee loved her white brothers and sisters and wanted them to benefit from the aforementioned protections. Above all else, the anti-whites wanted her race to go extinct. They would embrace an anti-white Republican before they'd even tolerate a strong white girl like Kaylee Jane, even though most of her other beliefs mirrored their own.

Kaylee returned her thoughts to the divine spark. Maybe there was more to life than just the flesh and the eventual dust, or the sin of being born white, the driving force behind the modern anti-white religion.

During the week of December 5th, Kaylee paid little attention in her classes. She was doing well in all of them, though Benjamin O'Brien would give her a "B" out of spite. For the most part, Kaylee thought about God and divine inspiration, but He was not the only thing on her mind.

Donny Patrick would always speak to her. He'd smile and say hello, but he never did sit beside her at lunch. His words gave her great hope in a time of despair and she longed for more. She hoped he'd talk to her again. He might even ask her out. Kaylee did not speak of herself as being "drop dead" gorgeous or more beautiful than so-and-so, but she would be a fool or a liar if she said that she was not beautiful. Beauty wouldn't be

enough for a real man, but physical attraction would be an essential start for a relationship. She allowed herself to make a few assumptions, and perhaps take a few leaps of faith when she thought of Donny and his motivations. Maybe he was conscious of his race and the struggles they faced as white men and women. He might long for a white girl who would stand with him in solidarity and give to him her deepest affection. After a while such thoughts became frustrating and she tried not to think about him. If Donny was aware, why didn't he sit with her? Why didn't he ask her out?

The weather was warm for December but that was about to change. On the 13th there was a cold rain that was heavy enough to chase away even diehard rain lovers like Kaylee Jane. Lunch had come to an end when Kaylee was heading for her locker. She wasn't going to retrieve any books or papers; those were all in her backpack. She'd sneak a piece of sugar-free gum to have in her afternoon classes. Though she loathed going home, she hated being at school even more. After lunch she thought about how she might escape the Campbell House, or what she might do if she were confined to its walls. If it wasn't so cold and getting colder, she'd take another long walk to the pizza joint and buy a bottle of water. They always looked at her a little odd when she did so, which encouraged her all the more.

While Kaylee walked the crowded aisle toward her locker, she could see a blonde girl from two of her classes. Christina Keller was a popular if uninteresting student. She made decent grades and, more important, was attractive and usually friendly. Her boyfriend was from a well-off family and played golf for Uniontown High School. She had a thick blonde bob and green eyes, and her body was developed and womanly. Overall, she was very pretty and well-liked.

Miss Keller was not without her faults. She'd gone out of her way to show that she was not a bigot and treated the school's non-white students with politeness that often bordered on the ridiculous. No doubt she'd been cordial with Cory Demery. She most likely waffled when the black junior asked her to meet him after school. Eventually she said no, and tried to escape, but he would not accept her answer. When Kaylee chanced upon the two, Christina was trying to ignore him, which both encouraged and infuriated Demery.

"What, you racist?" he said to her loud enough for Kaylee to hear. "Is that what this is about?"

Demery, unlike most of his friends, was athletic, though he wore thick glasses and hung out downtown rather than practice any sport.

"You don't like black men, is that it?" he said.

"I didn't!" said Christina, then much softer, "I didn't say that."

Demery grabbed her arm and she did not fight him. Kaylee, already angered by his blatant attempt at shaming Christina into compromising her natural revulsion, was outraged by his violation of her personal space.

Demery and Keller were standing near a bank of lockers, not far from a supply closet. Across the hall was the chem lab, its door open. The instructor had gone to the teacher's lounge for coffee. Two students stopped for a second when Demery grabbed Christina's arm, but then continued walking. Another pair approached but said nothing. Kaylee was not one of the apathetic bystanders.

"She said she wasn't interested!" Kaylee said.

"Mind your own fuckin' business, bitch!" he said without letting go of Christina.

Kaylee waited for a white male to tear into him. Four or five students had gathered but no one stepped forward. At the moment, Kaylee was the only one between the bystanders and Demery. She felt desperation gnawing at her soul. She resolved to intervene, even if no one came to her aid. Most likely she would suffer despite her own strength. Demery was not weak, and he was male. Kaylee did not trust in Demery's mercies, for it is likely that he had little or none. Christina wasn't even her friend, but she was one of Kaylee's sisters in race, and to Kaylee that mattered more and more. Since none of the boys would defend Christina, Kaylee had to try her best. This hurt Kaylee more than she'd admit at the time.

None of the boys stepped forward, save one - a resolute young man who heard the commotion. He'd heard Demery and he'd heard Kaylee Jane. He pushed through the four white spectators and emerged near Kaylee. His name was Donny Patrick.

"What the fuck's goin' on?" he asked.

Kaylee was startled by his sudden appearance but soon began to feel relief, even joy.

Demery snapped his head toward Donny.

"It's none of your fuckin' business!" he yelled.

Donny continued his advance, which became a dedicated charge. Demery had no choice but to relinquish his grip on Christina. Demery attempted to defend himself with a preemptory strike but Donny knocked it to the side. He grabbed Demery and shoved his head against the wall. His move made Kaylee rejoice inside, enough that she managed an ephemeral smile. Demery attempted to slip out of Donny's grasp. The result was not what he'd wanted. Donny slammed him against the wall for a second time, this time much harder. The young white man puts his forearm

against his opponent's throat and held him to the wall. Donny's lupine gray eyes stared into Demery's brown and yellow ones, which had great difficulty returning the stare.

"You've got one last chance," Donny said, "Leave her the fuck alone or I'll put you in a fucking wheelchair. Do you understand me?"

Demery's fearful glance observed something feral in Donny's eyes. He raised his hands, palms toward his adversary. Kaylee took a moment from her euphoria to observe the crowd. The other students were watching. Christina ran off in the opposite direction, around the corner. Kaylee noticed more movement, this time from the rear of the six white students who approached after Donny seized Demery. None of the other white students made a sound as two of Demery's black friends moved around and through the gawking rabble. It was obvious to Kaylee that they would come up behind Donny.

"Donny!" she yelled, "Watch out behind you!"

Kaylee was ready to engage the closest one should they attack Donny Patrick. She was sick of the silence, the lack of action and the lack of support. It didn't matter to her that she was female; she was white.

Donny turned his head to try and assess the threat. As he did so, he pushed hard with his forearm against Demery's neck.

"You motherfuckers want it? Huh?" he said, "I'm right fucking here!"

Flame was in his eyes. He would fight all of them if necessary. Demery squealed in pain. Donny leaned into him, cutting off his air.

The two ceased their advance. They must have realized that Donny would fight, and it could get ugly.

"Motherfucker!" yelled the older of the two, "This ain't over yet!"

The other one looked at Kaylee.

"Fuckin' stoner bitch!" he said.

The two returned to the crowd and emerged through its rear, leaving before any authorities could appear. The older one shoved one of the white males as he departed.

Donny relaxed his hold on Demery. Before Demery could flee, Donny slapped him so hard the students in the chem lab could hear. None of the other whites in the crowd said a word. Kaylee looked around to see if the enemy was regrouping. Satisfied that they had left, she looked at Donny, who winked when he saw her. The tension began to ease and the crowd started to disperse. A teacher might show up now that there was no longer any danger, so Kaylee and Donny departed as well.

Cory Demery was not the first student to report the incident to the administration. Two weak-willed and traitorous whites went to Principal

Weems as soon as the altercation was over. The administration gave Donny Patrick a three day suspension for his valiant defense of Christina Keller.

Donny returned to class on the 19th of December. Kaylee was happy to see him and simply overjoyed when he sought her out at lunch. As he approached, her smile lasted almost twice as long as usual. She'd noticed him coming from much further away this time. He had on a red button-down shirt with the top button left unfastened and wore the usual jeans and sneakers. Donny always seemed classy no matter what the apparel. It must have been his body language. Several male students were handsome and powerful, but Donny had a grandeur about him that was even more impressive to Kaylee's senses. He could become a man to be reckoned with some day.

He'd be strong enough to take a woman, she thought, and strong enough to wait for her.

"I wanted to thank you, Kaylee," he said, "Thanks for not just standing there."

"I wouldn't do that to one of my brothers," she said, "Did Chris ever thank you?"

He shook his head.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Kaylee," he said, staring deep into her eyes, "I'm leaving again. Dad's found a new job and I'm worried that after I'm gone they'll retaliate against you."

His announcement was a thunderbolt.

"You're leaving?" she asked.

"Yeah," he said, "United laid off my dad, and he got a job in Montana. He'd wanted to go there for a long time, and I think he'll be happier there. It pays less but I think he'll enjoy it a lot more."

"When's your last day?" she asked.

"Friday, right before Christmas break," he said.

He didn't call it "Winter Break" like UHS did.

When the conversation ended and he rose to leave, Donny wished her luck and told her to be careful. Then he left. The last thing he wanted was another attachment after a lifetime of leaving them behind.

The sky outside was mottled light and dark gray. Snowflakes fell from a sky that seemed too cold for a storm. With her toboggan and dense hair, Kaylee didn't feel the icy air. She could see Gene coming down the street in the silver minivan. He wouldn't say much to her. He'd stopped doing that. He'd just take her from one prison to another.

Donny Patrick continued to greet Kaylee. In the days that remained, that was all he would do. He liked Kaylee and felt more than the usual physical attraction. He did not want to miss her, so he left without getting any closer. He'd be in Montana for Christmas, and it would be peaceful and white.

Christmas was white in Uniontown as well. There were five inches of snow in town and more in the Laurel Highlands. At the Campbell House, it was just another cold winter's day.

On the afternoon of the 27th, Gene finally agreed to take Kaylee to the Connellsville used book store that she loved to frequent. On the outside the store looked small. The looks were deceiving. It was packed with books, from mundane to rare, and was one of the few places where Kaylee felt in her element.

Today she'd spend some money she'd saved from her oft-cancelled allowance. She'd also spend the money Ashley sent her, if she could do so without getting caught.

The recent snow still lined the sidewalk and icicles hung from the corners of the building. Gene went inside with Kaylee, which was annoying but wouldn't necessarily ruin her day. He usually left before she could check out. She looked at the attendant working the register, a middle-aged woman with a motherly look who returned Kaylee's glance with a smile. Kaylee began looking through the shelves and boxes and stacks of books for anything and everything that might interest her.

Within an hour, Kaylee had found far too many books than she could afford. It was a monumental task to narrow her selection, but necessity forced her to do so and in the end she made her decision. She would buy a field guide to wildflowers and another one about Eastern trees. The third book was an old copy of *Anna Karenina* and the fourth was a set of cookbooks in the French language. That left Ashley's gift money. Gene looked at each title before allowing her to spend her money on them. Satisfied that she wasn't buying anything that might offend his sensibilities, he accompanied her to the register and then passed through before she could complete the purchase. She watched him go. Once he rounded the corner of the store, Kaylee excused herself for a moment and returned with a final book.

"Should you be buying another one?" asked the kind-looking woman.

"Don't tell him, please," Kaylee pleaded.

The clerk looked at the book. It was an old Bible. She looked at the young girl with the porcelain white skin and pale blue eyes. To her Kaylee was beyond beautiful, like a sad winter angel.

“OK,” said the woman, who rang up the charge and bagged the books.

The Campbell's did celebrate the New Year. Gene drank too much, as did Erica. Kaylee was glad that they were away at a party. In their absence, Kaylee contemplated the school's “real life experience” requirement. If they'd allow it, she'd like to get a part-time job. Kaylee had called a few places and found one that was both interesting to her and willing to participate in the school program. The place of interest was an automobile shop within walking distance from the Campbell House. The owner was also the chief mechanic. If her parents agreed, she'd start the second Monday in January.

At first Erica would not allow Kaylee to work in what she called a “white trash” job. A few days later she changed her tune. There was one stipulation: Kaylee must pay on food and other expenditures around the house. Kaylee began her job in February. Ostensibly she would help with the electronic bookkeeping, the processing of orders and occasional cleaning of the shop.

For an hour a day, Kaminski allowed her to help him repair vehicles. She learned quickly. Kaminski, a tall and rotund man with short white hair and blue eyes, took a liking to Kaylee, who was a polite and a diligent worker. He could see that she was unhappy, but helping him seemed to raise her spirits. He made it a point to work with her for at least an hour each day.

Kaylee had not become a libertarian or paleoconservative. She had become race conscious. She had not come to a conclusion on her religious beliefs, but she was no longer an unquestioning atheist. Few leftists, rightists or moderates support every tenet of a party's platform, though many will pay lip service out of cowardice or intrigue. Even before she questioned her faith in atheism and awoke to racial realities, Kaylee had never fully supported abortion. Now she found it abhorrent. The thought of a white woman killing her unborn white baby sickened Kaylee. With her race in jeopardy of annihilation, and with each and every white nation open to massive non-white immigration, there was no place for destructive selfishness on the part of white men or women.

Other than those exceptions, Kaylee's opinions on other topics had not changed. In fact, her racial awakening strengthened many of her previous conclusions. She abhorred open-borders capitalism and loathed the wealthy class, who seemed to profit more and more from the decline of her race. Large corporations often aroused her ire. More than anyone, they supported massive non-white immigration into white countries as

well as environmental degradation. Of course, working class whites were the ones who suffered most from the rich man's avarice.

While Kaylee had unfettered internet access, she would read several leftist blogs, though their anti-white and anti-white male attitudes at first upset and eventually infuriated her. They would champion a cause dear to her heart, such as environmentalism, only to stab her and her race in the back by diverting the criticism on to white males. Those who used the environment or workers' rights to push their anti-white agenda were traitors, just like the corporate pigs they professed to oppose.

Back in October, Kaylee had a confrontation with Jessica Arnold, whose father was a city councilman and an ardent Democrat. Jessica was talking to her friend Olivia Scotton, who knew of Kaylee's strong support for unions, yet was ignorant of her race consciousness. The two hadn't shared a class since the eighth grade and had never spoken outside of school. Jessica, however, shared O'Brien's class with Kaylee.

"Ask Kaylee Campbell," Kaylee heard Olivia say.

Kaylee turned toward the twosome. Jessica was getting hefty. She'd once been healthy and cute, but since the 9th grade she'd begun to expand in size. Olivia shared the same dark hair color of Jessica, though she was still thin. Olivia had never been cute. Her dark brown eyes were too small and her nose too big for her face.

"No, she's a Rethuglican," said Jessica.

Jessica held her notebook to her chest and sneered at Kaylee.

"Oh yeah, I'm a Republican," Kaylee said, "I love the managerial class, the fucking parasites who are destroying the working man. I adore anti-white big business, the ones who would cut down every tree and shit in every river if it increased their profits." Kaylee snorts. "I was against Bush's war even before your party figured out that he lied, and I'm still against every war he started, even after your fucking mulatto escalated the wars and started a few of his own. And you call me a Republican! Come on, Jessica, even for a Democrat that's fucking stupid."

Kaylee stopped just as she got close to Olivia. Kaylee sized up her taller but physically unimpressive opponent.

"Enlighten me, Olivia," Kaylee said, "What does your party do about any of that?"

Kaylee gave her no time to speak, though neither girl was about to.

"They start more wars," Kaylee said, "and bring in more third-world immigrants, who take jobs from white working men, and cut down more trees and destroy more wetlands for their ugly fucking barrios. Nice. Sounds a lot like the 'Rethuglicans', doesn't it?"

Kaylee looked at Jessica before enunciating the young Democrat's deliberate mispronunciation of Republican.

"What are you?" asked Jessica with disgust on her pudgy face.

"I'm not a Republican and I'm sure as fuck not a Democrat," Kaylee said. She crossed her arms, which showed their impressive growth through her tight long sleeves. "I'm a strong white woman. Got that? So think next time before you open your fucking mouth, or you might just provoke me."

Neither Jessica nor Olivia said another word.

During a clandestine internet search while Erica and Gene were on a weekend vacation, Kaylee encountered a fierce anti-white post to the Daily Kos site. The author, a half-Jewish male, had made a fortune lecturing students and businesses about the evils of "racism". In his Kos entry, he rejoiced in the decline of whites in general, and in specific celebrated the impending disappearance of elderly whites. The entire piece was vulgar and laced with hatred and bile. Being a coward, the author eventually edited the piece, but other sites saved the original. Kaylee sighed when she read the screed. She knew that if she confronted her parents with this overtly anti-white diatribe they would punish her. But she was not broken, and she would not allow them to think that she is. She was alone and felt a powerful urge to fight. The anti-whites have all the power in the dying nation of America while she had none. Courage and defiance are rewards in their own right. Kaylee decided to take up her shield.

By all indications, Kaylee could have had a life of wealth and esteem, but in the depths of her mind and soul she'd know it was all a lie. Many could exist with that lie, though it would devour them in the end. Kaylee Jane could not swallow the lies. To her there was something more to life. There was purity and strength in defiance, even if she was the lone flame in the darkness. Should she live but a few brutal years, at least she would be Kaylee Jane and not an imposter with Kaylee's face. She would love her race without shame or guilt. She would be innocent. If Kaylee surrendered her identity and followed the path to fortune and prestige, she would have to deny her love for her own race, and she would be guilty of aiding the genocide against her kin and her future children. Perhaps, because of her treason, a child of hers might pay the ultimate price for being born white; perhaps he might not be born at all.

Kaylee printed the genocidal anti-white tirade. The next day, when Gene and Erica were due to return, Kaylee changed into her battle clothes: leggings, lace-up boots, gloves and a Black Flag tee. She descended the stairs and waited for Erica and Gene to arrive.

Twenty minutes after their estimated arrival, Erica's Honda pulled into the driveway. She was driving of course. This time, when they entered the house, it was Kaylee who told them they need to talk.

Erica was wearing a red dress that flattered her figure and showed too much of her breasts. Gene was wearing a t-shirt and jeans and looked ridiculous for his age.

"What?" Erica asked.

Kaylee handed her the paper. Erica refused to read it, instead handing it to Gene while she glared at Kaylee.

"I'm tired," she said, "This better be good."

Gene recognized the rambling declaration of anti-white hate. He'd read it almost as soon as the author posted it. Gene looked at his daughter, not sure whether he should be angry or embarrassed. Erica was irritated by his silence.

"What is it?" she snapped at him.

"She printed this off the internet," Gene said.

Kaylee looked into his eyes and he turned his head away from her.

Some fucking father, thought Kaylee.

"You used the computer?" Erica roared, "How dare you!"

"Before you fucking punish me, read the goddamned paper!" Kaylee yelled.

"If I do I'll add to your punishment," Erica said, "Do you really want that?"

"Yes!" Kaylee said.

Gene wanted more than anything to leave.

Erica snatched the paper from Gene's hands. She skimmed it and then let it fall to the floor.

"How do I know you didn't write that?" Erica asked.

"I left the computer on," Kaylee said, "You can see the webpage."

"It doesn't matter," Erica said, "He prob-"

"It does matter!" Kaylee yelled, "If I said that about his fucking people they'd destroy me. Universities and businesses pay that asshole a huge fucking sum of money to teach about racism. He wrote this shit and makes fun of us. How about I gloat over the death of old Jews like his mother? Huh? If I said that shit about kikes while I was in Germany, I'd do time! Fucking prison time for speaking my mind!"

"Are you done?" Erica asked.

"You agree with him, don't you?" Kaylee asked.

"I used to think I was to blame," Erica said, "But I'm starting to believe you need serious help."

"Do you ever think about your grandchildren?" Kaylee asked, "Do you even care about them? What kind of a world are you leaving for them?"

"Hopefully one without racism," Erica said.

"Or without whites, isn't that the end result?" Kaylee asked, "Anti-racism is your code word for anti-white. So my children can just die if they're white, or never be born, and that's how you'd end racism, isn't it? Isn't that your goddamned final solution?"

"You're not fit to have children," Erica said, "Right now you'd raise them to be little racists."

"If I raised them to support our genocide, then I guess it'd be fine, huh mom?" Kaylee said, "You always said you're not just my mother. You said you're my sister, too, because we're both women. Isn't that right?"

"Don't start," Erica said.

"Am I not your sister?" Kaylee said, "You left out the truth, mom. Our white men take care of their women. And you want their own children to hate them for being racist."

"I think..." Erica began to say.

"You want our nations flooded with non-whites," said Kaylee, whose voice could easily overpower her mother's, "and you want to silence the opposition. That's genocide, mom, pure and simple. Mass immigration and assimilation mean white genocide, and right now you support it."

Erica shook her head. Gene looked at both of them, and then he started to leave.

"Do you listen to yourself?" Erica asked, "You sound insane."

"Then tell me where I'm wrong," Kaylee said, "If I'm insane it should be easy."

"I hope you are insane," Erica said, "I couldn't stand to have a Nazi for a daughter."

"A Jew celebrates our eventual extinction and you call me a Nazi!" Kaylee said, "Anyone who fights our genocide is called a Nazi. It's how you shut everything down and silence us. One word and you don't even know what the fuck it means."

"Just go upstairs," Erica said, "You're starting to bore me."

"I'll wait for my punishment," Kaylee said, "What's left for you to take from me, anyway? The air in my lungs?"

"Don't tempt me," Erica said.

Kaylee shook her head.

"You would," she said just loud enough for Erica to hear.

"Go!" Erica said, her face showing increasing anger.

Kaylee turned and left. Upstairs, she stretched and hit the dumbbells. It felt good to work off her anger. Usually she listened to music while she exercised. On that day, Kaylee was charging her iPod. She could hear the approach of heavy footfalls. It must have been Gene. Still holding the dumbbell, she waited for him to enter.

Gene came through the door and sat on her bed. They stared at each other for a while, and then Gene looked away.

"Why the fuck can't you give this up?" he asked.

"This is who I am," she said, "It's not a belief. It's me. You're asking me to give up who I am."

"OK, you're white; I get it," he said, "Why does it matter so much to you?"

"Why do you want me to stop loving my race?" she asked.

"Kaylee," he said, "There's no place in this world for racism." Gene touched his chest and pointed to her. "We defeated that. It's what the most barbaric regime in history once stood for. They murdered millions of innocent people, Kaylee."

"The Soviet Union?" she asked.

The provocation worked; Gene was visibly angry.

"You know what I mean!" he said.

"Jews and liars tell you what to think and you just obey them," she said, "All because they suffered or some shit like that. If I love my race then I'm a Nazi. What if Jews promote non-white immigration in white countries while practicing apartheid in Israel? Isn't that fucking hypocrisy? Why don't you question their motives? What if they support flooding every white nation with non-white immigrants? What if they start a porn industry that destroys white women and men? What if they push, like, miscegenation and assimilation until there are no more whites left? What if they rejoice in the death of an entire race, my fucking race? Isn't that genocide? Aren't they Nazis, too? Or can only whites be Nazis?"

Gene said nothing for a while.

"Well?" Kaylee asks.

"You have to give this up," he finally said, "I beg you, Kaylee, please, for your future. You could have a beautiful life. I know you can. You're intelligent and unique, and you're talented. I don't think you're insane or a bad person. I just think you're in a lot of pain. You miss our old life, and so do I, sweetheart. Please consider your future."

"I do," she said, "Every day of my life, I do."

"Have you thought about what you want out of life?" he asked, "You'll be seventeen soon. What do you want out of life?"

"I want my children to live without shame," she said.

"Why..." he said and then stopped. Gene rubbed the back of his head in frustration. Then he whispered, "Why can't you be like you were? Did something happen to you? Kaylee, please, tell me how we can help you."

"I woke up," she said.

"You might see this as heroic or principled but it's just a selfish, childish rebellion," he said, "and it's all wrong. Kaylee, I don't want to see you suffer. I'm your fucking father!"

"I do suffer, dad," she says, "And this is not a rebellion. It's who I am. Can you still love me for who I am? Not the Kaylee in your fantasies, but flesh-and-blood KJ. I'm KJ, dad, not what you or mom want me to be. I'm not ashamed to be white. Can't you love your daughter if she loves her race, and just wants white people to survive?"

"Don't you want to go back to Seattle?" he asks, "I know you want to keep singing. You could go back to taking lessons."

She notices that he did not answer her question.

"I want both," she says, "But I don't need either. Dad, nothing can make me change. Nothing." She touches her chest with her left hand, "I have myself in this world. That's what I have. I have this one life. It doesn't matter what I could have. I have nothing if I deny who I am."

"All you'll have is pain," he says, "Please, Kaylee, you can't fight the entire world. You're wrong and you can't win this fight." He stares into her eyes again. "Please, Kaylee, just let it go."

"It doesn't matter if I win," she says, "Somebody has to make a stand. The future of my children is worth suffering for, can't you see that?" She looks down and then back into his eyes. "They're worth dying for," she says.

My children are worth killing for, she thinks.

He stares into her blue eyes. She stares into his. He looks down, sighs and shakes his head, and then he leaves the room.

Erica and Gene's bedroom is modern and captivating. The walls are lilac and the bed is a soft white with pillows that are a shade darker than the walls. There is a white dresser and a mirror framed in purple, and drapes of white with clematis flowers. Erica spared no expense and left out no amenity. If Gene Campbell could allow himself to be honest, he'd ask if there was ever love in that room.

"Did she respond?" Erica asks.

She lies there, uncovered, on the right side of the bed. Gene knows better than to try and fuck her tonight.

"No," Gene says.

"I think we're going to have to face the facts," Erica says, "This problem is going to get worse and worse unless we make a move."

She's wearing a thong teddy and Gene would like to have a little fun, but he won't dare touch her.

"What do you want to do?" he asks.

"I don't think that we can take care of this on our own," Erica says.

"Do you want to send her to live with dad?" Gene asks.

He tries not to look at his wife. She wore that dress all day, and now this, and there's no way he can satisfy the urges he's felt since noon. If she stands up he'll roll on his side so he cannot see her bare ass.

"No," Erica says, "She'll get into trouble. Anyway she'll see it as a reward for her bad behavior."

Gene waits for her to tell him their plan. He wishes she'd cover with the sheet.

"I'm going to look into boarding schools," she says, "Schools for troubled teens. I'd like to find one that will take a girl like her."

The idea surprises and dismays Gene. He doesn't care for the idea of sending Kaylee to a school that is run like a detention facility, with its share of addicted and potentially violent teens. She's already giving him a vibe of desperate aggression and might end up in fights or worse. Perhaps she'll meet a like-minded student. The thought horrifies him. Perhaps she'll get pregnant. They'll know that she's racist and the non-white students will abuse her for it. He cannot support this decision.

"OK," he says.

When Erica starts to rise from the bed, Gene turns on to his side and faces away from her.

Erica comes home early on Tuesday, before Gene can bring Kaylee Jane home from school. She scours Kaylee's room. She finds the field guides and works of classical fiction, which are on Kaylee's desk and stacked beside the tall mirror. She looks through the chest and her drawers and closet. She checks under the bed. She pulls the dresser out from the wall. It takes all her strength but is worth the effort; behind the large piece of furniture is Kaylee's Bible.

Kaylee Jane hangs her blue rain jacket and black toboggan at the door. She wipes her boots and removes them, but leaves her gloves on for the time being. She pulls out the olive green t-shirt that was tucked in her jeans. She'll be changing for a quick shower before making supper. Kaylee goes to her room to grab her clothes - exercise leggings and a sleeveless shirt - and throws her backpack on the floor near the stack of

books. She lays her gloves on her desk and grabs the little bottle of deodorant from the top of her dresser.

Regardless of the cool February rain, after a day at Uniontown High a shower feels good. Kaylee Jane descends the stairs and goes to the kitchen. At the table sits Erica. Kaylee looks at her without saying a word, and then does a double-take. In front of Erica is the Bible from Connellsville.

In an instant Kaylee's look of indifference becomes one of pain.

"That's bullshit!" she says, the hurt evident in her voice.

"Is this your problem?" Erica asks, "Someone poisoned your mind with this superstitious filth? Was it that Trzeciak bitch? I never should have let that little whore spend time with you."

Kaylee Jane stares at her. She says nothing. She doesn't look away from Erica, who will not look away, either.

"Do you feel the need to belong to something?" Erica asks, "Because there are glee clubs, you know." She's having too much fun to quit. "Does science frighten you? All that space and no god to make things right in the end? If you need an invisible friend, how about Santa Clause? I'll even put up a tree this year, just for you."

"No, you're right," Kaylee says. She sighs and looks away. "Don't put up a Christmas tree."

Erica doesn't respond. She expected an outburst and is a little disappointed by Kaylee's soft response.

"Can you do one thing, though?" Kaylee asks.

"What?" Erica asks.

Her smug look is gone.

"Buy a candelabrum," Kaylee Jane says, "and buy the Talmud, too, that way I can have my superstitious bullshit and you can keep mocking me for it. It'll be fun."

Erica tries to talk over her, but Kaylee, who usually speaks in a normal tone can raise her voice far above Erica's level.

"We can even go to the Wailing Wall," Kaylee Jane says, "and I can pray to my invisible friend."

"You're so cleaver, Kaylee," Erica says.

"Oh wait," KJ says, "You can't mock me if I'm a Jew. I should have bought a Koran, that way you'd mock me when your nigger starts another war for Israel, but you'd leave me alone when the Moslems go after whitey. It could be a game. You'd wait for your orders and then either treat me like a princess or like shit."

Erica shoves the Bible off of the table.

"Since you feel the need to waste our money on garbage," Erica says, "You'll be giving us 60% of your pay."

"OK," KJ says.

Again Erica expected an outburst.

"Make something quick and eat upstairs," Erica says as she stands to leave.

Erica picks up the Bible but stops after passing KJ. She looks at her daughter from head to toe. She cannot find one flaw in KJ's appearance.

"Try not to eat too much," Erica says, "Your ass is getting a little big for your size."

KJ shows no emotion on her face. Once Erica leaves, a smile grows, and she closes her eyes and laughs.

After supper, KJ brings the plates down to the kitchen and loads them into the dishwasher. Back in her room, she lies on her bed and stares at the ceiling while listening to the music of *Bleeding Through*. After five songs, she removes the ear buds and walks over to the dresser. She moves it without great difficulty and examines the rear of the dresser and the wall. Along the bottom of the wall, from the doorway to the closet, and then again from the other side of the closet, is a 4-inch strip of decorative paneling that encircles the room. KJ follows it. There are few breaks, including the space for the register, though some of the breaks are places where one strip of paneling is butted against the next. One such break is under her bed.

Over the course of the next few weeks, KJ will cut a precise line in the paneling under the bed. It will be a book's width down from where two pieces meet. Gene has two large cabinets full of tools he does not use. KJ will put them to good use by cutting from the wall a 3 " inch rectangle whose length will be just under the size of the modified paneling strip. Since the wall is hollow, she can fit small objects inside, including a few books if she fits them with care. Before putting the modified strip of paneling back into place, she puts a slight notch in the corner of the strip. A nail file or guitar pick can pull the strip loose enough for her to remove it. Upon very close inspection, the notch is noticeable. From a distance, it is not.

In late March KJ convinces Gene to drop her off at the Uniontown Mall. It's a mild and cloudy Saturday with a chance of light rain. KJ tells him she'll walk home. KJ never liked malls and is quite aware of the dangers. Large groups of minorities have taken to "flash mobbing" and starting trouble in such establishments. Without a credit card or regular internet access - the biggest reason for the death of the mall - KJ must rely on

the fading collection of stores for most of her covert purchases. She's thankful that the crowd today is sparse and mostly white. She walks to the directory and then straight to the bookstore. KJ has a mission in mind. She'll replace the Bible she bought at Connellsville.

Her purchase complete, KJ decides to have lunch before departing. Passing by the fast food counters and their high-calorie, low-nutrition garbage, she stops at the Boston Beanery restaurant. She takes a booth seat and orders a chicken salad with an apple juice on ice. While she waits for her meal she looks around the joint. She sees a girl come up to the entrance. The girl's face is well known to KJ, though she hasn't seen Jordan Trzeciak in two years. KJ gets a half-smile and hopes Jordan will notice. Before she takes a seat she looks over toward KJ, who waves. Jordan's face lights up with surprise and joy. She says something to the greeter and then walks to KJ's booth.

Jordan is still too thin. Her face is still very pretty, and she will be an attractive young woman. She was always susceptible to the cold, and her long, heavy coat and furry hat contrast KJ's light hoodie and black knit cap.

"Hi Kaylee!" she says with a big smile on her face. "Mind if I sit with you?"

"Don't be silly!" KJ says, smiling.

She rises and the two embrace.

"How have you been?" Jordan asks.

"Good," KJ says, "Thankyou. How have you been?"

KJ's surprise is evident. It, and the smile fade away in a hurry, though inside KJ feels some joy at seeing her old friend.

Jordan expected KJ to ask what she used to ask. In days long gone, KJ would ask her if she was still a "Jesus freak," and Jordan would respond by asking KJ is she was still a "godless heathen." She wonders why KJ did not ask. She can see that her moody friend is in an especially melancholy state of mind, and tries to lighten her up a little.

"So, are you still a godless heathen?" Jordan asks.

In the extremely small chance that KJ will take it as a serious and insulting question Jordan bites her lip and giggles so that KJ will know it's not.

"No," KJ says.

The answer, which could not be more serious, surprises Jordan.

"Kaylee, I'm sorry," Jordan says, "I was just joking, like we used to do. I guess it's been a while, hasn't it?"

"It's cool," KJ says.

She smiles for a second and then continues the conversation. The two take their seats.

"So how's life?" KJ asks.

Jordan orders a coke and a pub burger and the two catch up over lunch. KJ doesn't mention religion or race. There will be times she regrets not doing so. Right now it feels too good to have someone decent to talk to, someone who's not a sheep or a tool of the establishment, and she's content to go with the flow of the discussion. Jordan and KJ share memories and a few laughs, and Jordan gives her some personal information, such as her email and cell phone number. KJ gives Jordan her cell phone number and an email address, but warns her she cannot read emails on a regular basis.

"Hey, do you have Facebook?" Jordan asks.

"I had a page, but I don't have much access anymore," KJ says.

She won't explain why unless Jordan asks. Jordan does not. They finish their meals and stick around a short while sipping their drinks. Before the two part ways - Jordan's father is waiting for her, and KJ doesn't ask for a ride - Jordan wishes KJ the best.

"I'd promise to email or text you," Jordan says, "But you know how life is. Everyone feels better saying they'll do it, even if they don't mean it. Then you're left expecting a message that never comes. I'd rather we don't do that. Well, take care, Kaylee. I hope I see you again."

"I appreciate your honesty," KJ says, "I always have."

Jordan hugs KJ before she departs. The two walk off in opposite directions.

On the first Saturday in April, KJ walks up to her father as he sits in the kitchen, sipping coffee. He doesn't hear her approach and is startled when she speaks.

"Here," she says.

She tosses a piece of paper on the table beside his MacBook.

He fears opening the folded paper. For a while he doesn't look at it. Rather, he looks at his daughter. Her hair is long, all the way down to her sternum, and flows all over her shoulders and down her chest and back. She wears a white and red long-sleeve t-shirt. She looks like one of the girls he would have chased back in high school. Those girls were out of his league, but it didn't stop him from trying, and most of them at least flirted with him. They were all in general agreement about life and politics. KJ has gone past all of them. She is a truly beautiful creature, surpassing even Erica in her heyday. Instead of laughing with him or taking him up on a trip to the coffee shop, where they'd drink and lament all the injustice in

the world and a little later get stoned, if KJ had been one of those girls she'd have told him to go fuck himself.

Gene feels a wave of despair. He did everything right, and so did Erica. They took her to all the right events and demonstrations. They taught her that racism is the greatest evil in the world. They taught her that racists are the most degenerate and vile monsters to walk the Earth. They taught her be rational and open-minded, not like the bigoted Christians and white trash of Appalachia and Dixie. Erica showed him the Bible she found in KJ's room. He spat on it when he threw it in the garbage. He has a feeling that the book did not ruin his daughter, try as he might to believe it. Try as he might to believe that someone or something else was responsible for her racial awakening, a voice in the depths of his mind tells him that KJ has come to those conclusions on her own.

"I need a book for Hayworth's class," she says.

Anita Hayworth was born in Erie. She looks as if something heavy had pressed upon a taller woman, until her figure became short and broad. Even her head is flattish. Hayworth is KJ's English teacher.

Gene eyes her. He fears reading the title written on the slip of paper. Could it be *The Bell Curve*? *The Culture of Critique*? *Mein Kampf*?

KJ is annoyed by his hesitation.

"It's a book about the Monongah mine disaster," she says, "I have to do an oral report and I chose the disaster as my topic."

"Oh," Gene says, "OK."

He opens the paper and reads it. She's telling the truth.

He can hear her loud exhalation and sees her shake her head as she leaves the kitchen.

Upstairs, KJ takes one of her spiral notebooks from her backpack. She puts in her ear buds and continues working on a song she started writing a few months previous. She works on it for three hours, using all of her study time in the process. As the time for sleep approaches, she turns to the back of the notebook. She reads a little statement she wrote after musing upon the divine spark and beauty of her race.

We're the ones who create the most extraordinary and beautiful art. We're the ones who conceptualize and express beauty, eternity, and nobility in song and on canvas. Others imitate, some better and some worse; some cannot imitate us at all. We alone have that spark that carries us further than any other. We alone see the real beauty in a thing, from a hunter's cabinet to a grandfather holding his newborn grandson. We not only feel satisfaction over a box full of game or the joy of having a grandchild, we glorify the bounty in a painting so meticulous as to rival the best pho-

tograph, and we stand in awe as we witness eternal love in the grandfather's gentle smile. The painter gives us this gift, as a white man can, and we internalize it forever. It is love that we feel when we look upon the child; the renewal of our people. Love drives us to dream and to create. As whites, we can rise above carnal lust and experience love in all its power and depth. Our greatest artists did not sculpt or paint or play simply to honor men of wealth and power. They did so because their souls are wed to beauty and creation. A divinity connects them, as it connects us, should we choose to acknowledge it. I believe that's worth dying for. I believe that's worth killing for.

On the first Saturday in April, Gene retreats to the den to watch a pivotal game between two professional basketball teams. He has no idea who plays for what team, though today's game is between Philadelphia and the New York Knicks, his boss' favorite team.

KJ is walking past the den and hears the announcers gushing over a black player's ability to shove other players out of his way and slam the ball through the hoop. KJ creeps into the room and again startles Gene, who should have noticed her since his peripheral vision includes the doorway.

"Stop that!" he says without looking at her.

"I didn't know you liked basketball," she says.

He doesn't, but the superintendent does. He's invited Gene to watch several playoff games late in the month. Gene ignores his daughter. KJ jumps on the couch and looks at the game.

"Did you know that the NBA received excellent marks for diversity," she says, "But I'm not sure why. To my inexperienced mind, an all-black team isn't very diverse."

"Go upstairs, Kaylee," he says.

"You used to be cool," she says.

"What?" he says and finally looks at her.

"No, you're right," she says as she rises, "You never were cool."

If she'd called him a prick, an asshole or any of the other names one might use as an insult the impact could not have been greater. For the first time in a long while Gene feels like breaking his vow not to use corporal punishment. He doesn't consider KJ's age, just that it would be catharsis to slap her, and she might never mention race again.

KJ goes upstairs and works on her oral report. On Thursday she'll present it to Mrs. Hayworth's class. If she scores a "C" or better she will receive an "A" in the class. KJ works with diligence on the report. Her final score and GPA mean nothing to her.

It's cold outside on the day of the report. KJ waits twenty minutes beside the minivan while Gene panics and runs around the house. By the time he finds whatever it was he misplaced, the both of them are almost late.

He drops her off at the side of the high school and races off to his middle school. A few guys are standing outside, maximizing their last few moments of relative freedom. One of them, Justin Harris, waves to her. She smiles. Beside him is Tyler Marchant. Their eyes meet. Tyler looks at Justin and says something that KJ cannot hear.

Once she's inside the bathroom, KJ buttons her gray and white flannel shirt and tucks the bottom into her jeans. She's not wearing gloves today, but she is wearing her boots as usual. She checks them and is satisfied with their shine. Then she's off to English class. Hayworth has assigned her the fourth and final spot for the day's oral reports.

Carrie Depew presents the first report, which is an uninspired and unsympathetic presentation of the R. Budd Dwyer case. Depew parrots the official explanation and the report meets with Hayworth's approval.

Next is Robert Kochanowski, the well-known "goofball" who discusses the Battle of Gettysburg. To KJ's delight, he elaborates on several lesser-known events during the course of the battle, including Jubal Early's attack on Culp's Hill and J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry actions. For a boy who exemplifies nonchalance, Kochanowski much have put in a tremendous effort and his report is interesting and thorough. His commanding presence in front of the class is equally striking.

The third presenter is Mike Hedlund and his topic is of great interest to KJ. Mike is an overweight and passive nerd who has no chance of winning the attentions of a girl like KJ. It is not out of mean-spiritedness on her part; she has never been cruel toward him or males like him. A highly desirable and thoughtful girl like her is simply not attracted to weak males. It is a reality that she could not change even if she wanted to. She does not want to change; together with her racial awakening, KJ has realized that her race will need strong, principled men if it is to survive. The typical "nerd", who spends his time avoiding physical challenges and whining about anything and everything that threatens or offends him, is neither strong nor principled enough to fight for her or her children.

Ostensibly, Hedlund will discuss the 1948 Donora Smog. His report begins on a promising note and then degenerates into a boring recitation of statistics. Not once does he touch upon the identities of the people who suffered in the disaster. Toward the end KJ finds herself looking out the window at the thick gray clouds. She'd like to avoid the nervousness that

afflicts her when she speaks in front of crowds and his report is doing just the opposite.

Hedlund finally shuts up and takes his seat. Hayworth looks at KJ, who taps her fingers on her desk and then stands. Both Hayworth and the students around KJ notice that she does not have note cards or any sheets of paper on her person. KJ's passion overcomes her nervousness and the lovely shyness that she's had to suppress, lest she remain quiet while her kin suffer. KJ stands behind the podium and then moves it to the side. It's too tall for her to adequately address the class. Several of the males watch her with all their attention. She knows why; it has nothing to do with Monongah. She'll use their attention to perhaps leave them with a larger message.

Her report is thorough and passionate. She mentions the men who died and the families who suffered from the 1907 catastrophe. She explains why the explosion occurred and the reasons for the huge death toll. She is unafraid to lay blame where it belongs - upon the mine owners, both political parties and the state government of West Virginia. Then she speaks of the hundreds of widows and thousand fatherless children who remained. Hayworth is impressed. KJ never looked away from the class, nor did she pause or resort to the use of notes. Hayworth did not think that KJ would take the assignment seriously. She'd already given her an unsatisfactory citizenship mark for inattentiveness in class. She is prepared to give KJ the highest mark possible for the oral report.

Then KJ finishes her stellar report with a conclusion that will stun the class and completely change Hayworth's evaluation.

"The vast majority of the men who went into the mine that day, the miners who were their kinsmen, and their flesh-and-blood sons, were white," KJ says, "The owners were white. Yet those same 'captains of industry' condemned the miners to death as well as their sons alongside them, and they condemned the miners' families to hardship and enormous suffering. They didn't care that over 95% of their work force was white. They sent those brave men into unsafe mines, and forced them to work an inhuman schedule for a pitiful amount of money. The white miners did not walk away from the dangers and backbreaking work load; they would not abandon their loved ones. Unlike the wealthy mine owners, they were real men. The mine owners and politicians had no loyalty to their race and no love for the miners. All they cared about was wealth and power. Like cowards, they sent their own kinsmen to their deaths. The rich industrialists created the Monongah disaster. They were traitors to their white brothers and they should have paid for their crimes."

KJ pauses for about five seconds and then thanks the class for listening.

The students disperse when the final bell rings. Hayworth's English class, teacher included, had been silent up to that point.

It's raining and dark when KJ returns the next morning. She doesn't tuck in her unbuttoned long-sleeve shirt, though the tee is tucked tight. She removes her toboggan at her locker and shakes off the rain. She can see Kat kissing her new boyfriend Greg Woods. Ms. Hayworth is standing behind them, looking at KJ. She must have seen KJ enter from down the hall and has crept up to talk to her. KJ expects to receive a failing grade for the report. She loads her backpack, hangs her shirt and closes her locker. KJ walks straight to Ms. Hayworth.

"Mr. Weems is waiting for you, Kaylee," says the wide, forty-something brunette, "Go ahead and go to his office. I won't mark you tardy."

She must feel poorly for punishing a student based on her opinions. Like most cowards, she'll wear a sympathetic face while she pulls the knife from KJ's back.

Principal Weems wears a short-sleeved shirt and tie. He's typing on his laptop when KJ enters his office. He looks at her through his wire-rimmed glasses and motions for her to have a seat.

"It looks like we have an emerging pattern of bad behavior, isn't that so, Miss Campbell?" he says as he squints at the computer screen and then looks down to hunt letters on the keyboard.

KJ says nothing in response. Weems removes his glasses and rubs the bridge of his narrow little nose. He sighs before looking at her.

"Is there something we can help you with, Kaylee?" he asks, "You seem to be obsessed with pushing people's buttons."

"Is this about my report?" she asks.

He nods and opens his mouth. She speaks before he can utter a word.

"So you're going to punish me, right?" she asks.

"According to the Code of School Conduct, Miss Campbell," he says, "The punishment for racial harassment ranges from detention to suspension. I do not think suspension is warranted. That being said, it would be dereliction on my part if I were to ignore the code and not issue five days detention, beginning tomorrow."

"A few weeks ago Becky Schlageter gave a report on the benefits of the Roe vs. Wade decision," KJ says, "That should merit at least two days detention, don't you think? I imagine at least a few students were offended when she called an unborn baby a mass of cells. I was!"

She very, very nearly says “fucking.”

“Different opinions aren’t offensive, Kaylee,” Weems says, “Racism is. You are well aware that we have zero tolerance for racism.” He picks up his glasses and dons them. “Please consider this a learning experience. I’d hate to have to suspend or expel a student for such behavior.”

KJ does not protest. His threat is clear. She returns to Hayworth’s class. One thing’s for sure; if the other reports were going to be controversial, they won’t be now.

At 8PM, KJ is in her room listening to the *Gorilla Biscuits*. She’s exercised and eaten. Now she’ll relax until it’s time for sleep, or go downstairs and face Erica. As the clock changes to 8 she begins to think that she’ll avoid Erica and be able to sleep in peace. At 8:02 Erica calls her name. KJ curses her luck and removes her ear buds. She hesitates and considers changing into the tight leggings her grandmother bought her, but decides not to rile Erica more than necessary. As she enters the hallway she first hears and then sees Erica climbing the steps. KJ returns to her room. This bitching session is going to be in the comfort of her bed.

KJ sits on her bed and watches as Erica enters. Erica goes straight to KJ’s desk, where her iPhone is charging. She yanks it out, cord and all, and then steps in front of the stack of books on the floor. As Erica’s back is turned toward her daughter, KJ grabs her iPod and shoves it under her blanket. Out of sight, out of mind, hopes KJ. Erica taps her soft shoe on the wooden floor and then pulls KJ’s copy of *Rob Roy* out of the stack. She turns toward KJ. There’s no anger on her face. She enjoys punishing KJ too much to be angry right now.

“Next time I have to punish you,” Erica says, “I’ll take away all your books, your mp3 player, whatever I have to. If you want to have the attitudes of a caveman, you can live in a cave.”

Erica walks out with the iPhone and book. KJ hears her trip on the dangling cord as she descends the steps, and then curse. KJ closes her eyes and laughs.

Gene does not follow her on cue. In fact, he waits so long that KJ figured he wouldn’t come “talk sense” to her until tomorrow. But come he does, at around 9:35.

Gene’s in a button-down shirt and long pants, which is somewhat surprising. He is wearing sandals on his feet. KJ doesn’t allow him to begin. She jumps up from her bed.

“What the fuck? Is this good cop, bad cop?” KJ says, “Why don’t you just tell me what a fucking failure and disappointment I am for being racist, and then get the fuck out.”

"You're trying to provoke me," Gene says, "but such childishness won't work."

KJ saw the anger and difficulty in swallowing that proves him a liar.

"Do you know how I found out?" he asks.

"No," she says.

"Nathan Weems called me at lunch," Gene says, "and I'm sure the superintendent and his staff will know, which means the faculty at Benjamin Franklin will know. Congratulations, Kaylee, you've damaged my reputation and put your family's welfare in jeopardy."

"Tell me, dad," she says, "Do you agree with your anti-white friends when I'm not around? When I started loving my race I ceased being a person to them. If I stole a car or smoked weed in the kitchen, or got pregnant and then killed my baby, they'd reach out to me. Fuck, they might sympathize with me. Even if they didn't, I'd still be a person to them. But I'm a racist, and that's the worst possible fucking thing, isn't it? If I die tonight not one of them will say, 'what a tragedy things turned out this way.' More like, 'good thing the racist bitch is dead.'"

He closes his jaw hard before he speaks.

"Did your mother punish you?" he asks.

"Why don't you ask her," KJ says.

"We're going to have to try something drastic if you don't change your behavior," Gene says, "It boggles the mind how a girl so intelligent can become so irrational, and anti-intellectual," he says.

"I don't give a shit what they call themselves," she says, "Intellectual, intelligentsia, who cares? If what their mouth says is ridiculous and they commit acts of evil then I am against them, fuck yes. Those motherfuckers say there's no such thing as race, and then they say there's a race problem. Everything they support and promote, from massive non-white immigration to miscegenation and all their goddamn anti-white propaganda means that it's not a race problem they're talking about, it's a white problem. Their solution is our fucking extinction, dad. That's the final solution to their race problem, we go extinct."

"How did you become a white supremacist?" he asks, "I mean, what the hell? We never taught you any of this crap."

"I'm not a supremacist," she says, "I want my race to survive. Is that supremacy to you?"

"Why do you want it to survive?" he asks, "There is no 'white race', there's just the human race. Why are you pro-white, Kaylee? Why the fuck aren't you pro-human? Do you hate everyone else?"

"I am white, dad" she says, "Why the fuck shouldn't I love my race?"

"You know what you sound like to me?" Gene asks, "You sound like a goddamned Nazi."

"You use that word to silence the opposition to fucking genocide," KJ says, "Do you support the genocide of my race? Huh, dad? Do you? You call us Nazis just to shut us the fuck up, but you won't answer my goddamned question! Do you support white genocide?"

Gene leaves without answering the question. Later that night, he and Erica will discuss KJ's latest display of love for her race. Gene will reiterate his new-found support for shipping KJ off to boarding school.

KJ thinks about Donny Patrick now and again, especially during lunch. She notices Justin Harris eying her up, but other than a polite wave or nod she never gives the stoner any encouragement. If he was interested in her romantically, she'd rather eat alone than have him around, though she doesn't like the idea of giving anyone that kind of a harsh rebuke. She would have no choice if he forces the issue; that's exactly what happened with Matthew Rayner. Politeness didn't work very well with him. In fact, only his graduation gave her reprieve from his advances. Justin was never half that annoying. If he just wanted to talk it might not be so bad.

In her mind, KJ relives Donny Patrick's intervention against Cory Demery. She scrutinizes the incident to understand how it unfolded, and what they did right and what they did wrong. She has a desire to learn self-defense, but knows if she brings it up to Erica or Gene they'll shoot down the idea, no matter how important it is. She tries not to think about her future at a time when most high school students are beginning to do just that. She does hope she'll meet another young man like Donny. She hopes he'll be completely aware of his race and have no shame loving his white brothers and sisters. She sighs and feels the pain of a fantasy that is vital to her, yet seems hopeless.

Kaylee Jane Campbell wasn't the only one thinking about Donny Patrick's heroism. Demery and his cohorts hadn't forgotten their public humiliation. On more than one occasion they attempted to jump Patrick, only to be thwarted by his vigilance or their own fear of his physical power. Now that he is gone, their lust for vengeance focuses on a secondary target.

According to rumors, this secondary target is also an open racist who served detention for her pro-white opinions. Although she is physically fit and getting stronger, she is no match for them, especially if they come in a group as their kind usually does. They do not fear her power, nor do they fear white solidarity. Demery and company learned from the Donny

Patrick incident that most whites will not intervene to help one of their own. Unlike Christina, when Kaylee Jane faces them she will be alone.

It is mid-May. The school year is building toward final examinations and the end of another year of propaganda and indoctrination. KJ is among the students who could achieve perfect scores. She is not willing to play the game, however, though she knows that she needs to pass her junior year in order to eventually escape. She does the minimum necessary for passing grades. In retaliation, her mother calls Mr. Kaminski and tells him that KJ will not be coming to work this week. Erica knows that KJ enjoys her job far more than school. So KJ practices working on the minivan while Erica and Gene are having dinner with their colleagues.

There are many things on KJ's mind as the school year grinds to a close. She never forgets the hate in the voice of Christina's assailant, though the threat of retaliation seems to fade as the school year comes to a close. In a time of cram sessions and four-hour tests, it is an understandable mistake for KJ to pay less attention to Demery and his accomplices, but it will be a costly one.

The First of May seems like any other day for KJ Campbell. In English class the teacher berates her for being inattentive. Meanwhile, two black girls text during the entire class. Since several students, including a few who are cold or even mildly hostile toward KJ have access to the lunch room and therefore the lunches stored there, KJ begins to keep her lunch in her locker. She makes the food herself; it is a skill she desires to sharpen and expand. Once lunch is over on the 1st of May, KJ heads back toward her locker at her usual defiant and leisurely pace.

Near her locker is a black girl from the senior class. KJ does not like this girl loitering near her locker. She keeps her eyes on the girl. She does not notice that four of the black girl's friends - three males and a female - are coming up behind her. She will learn a painful lesson about being unobservant. The girl beside KJ's locker moves closer as KJ approaches. KJ reads her body language.

Great, she wants to fight. It's on, then, you black bitch.

KJ is much stronger than the black girl, even though she's shorter. Her arms are much larger and her legs can deliver a powerful stomping if necessary.

The black girl hisses at KJ.

"We didn't forget you, skanky ass bitch!" she says.

Her aggression is exaggerated. She said "we." KJ realizes she's about to be jumped. She turns around in time to see the three males at far-too-close-range.

One of the assailants grabs KJ and pushes her toward the wall. She shoves him hard and he falters. She's much stronger than he estimated and he was not ready for the response. The other two are there to help their surprised cohort. Together they succeed in overcoming KJ. There are other students - white students - who glance or stare but most keep moving and none intervene.

KJ is pinned with her back against the wall. She snarls and kicks one of them with her boot. The third one, who is not holding her, puts his hands on her body - one on her upper arm, one on her throat. He flashes a toothy smile. Rage and despair grow inside her. She tries to resist and manages to get her left arm free for a moment. She strikes the one with his hand on her throat. The swing is limited and her hand is open, but the weak blow surprises him. This causes toothy to remove his hands and step back. He retaliates by slapping her face and she cries out.

"Get away from me!" she yells, "Help me! Someone, help me!"

The enemy laughs. A few whites stop and stare but none dare lift a finger. Donny Patrick isn't here anymore.

KJ's mind crystallizes on one thought: the words of the Celtic woman Chiomara, which she read not long ago.

Only one man shall be alive who has been intimate with me.

She looks into toothy's yellow eyes.

I will kill all of you if you rape me.

"Watch out!" one of the black females says.

The females are acting as sentries. It turns out to be a false alarm, but it spooks a couple of the males. The two that are to KJ's side let go of her arms, lest they be caught restraining her when a teacher appears, but remain at her side so that she cannot escape. One of them reaches for her rear and she strikes his arm.

At that moment toothy makes his move. He shoves KJ with all his strength. She hits the locker with a loud thump. KJ looks into his face. His eyes are black and vacant. He flashes his evil, snaggletoothed smile. He thinks he's winning. KJ feels an intense rage rising inside of her. She spits into his confident face. His smile disappears in an instant. He retaliates by slapping her a second time, the speed of his strike taking inexperienced KJ by surprise. Her block fails.

But KJ is much stronger than toothy realizes. She picks her moment well and launches her strike, catching Toothy hard on the jaw. It is a powerful, closed-fist punch. Although she is not able to throw a great deal of momentum into the punch she does manage to get her hip into it. The blow almost staggers him. To save face he conceals it as best he can. He

steps back for a moment. He wants to beat her. He wants to do much worse.

"Let's get out of here, Duane!" says one of the other males.

He's spooked; perhaps he sees a teacher beyond the crowd, or even worse, Mr. Andrews. The females haven't mentioned any teachers, but for whatever reason the male to KJ's right loses his nerve and so does his cohort. The two males to KJ's side begin to edge away.

Duane freezes. It looks like he'll have to leave. He snorts in anger and frustration. Before backing off, however, the snaggletoothed miscreant seeks one last thrill, one last form of humiliation against this rebellious white girl. He lurches forward while KJ watches one of the other assailants and grabs her breasts.

KJ shoves him off of her. Her unfettered outrage and righteous hatred reach crescendo. She screams at him.

"Fuck you!" she says.

A few whites stop to watch.

KJ wants to beat him. She wants to beat him until he no longer breathes. Tears begin to flow down her face. She grits her teeth. How dare this prick touch her body? She will not allow him to escape unpunished. KJ stares into his eyes and he sees her fury. Then, her inhibitions erased by the sexual assault, she commits the worst sin imaginable in the eyes of the school and many of her fellow whites.

"Fuck you, you fucking nigger!" she yells.

Students who ignored the assault, the great majority of them white, stop and stare in horror.

A voice shouts above the crowd.

"Who said that?" says the female voice, "You, who's over there?"

It is the voice of Shannon Heinz, an algebra teacher at UHS. Heinz is short and humorless. Her hair is graying earlier than it should. Students consider her hard-assed, often unreasonable and selective in whom she punishes. Heinz charges through the gawking crowd and toward the girl who dared utter the forbidden word.

"Did you hear that shit?" Toothy says. He'll play the victim now. "That racist bitch hit me, too!"

He rubs his jaw.

"Get to class, Duane," Heinz says, "I'll handle this."

Heinz puffs up with anger. Behind her back, Toothy flashes a smile. He's still rubbing his sore jaw. Heinz looks at KJ. At first Heinz is silent, her lips contracting. Finally she speaks.

"I might have known," she says.

Rumor has it that KJ is a stoner. That rumor is wrong. There are other rumors that she is rebellious and unwilling to conform. That part is right.

KJ looks at Heinz with outrage and pain on her face. She knows what is about to happen. The pack will escape punishment for the assault while KJ will suffer for using a word. She wishes she'd have hurt Duane more than she did.

"Come with me, Miss Campbell!" Heinz yells, much louder than necessary.

Heinz begins to march toward Weems's office. KJ follows. She'll be offered detention if she apologizes; otherwise, she'll be suspended for three days. KJ would rather die than apologize to her attackers. Besides, it's important to her that she not compromise. In her despair she wonders if it will matter. She tells herself that it will; if not to anyone else, at least to her. She promises herself that she will not surrender.

KJ doesn't say a word as they head for Principal Nathan Weems's office; neither does Heinz. Weems is neither liked nor hated. He usually isn't regarded at all. He's the kind of administrator who avoids a problem unless it's already solved; the kind of disciplinarian who is too lenient unless the crime reflects poorly on the administration. In those cases, he shows no mercy.

Principal Weems is sitting at his desk. His hair is too dark for a 50-year-old. He's wiping his wire-rim glasses when KJ and Heinz approach the office. Weems fancies that his glasses make him resemble an intellectual or a late-60's musician. He slides them through his thick, curly hair when he sees Heinz approach the door.

Weems sees Heinz stop in the secretary's outer office. Then she turns and speaks to someone who is standing behind her. It's obvious that Heinz is angry. He wonders who the instigator might be.

"Go on!" Heinz tells the unseen person.

When Weems sees KJ coming through his inner door he sighs. He knows this will test his patience. He has no idea what has happened, and even expecting the worst he cannot adequately prepare for the news.

"I'm sorry to tell you this, Nathan," Heinz says, "but Miss Campbell just uttered an insult of a racial nature."

Weems gasps. His stare shifts from Heinz to KJ and then back again. There is shock and growing horror in his shallow green eyes. He expected a fight, even drugs; anything but this. It's as if a volcano just opened up under the Pennsylvania school.

KJ doesn't say a word. There's no point. These traitors will side with her tormentors no matter what they've done. She'd like to tell them what

she'll do if Duane ever touches her again. Her mind moves on to her parents. They will be far worse than these two fools could ever be. Her mother will vent years of wrath upon her. KJ has difficulty swallowing. Her silence is misleading, for at the moment KJ is full of raging emotion.

Principal Weems taps his fingers in front of his mouth. Then he slams his palm on his desk.

"Who did she insult?" he asks.

He hopes it was a student of Polish or Italian descent. He knows better.

"An African-American student," Heinz says, "Duane Carter."

Weems knows Carter. His file is hefty. Weems looks as if he's been slapped by a woman he thought would go home with him. The fact that KJ dared insult a black student makes her transgression all the worse.

"Did she say...?" Weems doesn't finish.

Heinz nods. Weems gasps in pathetic fashion. He reaches for his phone, and then stops. He sighs. Then he reaches for the phone again, and this time he manages to dial a number. It's the number for Ben Franklin Middle School, where Gene Campbell teaches.

"Dolores?" he says into the phone, "Hi, this is Nathan. Could you get Gene Campbell for me? Thank you."

Weems flashes an angry glare at KJ. She looks away. Weems doesn't matter. She hears him tapping on his desk as he waits for her father.

"Gene, it's Nathan Weems. I wish I could say better. We need to see you as soon as possible." Gene must ask Weems if this relates to KJ, based on Weems' answer. "She's created a disturbance," Weems says, "I'd rather tell you in person. She's here in the office. OK, she'll be here when you arrive. Thanks, Gene."

Weems hangs up the phone. The wait will be nerve-racking for KJ. She hears Ms. Heinz creep out of the room and close the door behind her.

Weems would never admit it, but in his heart he does not believe that KJ started the altercation. He'd like to say she provoked the non-white students. He'd like to say that her jeans are tight enough that she encouraged the attack, but he knows that just might enrage the feminists. He'll just have to ignore the minority perpetrators and point out a lack of witnesses when KJ protests. If pressed, he'll provide numerous white and black witnesses to her racist transgression. Fortunately for him, no one except KJ will see the contradiction. Fewer and fewer Americans care to look for inconsistencies in testimony when the accusation is as serious as racism. Weems hopes to pressure KJ into contrition. If only she'll apologize the inevitable storm could be relatively mild.

Gene Campbell arrives in less than a half-hour. KJ hears the car pull into one of the visitor parking spaces. She looks toward the window in shock and dismay when she hears two doors slam shut. She hears two sets of footfalls outside in the hallway. One is wearing shoes; the other is wearing high-heels. Both persons approach the principal's door. There is a loud knock. Sarah Compton, the secretary, must be leading Gene into the office. But why would she? He knows where it is. A frightening thought occurs to KJ. Perhaps her mother has come along. She feels tightness in her throat. She tries to find some other explanation.

"Come in," Weems says.

The visitors must hear him through the door, since it opens at that instant. KJ does not look. She closes her eyes. She knows the second set of feet do not belong to Sarah Compton. She knows who came with her father.

Weems rises.

"Hello Erica. Hello, Gene," he says, "I wish we didn't have to meet like this."

His words are sincere, though his reasons are not noble. The Campbell's sit to the right of KJ. Gene speaks first.

"I know, Nathan," he says, "I'm sorry."

KJ does not look at them. She can feel Erica's stare. She doesn't want to see her father's vacant, lifeless face.

"I don't know how to tell you this," Weems says, "but your daughter was heard uttering an insult of a racial nature."

There is silence. To Erica, Gene and Nathan Weems, KJ's use of the forbidden word is a very serious offense.

KJ folds her arms.

"You didn't..." Gene says, staring in dismay at his daughter.

Erica shakes her head. She'll find her tongue later. Gene speaks again.

"How...Why would you?" he stammers.

Overblown outrage is one of his specialties, though he's not particularly good at making it sound sincere. He is, however, very good at acquiescing to his wife.

KJ's head is turned slightly to the left, away from her parents.

"He grabbed me," she says.

Her hurt and anger erupts. KJ snaps her head toward them. There is an ancient flame in her eyes, one that used to burn in young white women when the fate of their people and the future of their white children mattered to them.

"He put his fucking hands on my body!" KJ says.

Weems recoils. He's sure someone outside has overheard. Gene is stunned. Erica's mouth gets tighter. Her eyes narrow.

KJ feels the tears again, welling up in her eyes. Her face shows her suffering and rage. A quiet descends upon the room and the movement of the second hand on the office clock becomes audible.

Weems wants to speak but he cannot. He would threaten her with additional punishment for swearing, but he sees the look on her face. He is a coward; while he'd be happy to punish her if he were sure she wouldn't resist, his uncertainty makes him hesitate. He's also afraid of how Gene will react. Gene is her father after all, and she just told him that she was attacked. Gene is also physically powerful, despite his passive-aggressive personality. Weems is beginning to believe that KJ will resist. There was a time in his life when he'd have sympathized with her. He would have realized the forces arrayed against her. He'd have realized that she is innocent. That part of him suffocated long ago on the teat of the education industry. Nathan's college days, eight years of anti-white indoctrination, pot and alcohol, left him without the courage of his forefathers. He wants to accuse KJ of provoking her assailants with her tight jeans and t-shirts, but he is too frightened of her fierce passion and the feminist backlash that might happen if he makes such an accusation.

Unlike KJ, who knows better, Weems has overestimated Gene Campbell. KJ needs him right now, more than ever, even though his entire relationship with her has been destroyed by his weakness and his utter failure to take up for her.

Gene breaks the silence. KJ could have predicted his response, though she did not want to. It's too painful.

"Watch your language, KJ!" says the man who never cared how many times she cursed around the house.

KJ looks at her father. She has always known that he lacks fortitude, even before she awoke to the truth of what her children will face. Sure, he would occasionally act tough, but that was just an act. His false bravado and lack of spine has wounded her all her young life. Now, at the moment she needs him most, he fails her again. This time her disappointment and despair turn to resentment. Like Weems, Gene is a coward. He will step aside and allow the powers-that-be to punish her. He will acquiesce while Erica savages his daughter. The non-white culprits will escape, emboldened and unscathed, except for the one strike she landed. KJ wishes she could have had brass knuckles for that one. She wishes she'd had a knife. Her furious stare leaps back to her father. He looks away when she stares

at him. Gene is betraying her. The expression on her face shows her agony.

Erica takes her turn. The lap-dog Gene looks at the floor. KJ does not alter the target of her stare. She looks at the father who has failed her.

"This is how you repay all of our sacrifice for you," Erica says, "by humiliating both of us? How will people feel, having the father of a racist teach their children? Hmm? Or the law firm? How much will we suffer financially when word gets out about your stupid, immature actions? They won't know that you're just a brat. They'll think you're a racist."

KJ glares at Erica. Erica knows that KJ is racially conscious but she will not admit that in front of Weems. Instead she'll call KJ "immature." Erica looks at KJ with disgust on her face. Weems, in spite of his deep ignorance and denial, notices Erica's expression and his mouth becomes dry. KJ turns her head back toward Weems' desk.

"I'm not surprised you attracted unwanted attention," Erica the feminist says, "you're pallid like a druggie and you dress like a bum. They probably thought that you wouldn't mind."

KJ comes very close to responding. Instead, she just looks down at the floor. She doesn't know what to do, so she figures she'd better bide her time. She no longer expects Gene to protect her.

A phone call allows Weems to worm his way between the two. He excuses himself then deals with the call as quickly as possible. Once he returns, he makes the offer he thought up before Gene and Erica arrived. KJ will personally apologize to Duane Carter. Then she'll do a report on injustices against minorities and persons with "alternative lifestyles." Finally, she'll receive three days in-school suspension. Weems' voice becomes faint.

"If she refuses to comply," he says, "she will be suspended for three days and will have to come in each Saturday for one month."

One look at her would tell a blind man that she will resist. Weems believes he's being reasonable when he tells her she has until Monday to decide. Since it's time for school to let out, he asks if there are any questions.

"No, thank you Mr. Weems," Erica says, "KJ will do the right thing, I assure you."

Since KJ began to think for herself, Erica hasn't been interested in what her youngest daughter thinks or desires. To her, KJ is more than a burden; ever since she rejected her parents' beliefs on race and white racism, KJ has become an embarrassment to Erica and Gene. Even worse, she is a disappointment. Gone are all the hopes that the Campbell par-

ents had in their “perfect daughter.” Their dreams for her have become a mockery, and of course KJ is to blame.

Not a word is spoken as the three Campbell’s walk to the minivan. Gene opens the door for Erica, and then he gets into the passenger side seat. KJ opens the right side door and climbs in behind Gene. Erica starts the van and drives to the end of the lot. Then she stops and looks back at KJ.

“Your sister was going to come in for the weekend,” Erica says, “I’ll tell her to come next week.”

Erica returns her attentions to the road ahead. She drives out of the lot.

“I don’t want to upset her with your primitive behavior,” Erica says, “Honestly, I don’t know how you could be a bigger disappointment.”

KJ would like to respond.

If I stood up and fought for my children, I’d be a bigger disappointment to you. Wouldn’t I, mother?

KJ feels the anguish ebb when she has these thoughts.

Why shouldn’t I fight? Maybe I’d be alone, but I’m alone right now.

“When Steph comes next week you won’t be going out with us,” Erica says, “And another thing, you better behave when she does come.”

Her parents do not need to send KJ to her room. She heads in that direction almost every time she gets home, to escape the reality of her so-called family. This time Erica follows her.

“You’re not getting away that easy,” Erica says.

“I know,” KJ says, “I’m not that optimistic.”

Her back is still turned toward her mother. She enters her room and sits on her bed.

Erica laughs. This means she’s furious.

“Kaylee Jane Campbell,” she says, “The rebel and the martyr. Always wronged by the big bad world.”

Erica enjoys mocking her beautiful daughter.

KJ folds her arms and looks away.

“What you did was ignorant and selfish,” Erica says, “Not to mention racist. I’ve expected this kind of behavior from you for some time; I just hoped you’d prove me wrong.” Erica shakes her head and acts flabbergasted. “You let those right-wing lies into your head, probably just to spite us, I don’t know.”

KJ looks at her.

“It has nothing to do with right or left,” KJ says, “And it doesn’t have anything to do with you, either.”

Erica kneels down in front of KJ. She puts her hands on KJ's knees. KJ recoils.

"Oh, yes it does!" Erica says, "Even if that's not your intention. Your three-year temper tantrum is damaging our future. It could destroy Stephanie's career at Penn. How will they react if they find out her sister is a racist?"

"I don't fucking care!" KJ says.

She stars into her mother's eyes. Erica didn't expect KJ to challenge her so fast. She's doing that quicker by the argument.

KJ does not relent.

"That piece of shit touched me!" she says, "He felt my breasts!" She talks over Erica. "He put his dirty fucking hands on my body!"

"Enough!" Erica shouts. She doesn't like KJ's defiance, especially how strong it's grown. "Whatever happened, it doesn't give you the right to say that word!"

The fury bursts forth from KJ's awakening mind.

"Really?" she says, "I guess you forget all your feminist bullshit when the sexual predator is a fucking nigger!"

It's loud enough to go through the walls. Gene, who is in the other room, must come close to having a heart attack.

Erica stands up. Then she slaps KJ across the face. KJ does not look at her. She does not say a word. Tears begin to flow down her face. These are not tears of shock or regret.

"I hated to do that," Erica says, "but you make me." She mollifies her tone. "Now, you're going to apologize to that boy and to the school. Then we'll discuss what we'll do with you. You will get over this phase in your life. We'll make sure of that."

Erica is a tyrant; petty, but for now powerful.

KJ looks at Erica. The veil of thick brown hair that hangs over KJ's face does nothing to diminish the power of her stare.

I will not betray who I am, KJ thinks, I will die first.

KJ has made a promise that the warriors of her race have made for millennia; usually they have made such promises to protect precious girls like her. Times have changed. She's learning that loneliness is no excuse for surrender. She's learning that standing up will now require more than just moral support for the brave men who fight for her. She's beginning to see that her kin and her future children will need her in more ways than one.

Erica walks out of the bedroom. The room becomes silent. KJ doesn't move, save to wipe her eyes. Then she hears a soft noise from the hall-

way. Most would suspect that her two parents are playing a tiresome bad cop - good cop routine. KJ knows her father. He's neither a "good" cop nor a "bad" cop. He's an emasculated shadow of Erica. Once, his act would confuse her into buying his false benevolence. It would temper the fire of her resistance. Now it hurts her to see his weakness, in the face of his wife and in the face of his anti-white friends. It does serve one purpose; it makes the flames of her defiance burn brighter.

KJ does not look at him.

"Kaylee," he says in a voice as soft as the rustle of dead leaves. "Talk to me, Kaylee," he says, "We need to know what's wrong or we can't help you. Neither of us believes that you're a racist. You can't be, that's absurd. Let us help you."

He's never helped her in the past. Knowing that the pack attacked her and attempted to sexually assault her, he still asks what is wrong with her. He'll never help her. He'll never stand up for her. He is no father.

She will not speak. She grabs her pillow and clutches it to her chest.

"When Nathan called me," he says, "I knew you were in trouble."

He rubs his forehead. He's 37; one year younger than Erica, yet he's beginning to look years older.

"I thought it was pot, Kaylee," he says, "Maybe you smoked a little weed and got busted. Fuck, I did it back in the day. I'd have been relieved if it had been. I know we talked about it, and I was hoping it was something simple and harmless like that."

She's still looking at the floor.

"Why would I want to feel happy when I'm not?" she says, "Why would I want everything to feel easy when everything is so fucking hard. It's a chemical lie, dad, that's all it is."

"Why not be happy?" he asks.

She doesn't respond. It would take more time than she'd like to invest and it would be futile anyway. She wants to be happy for a good reason, and right now there are very few of those. Her awakened mind resists the temptation to fall back into darkness. That is exactly where chemical highs might lead her.

"Kaylee," he says, "Even if you had a reason to lash out, you cannot use words like that. We still don't know how much damage this could do to all of us. Worst of all, you could be branded a racist for life. This is very, very serious. You know, people get fired for milder words than the n-word. Pretty soon, people will be arrested for using that kind of hate speech."

She finally looks at him. Her beauty emphasizes the outrage and pain on her face. Gene has never seen it this bad, and he's become accusto-

med to such looks from his youngest daughter. Instead of sympathy and fury over the maltreatment of his beloved daughter, he feels only anxiety.

"Should I beg for forgiveness before or after they rape me?" KJ asks.

"Do you think they're all like that?" Gene asks.

"What's to stop them if they want to be?" she says, "All they have to do is accuse me of saying a word. A fucking word! And pussies like fucking Weems come to their defense."

"So you didn't say the n-word?" he asks.

"Yes, father," she says, "I called him a nigger." Gene snorts and shakes his head. KJ continues. "Someone has to stand up. I don't care if I'm alone, this shit has to end."

"You shouldn't use that fucking word no matter what happens!" he says, "It should be banned from our language. We shouldn't even think a word like that."

"It's a word, dad!" she says, "For fuck's sake! It's a goddamned word! They use it all the fucking time!"

"That's different, Kaylee," he says. He notices that she called him "father" and "dad."

"Oh and I've told you," he says, "Call me Gene."

"I don't want to call you Gene!" she says.

He's too far lost in his ideological world to realize how much he just hurt her.

"Whatever, Kaylee," he says, "It's not important what you call me. What is important is that you let us help you, so we can cure you of this racist insanity."

KJ looks back at her boots. She didn't take them off at the door, and Erica was too pissed to notice.

"They destroy a man's life and his family because he says a word," she says, "They tell us what we can and cannot say. All whites are racist to the fucking establishment." KJ looks up at her father. "Who the fuck do they think they are? Why are they allowed to tell me what I can say or believe? How do you of all people agree with that kind of shit? You always told me to fight the system. Anti-whites are the fucking system!"

"I'm not going to debate you, Kaylee," he says, "You're wrong. We expect you to do what's right."

He gets up as he says this. It's time for his retreat.

"Supporting white racism is wrong," he says, "no matter how much you obfuscate the fact."

Gene closes the door behind him. KJ looks back at her boots, and then she lies back on her bed. She doesn't think about Gene or Erica or

any apology. She doesn't think about school or Weems. In fact, she hasn't thought about school since she left Uniontown High. She does think about something much more important. Those around her have abandoned her. She is a sacrifice to the gods of white guilt and politeness. She tries to imagine how she'll defend herself if they attack her again.

Monday comes fast. That morning, Erica doesn't speak to KJ, though based on her smart business-casual attire, it's clear Erica will be accompanying them to the school. Gene is wearing a plaid sweater that makes him look more ridiculous than when he dresses like a teenager. KJ wears a t-shirt with a logo from the band *As I Lay Dying*. She's also wearing blue jeans. Before leaving, she puts on her tall black boots. It's a test. Her boots are not all that they seem to be; not anymore.

Erica senses KJ's defiance as the three leave the Campbell House. Gene is too afraid to believe that KJ will resist. Erica doesn't care. She's starting to enjoy punishing KJ. It's a bit of sadistic fun. KJ could have been perfect, Erica thinks, but she took all of Erica's hopes and dreams and spit upon each and every one of them. To Erica, KJ's defiance merits a good deal of suffering. Erica, Gene and KJ pile into the minivan without sharing a word. Again, Gene opens the driver's side door for Erica. Again, KJ has to open her own door. She sits in back. No one speaks and Erica will not allow Gene to turn on the radio or his iPod.

The Campbell's arrive at Uniontown High School one hour before classes begin, as agreed. The light is on in Weems' office. Erica exits before Gene can go around and open the door. KJ climbs out of the rear. Her parents begin walking toward the school. KJ runs her fingers through her thick, clean hair, and follows them from a rather long distance. She does not close the side door of the minivan.

Weems greets them at the entrance of the administrators' offices. He's eager to end this matter. His glasses reflect the ceiling light. His eyes, full of dumb optimism, hide behind the glare. He shakes Erica's hand and then Gene's and invites them into this office without acknowledging KJ's existence. Weems and KJ's parents take seats in his office. They begin talking before KJ can join them.

"So," Weems says as he builds a triangle with his hands, "I assume we're all in agreement with option 1? I'll repeat it if you'd like."

He looks at Gene, and then at Erica.

"No thank you, Nathan," Gene says, "That won't be necessary."

Erica shakes her head.

"Good," Weems says. He finally looks at KJ. "Kaylee, after first period we'll bring in Mr. Carter and you can apologize to him."

He quickly looks back at Gene.

"No," KJ says.

Her voice is not loud but as always it goes straight to the soul.

Weems' smile vanishes. He looks at her.

"What..." he begins to say.

Weems almost asks if there's a better time and then realizes she's not going to apologize at all. He draws a deep breath.

Gene Campbell looks at KJ. He has a look of shock on his face. It shows how far away he's moved from his youngest daughter - or her from him. He then looks at Erica. She says nothing for the moment.

Weems speaks again.

"You refuse to apologize?" he asks.

Weems sighs, making it sound loud for show.

"I'm not apologizing to any of them," KJ says.

Her voice never wavers. Her emotions do not erupt.

"You leave me no choice, Kaylee," Weems says, "For violations against the code of conduct, specifically your use of hateful language, I am forced to suspend you for three days. You will also report for Saturday classes over the next three weeks."

KJ looks at Weems. Even a fool could see the unwavering defiance on her face.

Weems is used to defiance. He's also used to students defying him until he escalates and threatens their Saturdays or their free time after school. Then they predictably cave. He wonders why KJ is so different.

How could a beautiful young girl end up so utterly intractable? He harkens back to the days when he attended Syracuse, and when he parroted his professors on all things racial and social. How does this happen? She's a girl. Why doesn't she realize she's a minority just like those black students? If we end racism, it helps her, too. Why does she fight this, she knows she's wrong...doesn't she? Doesn't she realize that white racism stands in the way of prosperity, and everybody being equal? Race is just a social construct. There isn't even a white race. So why does she hate other races so much that she'd use hateful words like n...?

Weems never considers the pack that attacked her; not for a moment. Once KJ said the terrible word, their actions became irrelevant to him.

"I've looked at your records, Kaylee," Weems says, "You were such a good student once. I hope you can find that girl again, wherever she's gone."

KJ does not feel fear or humiliation. Quite the contrary; she feels strong. They expected her to behave like so many other whites and to ca-

pitulate and ask forgiveness from her non-white attackers. She struck back then and she strikes back now. Her storm is building. All it need now is direction. She still feels alone in the dark. Aside from anonymous posters on the internet, she has no one on her side. KJ holds on to the hope that somewhere there are others like her. For now, she is alone, but she is not so hopeless. She will surely pay for her defiance but for once it feels very, very good to earn whatever punishment Erica has in store.

"Let's go home," Erica says. She rises from her seat. It startles Weems who was deep in thought. Erica looks at KJ. "You've wasted our time, not to mention Mr. Weems'. We'll discuss this when we get home."

Erica has already taken the day off so that KJ isn't alone at the Campbell House. Erica alone assumed that KJ would refuse to apologize. She'll use the rest of the day to outline her punitive response to KJ's defiance as well as keep an eye on her daughter, lest KJ actually enjoy a moment's peace.

KJ stares at Weems. He cannot hope to fathom why she'd strike back. She refuses to bear undeserved guilt for being born white. He is one reason why her race is fading. KJ looks at her father Gene. His face is red. He is perspiring. Gene could not dream that his daughter would be so strong. He wishes she'd swallow her dignity and apologize to her attackers. He's willing to sacrifice her for his ideology and for the approval of his wicked wife. He's one reason why her race is fading. KJ looks at Erica, her mother, the mother who wishes to destroy KJ's independent mind. She can no longer poison KJ with her treasonous lies. Erica stares back at her. She's already choosing a series of punishments and KJ knows it. She will attempt to break KJ. She will try and kill the spirit of decency and fraternal love that KJ feels toward her brothers and sisters in race, and toward her own future children. In her jealous heart, Erica knows that she cannot kill that spirit.

"I said let's go!" Erica says.

KJ rises from her chair. She no longer looks at Weems or her father.

On the ride home, Erica drops Gene off at Ben Franklin School. He exits and tells his wife goodbye, and then leaves without speaking to KJ. As he walks he holds his head down. Erica and KJ are now alone. The mother's anger rises as she realizes that she has lost control over KJ's life. She does not say a word to KJ until they arrive home, though she considers saying several, all of them terrible. When they arrive at the Campbell House, Erica tells KJ to go to her room.

Erica keeps her dark secret. That secret, which she's tried to keep from her daughter since the day of her birth, would wound KJ worse than

she's ever been wounded before. Erica realizes how close she came to revealing the secret in order to hurt her daughter. But then she caught herself and stopped. There are things that Erica would not want to do, but it alarms her how close she came today. Of course, she'll rationalize this by blaming her daughter for pushing her to the brink.

Inside her room, with the door closed, KJ removes her boots. She runs her fingers inside the front straps and buckle. The little push dagger is still there. She bought it two years ago when she thought it looked cool. It passed through the high school's security system. The dagger may be small and KJ may be inexperienced in its use, but at least she now has a weapon. Should the pack attack her again, she is determined to make them pay for it.

Erica waits until Gene gets home to inflict punishment on KJ. She likes her lap-dog to be present. She enjoys his silent acquiescence. When they confront their daughter, KJ looks at them with indifference. Her computer privileges are already banned. Now, her allowance, cut to a minimum a year or so ago, is abolished. Henceforth her expenses will be controlled in totality by Erica; she doesn't even act like Gene will have a say. KJ glances and sees him looking down at the wooden floor.

KJ will have a curfew of 7 PM for the time being, unless she has to work beyond that hour. She will now be expected to help pay for the family's expenses. If Kaminski doesn't pay enough, she'll have to find employment elsewhere. Her reading material will be censored as will any purchase of music or entertainment. She will have to submit all desired purchases to Erica for approval. KJ is not surprised by any of this, though she resents it. She is particularly angry that Erica will be controlling her book purchases. A voracious reader, KJ sees that as an insufferable violation.

Her parents cannot take the music away from her. It will bring peace of mind during her imprisonment in the Campbell House. Her iPod is hidden as is the power dock she charges it with. She uses it in her room with the door locked and sneaks it downstairs when she does aerobics and heavier lifting. Always of great interest, music becomes a great solace for KJ during hard times such as these. KJ manages to access the internet at the library and at school, where she searches for information on new releases and concerts she might wish to attend. She's read about a place near Murrysville, Pennsylvania, where hardcore and metal bands come to play. KJ will figure out a way to get there, curfew be damned. They cannot change her. The more they try, the more she'll resist.

KJ serves the suspension and Saturday school punishments. As the spring warms into summer, she expects another attack, yet none comes.

It is likely that Duane and his accomplices would have tried but for some reason or other the opportunity never arises. Perhaps it is blind luck; perhaps they noticed her vigilance. Just maybe they saw the way she acted and moved when she was around them, and they began to suspect that she might have a nasty surprise in store.

All the while, no one offers any words of support for KJ, or even shows her the slightest sympathy.

Finally, the school year comes to a close. KJ passes the eleventh grade. Her marks are inferior to her actual intelligence but she does not care about grades, not now that she would have to parrot the teachers' lies in order to obtain higher marks. For this and her other opinions, KJ has spent the last two months in solitude, surrounded by cowards and fools who treat her as a pariah.

Before the end of the school year, KJ supplements her job at Kamin-ski's with a part-time job at a department store. For two hours each morning, she helps stock and tag merchandise. Then she's off to Kaminski's. The beloved mechanic hoped to employ her for two hours more, but his profits have dropped in recent months and he simply cannot afford it. In his soul he sometimes feels like he's failed her. To make up for it, he increases the time he spends with her on repair work. Under his tutelage she thrives, if only for a few hours a day.

KJ is still working both jobs when Joanie Mancuso's family moves in next door. Joanie is tall and very thin. Seven months older than KJ, Joanie is nowhere near as physically developed, as powerful or as beautiful as KJ, though she has a unique look that makes her quite attractive. Her hazel eyes are bright and reflect her intelligence and her black hair is a lovely contrast to her white skin. Joanie and KJ meet a few days after the Mancuso's arrive. It turns out that Joanie likes some of the bands that KJ enjoys. Both listen to alternative, metal and punk, with KJ's tastes leaning toward the harder and sharper edge, while Joanie's are on the softer side.

For the first three weeks of their acquaintanceship the majority of their conversations are about music and hobbies. When it becomes apparent that the two might become friends, KJ feels the need to inform Joanie of what she might be getting into if the two spend time together. One rainy July afternoon, while KJ is sitting on the back porch, Joanie notices her neighbor and runs through the rain and over to the Campbell House. She's just washed and dried her long black hair, so her steps are long and rapid. KJ is surprised that Joanie is coming over for a visit. Then she realizes that Joanie has no idea what's happened at Uniontown High.

"Hey, KJ, What's up?" Joanie says.

KJ introduced herself to Joanie as "KJ."

"Just hanging," KJ says. She closes her book. "I got a call about an hour ago. They're closing the shop early tonight, so I don't have to go to work."

"You have a job?" Joanie asks.

"Yeah," KJ says, "Hey, I wanted to ask, where are you going to school this year?"

"Uniontown High," Joanie says, "I think that's what it's called."

"Yeah, that's it," KJ says, "Joanie, I need to tell you something."

She looks at the rain and then back at Joanie.

"Before school starts you have to know something about me," KJ says, "A few months ago I was attacked by a group of black students." She tones it down so as not to frighten away a possible ally. "One of them grabbed my breasts, so I called him a nigger."

KJ looks into Joanie's face, observing any visceral response when she says the word. There is none. Instead, there is shock and perhaps fear. Joanie will be attending the same school where the assault took place. The shock fades.

"You should have kicked him in the balls!" Joanie says. She looks down, and then back at KJ. "You get punished?" she asks.

"Three days suspension," KJ says, "I still can't use the computer. They also started enforcing a curfew, but I've broken it and they never said a word. I figure they'll enforce it when I really want to go somewhere."

"Harsh," Joanie says, "You mean he put his hands on you? Anyone would insult him if he did that."

"It wasn't just anger," KJ says, her blue eyes staring into Joanie's hazel ones, "I meant to call him that. It was the only way I could think of to let him know that he can't have me. Even if he'd been nice, he still can't have me."

KJ looks at the rain again. It's pouring down on the yard.

"I'm not a racist, KJ," Joanie says.

KJ is ready for the typical response. It won't change anything. KJ is committed to walking alone, all her life if necessary. Then Joanie surprises KJ. It's not a bolt from the blue, but it does surprise her nonetheless.

"But I'm not going to judge you," Joanie says, "and I'm not going to hold it against you. It's just a word, huh?"

KJ looks at Joanie. She rarely smiles anymore, but does manage a small one. She doesn't need validation from her new acquaintance and that's not why she smiles. It just feels nice to be a little less lonely. She knows the feeling won't last.

KJ asks something that's been on her mind of late.

"The other day you mentioned what bands you like," she says, "You know, I've read about a club called Diamond Crossing, up in Meyersdale. Their website says a lot of metalcore and punk bands play there."

Joanie laughs and interrupts KJ.

"I thought you weren't allowed to browse the internet!" she says.

KJ gets a mischievous little smile on her face.

"I study at the library," KJ says, "You know, I have to get A's and all that shit."

Joanie laughs. She is full of life. KJ is glad to see this, yet there is a touch of sadness to the realization. She knows it's unlikely that Joanie will ever accept the dark truth of the war against their race. For the moment, it's enough to have someone to talk to. KJ does not know what to do with her life or her convictions. She resolves to live without compromising or degrading her people. She will not belittle or torment the white men who would love and protect her, this she swears. She hopes to find a strong white man someday; he would eventually be her husband. The thought warms her inside and yet she feels a great sadness. Perhaps she'll be alone all her life. She is full of life like any other white girl, or boy for that matter, yet her burden is great and it weighs upon her young soul. She feels its weight right now.

What if the price of being awake is solitude and suffering?

KJ has no answer that could blunt the pain.

She moves on with the conversation in order to avoid more anguish.

"Come inside," KJ says, "My parents aren't home."

KJ rises and opens the door and Joanie enters the spacious and elegant house. It is spotless and well-furnished with expensive pieces and décor. It does not feel like a home. KJ thanks Joanie for each complement, though it is out of politeness rather than any love for the house.

The two raid the fridge for a couple of diet sodas, and then retire to the den where they continue their discussions.

"You were talking about some club where we could go to a concert or something?" Joanie says.

KJ notices that she said "we."

"Yeah," KJ says, "It's in Murrysville. Some good Pittsburgh bands have played there, and a few others, too. I think the *Zero Fuckers* played there. It's hard to believe, but most of the shows are free."

"How far is Murrysville?" Joanie asks.

"It's about an hour and a half drive," KJ says. She shrugs. "But I don't have a ride."

"If you can pay for the gas, I can drive," Joanie says.

KJ is glad she mentioned Diamond Crossing. It's a chance to feel some happiness for once.

"Yeah," KJ says, "I can cover that. I'll have to show you Kaminski's Garage so that you can pick me up after work. We'd have to go to the late shows, if that's cool with you."

"Yeah, that's cool," Joanie says, "You know, you could give me a tour right now if you're down with that."

"Yeah," KJ says, nodding, "Sure."

KJ jumps up. She puts on her tall black boots. She and Joanie head outside together. Joanie's black Volkswagen Jetta is parked between the two houses, on the Mancuso's driveway. It's an early 1990's model and is in excellent condition. KJ likes the look of the older car.

Diamond Crossing exists not to make money, but rather to provide a venue for bands and musical genre that would otherwise fail to receive the exposure that they deserve. That much KJ has figured. She has no idea about the actual selection process. There are no strict rules as to genre, though bands that fall outside of punk, metal and alternative have not yet played at Diamond. Anti-white bands never receive invites, nor do those that glorify drug use. Thus far, no bands featuring non-whites or Jews have received an invite. Those who do make the cut are paid for their efforts. Attendance is almost always free, though it may be restricted.

There is one other reason for the existence of Diamond Crossing, and KJ hopes that this one is true, though at present she would call it wishful thinking. Heavy metal, punk and hardcore are exceptional in their importance to the white race. These forms of music are a natural evolution of so-called classical music, especially in the current climate of oppression and the stifling of the white voice. Like many of her other conclusions, KJ's belief about metal and punk is correct. It is the wounded, angry, enraged and beautiful voice of her race's tormented soul.

Three weeks after Joanie and KJ agree to attending a concert at Diamond Crossing, the two finally manage to make the trip. KJ learns that Erica will let her break curfew on Fridays as long as she keeps paying them from her paychecks and as long as she doesn't look too happy before leaving for work. Though Erica is a law assistant and knows quite a bit about deception and deceit, KJ is learning to play the same game against her antagonistic mother.

Joanie will bring KJ home after she works late on Fridays. Joanie tells KJ's parents that she works nights at a feed and garden supply store, which, though not true, cannot be proven false. Her brother Ed works

there and covers for her story. She offers to bring KJ home on Friday nights and the Campbell's accept her offer. Joanie even tells the Campbell's that her nineteen year old brother will ride with them so that she can legally drive at night. This idea, which is KJ's, appeals most to Gene. He never felt like driving KJ to work on weekday evenings. On occasion, Erica will demand that KJ be home by 11PM. This is a show of power and KJ learns that if she keeps a low profile at home, Erica will usually ignore her, even past curfew time. The Friday of the third week in July, Erica lets KJ go to work with Joanie. The two will attend their first show at Diamond later that night.

KJ and Joanie converse on the way to Murrysville from Kaminski's shop in Uniontown. It's the usual inconsequential banter, which is fine with KJ. She changes shirts en route, though she cannot change jeans. Fortunately, the work was light, and she's not oil-stained or greasy.

"You like workin' there, Jane?" Joanie asks.

In the past couple of weeks, after Joanie discovered KJ's full name, she has taken to calling KJ by her middle name. Tyler Marchant used to do that, too.

"Yeah, I like that kind of shit," KJ says, "I'd like to know how to repair a car."

"All right Jane!" Joanie says, "Way to empower yourself!"

KJ looks at her.

"It's not like that, Joanie," she says, "I get enough of that empowerment shit from my mother. I just think it's a good idea to learn something that might be, like, useful to me in the future. Not like that shit they teach us at school."

Joanie laughs.

"You seemed like you were too cool for that shit," Joanie says, "Fucking jail for little people, that's all it is."

KJ likes the reference. Probably, Joanie hasn't forgotten about KJ's troubles at school.

Tonight's show is excellent. The industrial metal band *Icarus Feather*, four talented musicians from Smyrna, New York, plays from 11:30 PM to 1:30 AM. KJ is surprised and pleased by the acoustics at Diamond. In spite of the venue's small size, the sound is better than at some of the larger amphitheatres and halls that she's visited in the past. KJ is not the only one impressed with the audio and the band; there are more in attendance tonight than either she or Joanie expected. During a short pause between songs, KJ mentions her observations to Joanie.

"Someone went all out with this place," she says.

Joanie nods.

"I'm glad they did," she says, "There are clubs back home but I usually had to sneak in those, and the sound usually sucked."

KJ wonders if the owners are passionate about music, or maybe they're trying to build a reputation and eventually open a larger club. She's right about their love of music; though she doesn't figure out the other reasons for Diamond Crossing, not yet.

"Hey Jane, you see who's coming next week?" Joanie asks, snapping KJ out of her deep thoughts.

"No," KJ replies.

"Oh yeah, I forgot you're not allowed to use the internet," Joanie says, "There's a hardcore band from New York supposed to play next week. I know you like that stuff. If you can cover the gas we can drop by again."

"Sure," KJ says.

KJ is very interested. Years ago she fell in love with punk and hardcore, and would love to see another live show. She doesn't worry about Erica. If she has to, she won't tell them she's going to be late. She has a secret copy of the house key and isn't worried if they confiscate her original key.

The show continues. KJ looks around as the band returns to the stage. She sees one familiar face - a boy who goes to Uniontown High. She looks at the others. Though she does not know them, they are her people, her kin. Tonight there are no exceptions; the entire crowd is white. KJ feels a little less lonely in their presence.

As the hour approaches 1AM, the familiar face moves closer. It belongs to a teenage male from Uniontown High, one who is handsome and charming, though his body lacks muscle mass. His eyes are a hazel-green and his hair dark brown. His name is Justin Harris.

Justin is not an obnoxious chap, nor is he callous or cruel. He's also not an obsessive oaf or a nerd. He does have a reputation as a small-time lothario and is a confirmed stoner. KJ has heard him play during guitar class and he has a great deal of talent; his failings are due to frivolity rather than a lack of ability. If he'd dedicate himself, he could someday earn an excellent living with his instrument. At present he will not make such a sacrifice of his free time, and perhaps he never will. Tonight he has other moves on his mind.

Before the show ends, Justin introduces himself, and the three talk for a little while once the band finishes its encore. It's small talk, and KJ notices that most of Justin's attentions are directed toward her. Perhaps

the racist label doesn't trouble him as much as one might expect, or he has other motives the compel him to ignore such a dangerous accusation. To his credit he interprets KJ's polite but clear lack of interest and he moves on to Joanie. There's still niceness in talking to him. He doesn't shun or condemn her. It's not much; in fact, it's very little. Since the departure of Donny Patrick, it's the most respect any of her school mates have shown her.

Gene is still awake when KJ gets home. He's drinking a glass of milk in the kitchen. KJ enters and walks past him after removing her talk black boots. He doesn't say a word. She's not surprised at his lack of reaction. Her relationship with her parents, once subject to a fate of their choosing, is no longer familial or affectionate. It is too late for them to change that fact. KJ leaves an envelope with money on the table. Erica won't punish her for staying out late.

The next Friday takes a long time to arrive. Even when it does, the hours that KJ spends at Kaminski's grind to a crawl. Usually KJ looks forward to the last two hours of her shift when Stan Kaminski will teach her about automobile repairs. Not this week; she's so eager for Friday that even Kaminski's lessons in automotive work have become tedious. KJ tries with all her might not to show her impatience. Kaminski realizes by Thursday that she is restless and eager for the weekend. He is not upset. He, too, was young once.

Friday finally arrives and before Joanie drops by to pick her up, KJ apologizes to Kaminski for being scatterbrained all week. He just smiles and tells her to enjoy the weekend.

Chapter III

Rebel Jane

It's a hot July night when Joanie and KJ visit Diamond Crossing for the second time. Tonight a hardcore punk band named *Chironex* will be taking the stage.

KJ appreciates the hardcore genre probably more than any other. Even before her awakening the sound appealed to her, as it did to her father, but never more so than now. She recognizes it as the voice of pain and suffering, and of rage and inner strength. Many of her brothers and sisters in race feel that something is terribly wrong, and rage against it with blind force. Some go astray and others choose the wrong targets. The driving urge to fight whatever it is that is causing her generation such misery is undeniable. For those reasons she identifies with the music. The sound stirs her soul. Once she dreamt of a songwriting or singing career. Now the music has become a way to combat her loneliness and the growing alienation she feels from the American anti-society.

When the band comes out on the stage, KJ notices the confident demeanor of the very handsome lead singer. Beneath his beautiful exterior - with its boyish face, bright eyes and short brown hair - is the heart and soul of a lion. Soon enough, she will learn that her assessment is correct. David Hill has traded any chance of wealth and celebrity so that he might be a man of principle and independence.

Hill plays a few notes on his guitar and then laughs with Tom Gillen, *Chironex*'s bassist. The lighthearted play continues until Hill's rising passion pulls him to the microphone. The show begins.

"This first song was written by Jimmy Compton and myself," he says, "It's called 'Paces.'"

Hill looks up from his guitar and begins playing the tune. It is obvious from the start that the musicians of *Chironex* are formidable. The crowd, particularly those like KJ who have never before heard *Chironex*, is spell-bound. The effect on KJ diverts her attention from the words of the song.

It is temporary, however. When she comprehends what Hill is singing about, she goes from spellbound to awestruck.

"We lifted you, we coddled you, we apologized for shit nobody did," Hill says as the music accelerates, "Who the fuck do you think you are?"

The guitar comes alive and Hill bends it to his relentless will. He continues singing. The lyrics blast those who consider him guilty for being born - for being born *white*.

KJ stops moving to the beat when she hears the lyrics. She looks at Hill and the band. Before she realized the gravity of their words, she could tell that they are among the best musicians she's ever heard on a live stage. Now she understands why they're playing at a small venue instead of an arena or a major punk festival. There is no fear or conformity on this stage, not tonight.

The music is a great comfort for KJ's tormented soul. It speaks to her with its fierce melodies and Hill's powerful, pertinent lyrics. "Paces" is not unique among *Chrionex's* repertoire. The next song, "Bloody Kansas", is a fast-paced attack on the violence against Hill's brothers and sisters in race. They are KJ's brothers and sisters as well. The song is not a mere chronicle of events; by the end of the tune, Hill demands justice. His unambiguous outcry energizes KJ. Though the theme of the song is heavy and unhappy, KJ feels joy from deep inside. These young white men have the courage to perform such songs in spite of the threats they must face and the opportunities they have no doubt lost. KJ submerges in the euphoria brought on by their show of strength. For once, she feels like smiling.

After the next song, KJ glances at the audience and sees a beautiful redheaded girl who seems as much into the music as she is. She's not far away, when the lights come on during a brief pause KJ can see that her eyes are the same shade of blue as her own. Further away is a handsome young man who wears glasses and who says something to the redheaded girl. The entire crowd seems to enjoy the music, perhaps regardless of the message, and KJ does not blame them. The band is excellent.

KJ looks up at David Hill. He's given up fame and fortune for dignity. He's traded the easy life of a coward for the hard life of a man of principle. Hill and his mates are young and courageous, and they are also imperiled by the forces of business, government and society that aid and abet the genocide against Hill's race; against KJ's race. She feels a pang of sadness when she realizes what these men must face, and the injustice that they will surely suffer. KJ does not feel sorry for them, however. Unlike Weems and her father and those who stood and watched as Duane Carter and his vile cohorts assaulted her, these are real men.

The show comes to an end. The crowd lingers for a while before departing. KJ's usual melancholy is altered to the point that Joanie notices and mentions it.

"I guess you liked the show, huh?" she tells KJ.

"You didn't?" KJ asks in surprise.

"It's OK," Joanie says, "The singer's hot." She nudges KJ. "Next week there's a band coming that plays the kind of music that I like. I hope you still want to come."

"Yeah," KJ says, "Sure, whenever you can make it."

KJ doesn't know who's playing or what kind of music they'll play, but it's a night away from Erica and Gene, and that's worth the price of gas and a couple of drinks.

Joanie and KJ are among the last to leave. KJ is in no hurry.

Who knows what would have happened had *Chironex* not played that night? After hearing the band and their fearless music, KJ feels a little less alone, and a little less desperate. It is a minor victory. But small battles determine a war. Before KJ jumps into Joanie's car, she looks back at Diamond Crossing. She closes her eyes and smiles.

The next Friday, Joanie and KJ return to Diamond. The band is an alternative rock outfit from Scranton. They're also quite skilled in their art, though the messages relate more to love and general struggles, and the lyrics are much less aggressive than Hill's.

Joanie has an excellent time. This is her musical preference. The influence of such famous acts as *Pearl Jam* and *Alice in Chains* is clear in the band's sound and that pleases Joanie to no end.

Justin Harris is in attendance and again he talks to KJ and Joanie; he's clearly interested in the latter. He's friendly with KJ and never tries to push the boundaries with her. All in all, the night is enjoyable, and the pleasant music helps KJ ease her mind in a healthy manner.

Returning home, the two young ladies engage in the usual discussions. Joanie mentions that she finds Justin cute. He is handsome enough, but KJ knows he won't stand beside his girl if a threat arises. She doesn't mention it though. Joanie tells her that next Friday a metalcore band called *Blackdamp* will be playing at Diamond Crossing. They marvel at the extraordinary quality of the music, and the fact that every concert thus far has been free. Then Joanie changes the banal nature of the conversation.

"You met my mother back in June," Joanie says, "You remember she teaches at Waynesburg? Anyway, she wants me to spend next July at a camp in Guatemala. I don't know, Jane. I mean, it's a year away and I

don't want to sound like a pussy, but shit happens to people on trips like that. Maybe I shouldn't go."

"Fuck that!" KJ says, "I sure as fuck wouldn't go."

"I know you wouldn't!" Joanie says, "Not everyone there is a murderer or a rapist. Don't let those assholes at school ruin you, please. I can't imagine what it was like, but they're not all like that."

KJ looks at Joanie.

"Those fucking assholes can't ruin me," she says, "And I'm not going to deny racial realities just to get everyone off my back. You know, just because I don't want them to touch me doesn't mean that I'm ruined."

"OK, Jane," Joanie says, "I didn't mean..." She does not finish her sentence.

"We're cool," KJ says, more because she feels too good to argue right now, and she knows she'd be wasting her time.

The two return to lighter subjects. KJ is glad for it. Joanie seems to enjoy their conversations. KJ would be the happiest she's ever been if Joanie would embrace the truth about race and kinship and loyalty to one another. Her enthusiasm is tempered by the harsh knowledge that such an epiphany must be exceedingly rare. Most whites will never awaken to racial realities. If whites were truly racist, like the establishment insists, why would so many white people condemn KJ for using a word?

The next week KJ cannot go with Joanie. Early in the week, she finds herself alone in the kitchen when Erica enters. There's something in KJ's body language that angers her mother. Perhaps she's not sulking enough. Erica reminds KJ of the curfew and tells her to return immediately after work on Friday. Gene, not Joanie, will bring her home. Erica must have seen a tiny spark of joy in KJ's demeanor and she tries her best to snuff it out. Satisfied, Erica departs for the den. During the entire episode KJ remains silent.

In spite of Erica's efforts, KJ finds a way to defy. Gene agrees to take KJ to work earlier than usual, and she spends the extra time at the library. When she arrives at the garage, she is eager to assist Kaminski with his miscellaneous tasks. It is a fruitful time of learning that is not limited to mechanical lessons. What websites the library does not filter provide a continuing education. It is during this week that KJ's resistance to her parents' anti-white religion grows even stronger.

Like their peers, KJ's parents have beliefs that they would call radical or rebellious, while in reality their worldview is obedient to those in power. The powers-that-be tell them that they are the trend-setters and the cutting edge of thought and originality, and in order to retain their pop-

ularity and privilege they elect to follow. Their worldview is neither new nor revolutionary. It has been behind every inquisition and oppression of heretics since long before the time of Christ. The union of government, business and academia, born out of greed and lust for money and power, wholeheartedly supports the anti-white worldview shared by faux radicals as well as conservative businessman. It enriches big business with cheap labor and cheap manufacturing from third-world countries, it elects anti-white politicians with increasing numbers of non-white votes, it empowers an otherwise small and very hostile Jewish minority, and it keeps academics employed as long as they proselytize for the system. Those who dare fight this blind union of the rich and the powerful, of left and right, will face its unforgiving wrath.

It is a stroke of fortune that Erica chooses that week to punish KJ. Though KJ would have enjoyed the powerful metalcore music of *Blackdamp*, if Erica had waited a week, KJ would have lost her second opportunity to hear *Chironex*. She is indeed lucky; the much-needed spiritual encouragement of the band and their music is not all that KJ might have missed.

On a Friday in late August, KJ and Joanie travel to Diamond Crossing to see what has become one of KJ's favorite bands, and certainly the one she most identifies with on a personal level.

On the way, Joanie mentions last week's show which she attended alone. She doesn't mention Ju-stin Harris. Joanie repeats her relative indifference to hardcore that could be a polite mask for dislike. KJ is gracious, and tells her acquaintance that she wouldn't want her to drive all this way if the show is not going to be enjoyable for her as well. Joanie smiles and changes the subject.

Tonight's show is different for two reasons. During the past two shows, Joanie might mingle in the crowd as KJ listened to the music, but she was never far from KJ. This evening, Joanie is almost invisible. KJ is unperturbed; she is enthralled with the music and the lyrics. Hill performs a long guitar solo during the song "Rainelle." KJ has never heard a guitar sound better.

The previous week, bad luck intervened and Erica trapped KJ at home. This week good luck more than makes amends. During a pause in the music, KJ looks around for Joanie. She's not within sight. When she turns back toward the stage, she takes a step and bumps into the red-headed girl she saw at *Chironex*'s last performance. KJ looks at her and excuses herself. The redhead smiles and nods. Her blue eyes are just like KJ's; not only in hue but in intensity.

KJ would like to talk to her. She fears the disappointment that she would feel if this girl is like the rest. She's been through too much lately. Red makes it easy for her and speaks first.

"Great group," the redhead says, "I think they're the best that's ever played here."

"The music's bad-ass," KJ says, "And these guys aren't afraid to tell it like it is."

She doesn't care to hide her opinions, not anymore. Why be afraid of the truth when most of the world wants you and your kind dead anyway?

Red nods.

"They sure do," she says.

KJ guessed that the redhead wouldn't be a typical race-neutered white woman. Still, she's surprised to find someone who's anything like her; another girl no less. KJ would like to talk but *Chironex* is about to play, and she's the last person who wants to miss a song. She hopes that she'll be able to speak to the redhead again after the show. Red may sympathize with her and her plight. And who knows? She may have friends who feel the same.

David Hill introduces the next song, "The Truth in Your Lie." It is a fierce hardcore piece that is full of rage and melodious energy. The person featured in the song is accused of a hate crime that he did not commit. The final verses are absolutely fearless; instead of whining that he's not racist, the subject of the song confronts the accuser, telling him that he feels the same way about the non-white that the non-white feels about him. The song ends with Hill saying in a calm voice:

"I love my family. Don't fuck with them again."

The crowd yells and whistles in appreciation. Much of it is for the excellent music. KJ is animated in her approval of both sound and message, and so is the redheaded girl.

As the sound of the small but vocal crowd dies down and the men of *Chironex* thank their admirers, KJ's thoughts return to her life and she looks around for Joanie. She sees her acquaintance near the door. Joanie waves for her to come. KJ gestures for her to wait a minute, and then turns toward Red.

"Come on, Jane!" Joanie says, "We have to go."

"This is the third time we've been here," KJ says, "Do you come here often?"

"Yeah," says Red, "Hill and the guys will be back in three weeks. Maybe I'll see you then?"

"Yeah," KJ says and smiles, "I hope so."

KJ turns away and heads over to Joanie, who is one foot out the door. Before KJ exits she looks back. The redhead is talking to the guy who was near her the last time *Chironex* played.

On the way back, Joanie and KJ have what begins as a typical discussion. Again it's Joanie who deviates from the more mundane subjects.

"I know you already like that kind of music," Joanie says, "I was never that much into it, but you know, the music does grow on you. It's a little heavy for me, but I'm starting to like it."

KJ looks at her. She feels her hopes rise, and who could blame her?

"You know, I can see why you're angry, Jane," Joanie says, "It's just..."

KJ's hopes fade almost as soon as they were born.

"After all the shit that minorities have been through because of us," Joanie says "You gotta expect them to be angry."

"Yeah, like bringing them here," KJ says, "and clothing and feeding them, so they don't have to starve to death with a gut full of fucking worms."

"Ugh," Joanie interrupts, "Jane, that's harsh."

KJ does not cease.

"They have the first shot at a job," KJ says, "They call that shit affirmative action, when in reality it's just anti-white. I mean, what the fuck did we do? What did my cousin Philip do, or Justin Harris for that matter? We had ancestors who were slaves, why are these goddamn minorities so special that we have to pay forever for something that none of them ever suffered? Why is it so wrong to love our people, or for me to want to date white guys and only white guys? Please, Joanie, spare me the slavery bullshit."

"I wasn't going to say that, Jane," Joanie says, "Like I said, I get why you don't like them."

KJ isn't sure that Joanie understands her.

"You know why they attacked me?" KJ asks, "A few weeks before, a guy I knew named Donny Patrick stood up to one of them when the asshole started harassing one of us white girls. Some of the others were, like, going to jump Donny, so I warned him when I realized what was happening."

KJ looks back at Joanie, who has both hands on the wheel.

"They attacked me because I helped a white guy," KJ says, "I stopped them from jumping him."

"Jesus," Joanie exclaims, "Did they attack him too? I mean, later, after they attacked you?"

"No," KJ says, "Donny moved away before they attacked me. If they had attacked him, I'd have helped him again. I'll fucking fight, too, I'm not a fucking coward. I would have stood by his side and fought."

"You liked him, huh?" Joanie asks.

She's already figured out the answer. KJ nods.

"He would have helped me the day they attacked me," KJ says, "He's strong and decent." She stops speaking for a moment and the car becomes silent. "And now he's gone," she says in a voice that is near a whisper but is powerful and moving, as is usual for KJ.

"I'm sorry, Jane," Joanie says, "You know..." Joanie stops.

KJ waits for her to finish. It hurts to have hope and then watch it die. She fights the pain.

"Never mind," Joanie says.

KJ feels lonely again.

The new school year is just around the corner. It will be another year of oppressive conformist propaganda laced with malaise and the danger of being attacked. KJ is prepared to resist the first and to survive the other two, though she laments the impending loss of what little freedom she had over the summer. There is one weekend left before the first semester begins. KJ makes the most of the time that remains. She borrows a book from the library - *Prairie Wildflowers* - and hopes to read it by Monday, the first day back to school.

It's raining again and KJ is on the back porch. Gene is at Ben Franklin School making final preparations for the beginning of classes. Erica is on a trip with two lawyers from the firm. Gene doesn't like one of them, the handsome one who on occasion works late with Erica, but he's too "liberated" to admit that it bothers him. KJ no longer cares what Erica is actually doing. Erica is as dead to her as a mother as she is to Erica as a daughter.

Joanie notices that KJ's parents are gone. She runs over to the porch just like she did earlier in the summer. KJ notices her approach and looks up from her book. KJ is wearing a sleeveless shirt instead of the usual t-shirt. Joanie can see the full size of KJ's arms.

"Damn, Jane!" she says, "Look at those guns! Are you on the swim team or something?"

"No," KJ says as she closes her book, "I've been lifting whenever I can; most of my life, actually. I don't want to look like a dude, but I like being strong." She gets a little smile. "And looking good."

KJ flexes her right and then her left arm. Her biceps are very impressive and she is proud of her accomplishment.

Joanie smiles.

"Anyway," Joanie says, "We're all going over to Kylie McMillan's house. Do you wanna come?"

"Who's we?" KJ asks.

KJ has lived in Uniontown for almost seven years. Joanie arrived two months ago. Because of her courage, KJ has fewer friends than Joanie, who hasn't even been to their school yet.

"Justin's coming," Joanie says, "Kylie and her boyfriend Jason Menefee, and Jen Miller and her guy. I think that's it. I met those guys at the Inferno that time you couldn't go to Diamond. You don't work tonight, do you?"

"No," KJ says, "Not tonight." She realizes that the other girls will be paired with guys. KJ, by far the most beautiful among them, will be alone. "I don't know, Joanie, it seems like you'd have more fun with those guys."

KJ would actually like to go; anything to escape the corpse of the Campbell House. She does not relish another opportunity to feel like an outcast. It may not surprise her, and it may not weaken her resolve, but it still hurts.

"Come on, Jane," Joanie says, "It'll be fun."

KJ looks down at her boots. Joanie is not asking her because she's thinking about KJ's enjoyment. She's asking her for reasons of security. Joanie is new here, and perhaps she's a little distrustful of Justin Harris. A boy-girl party could escalate out of control and KJ's presence and reputation as a fighter will provide the security that Joanie desires. In other words, unless there's an emergency, KJ will essentially be ballast.

KJ doesn't contemplate the reasons Joanie's asking her to come. She thinks about escaping the Campbell House and how nice it would be to set aside her cares and waste the evening.

"OK, sure," KJ says, "What time should I be ready?"

"Great!" Joanie says, "Come over before our parents get home so they can't block you. Is 8 o'clock OK?"

"Yeah," KJ says, "Eight's good."

Joanie smiles and runs back into the rain. KJ returns to her wildflower book.

The rain stops before KJ leaves home. Gene hasn't returned. There's no doubt he's still at the middle school. God knows and no one gives a damn where Erica and her partners went. The waxing moon is big and bright through the breaking clouds. KJ watches it as she walks through the grass. She changed her sleeveless shirt and is wearing a black *Mud-vayne* t-shirt - with its big red skull and pentagram on the front. She also

changed into a newer pair of jeans. Her wallet and her meager spending monies are in her pocket. Her boots are tall and black, and like most of her pairs look much like the others. The jeans are tight enough to tuck under her boots and this she does, it being her preference to wear the boots over the pants legs. KJ is also wearing gloves. It's a predictable ensemble to those who know KJ, and she doesn't care if she's the only one to dress in that fashion, or if others consider her wardrobe odd or even laughable. She could wear elegant dresses and have the same opinions and attitudes that she has, and still be shunned.

Joanie meets KJ at the back door of the Mancuso residence. She doesn't invite KJ inside; KJ has never been inside Joanie's house. Joanie grabs her keys from a table by the door and exits so fast she blows by KJ.

"Let's go, Jane!" she says.

KJ follows her to the Volkswagen. She closes the door as Joanie pulls out of the driveway.

"Where are we headed, Joanie?" KJ asks.

She has her window down. The fresh air is a great respite from the recent muggy heat. KJ has always liked the fresh smell after a long and hard rain.

"Bailey Avenue," Joanie says, "Let me know if I miss it. I think I know how to get there."

"Sure," KJ says.

Even if they make a wrong turn at least she won't be back at the Campbell House, waiting for Erica or Gene.

The two arrive without error, thanks to a little guidance from KJ. Kylie's Bailey Avenue home is smallish and old, but it is clean and surrounded by two vacant lots. That allows for a little privacy on an otherwise crowded lane. Parked outside is Justin's silver Honda Element, as well as two other vehicles, an old blue Cherokee and a white Camry of similar age. The Camry has a small blue spot; it has been repainted at some point. There is an honor roll sticker on the bumper. It is becoming second nature for KJ to notice minute details.

There is a doorbell but Joanie elects to knock. A girl who KJ's never seen before opens the door. She hugs Joanie and then looks at KJ.

"Oh, shit," Joanie says, "sorry Kylie. This is Kaylee Campbell. She's a senior at Uniontown. I hope you don't mind that she came."

KJ glances at Joanie and avoids showing her annoyance.

Great, I'll be spending the night in Joanie's car.

Kylie looks at KJ, who observes Kylie with much more discretion. Kylie's hair is sandy blonde and her skin, once beautiful, is darkened by

exposure to destructive sunlight. Her body is well developed, though she's nowhere near as strong as KJ. Nothing in her first impression is particularly interesting, let alone striking.

"Come on, Kylie, she doesn't bite!" Joanie says. Kylie doesn't move. "I'm not going to leave her in the car!"

Joanie is losing patience.

A voice from inside the house is the deciding factor.

"Let her in, Kylie! What the hell's up with you?" It's Justin Harris.

"OK, fine!" Kylie says as she moves to the side. "I just want to be sure."

Joanie and KJ step inside. The girl who must be Jen is sitting on a couch beside the boy she's probably dating. For some reason Jen looks familiar to KJ. Kylie closes the door and sits on the arm of a chair where a dark-haired boy is seated. This must be Jason. Justin Harris is standing near an open hallway. The room is lit by a single lamp. KJ can see fine details due to her excellent night vision. She sees a white bundle on the table in front of Jen and her guy. She can see four bottles to the side of the couch.

You invited me to a make-out party? I'm alone, Joanie! It's going to be a long night.

KJ realizes the real reason Joanie brought her. Joanie feels safer with KJ nearby, should she need help refusing Justin's advances.

As expected, the strangers ignore KJ. Joanie and Justin share frivolities and, not long after, they kiss. Justin is perceptive and notices that no one is talking to KJ. He engages her in a meaningless but pleasant conversation. She notices that he has never treated her like a pariah nor has he been lustful toward her in spite of his reputation and her incredible beauty. Perhaps the ex's who are spreading rumors about him weren't so innocent, and became vengeful when the relationship didn't bear fruit. Based on his words and lack of dedication to anything meaningful, KJ was never interested in developing a relationship with him; she believes the lack of desire is mutual. If he did have a desire to get close to her, surely the racial incident has ended that sentiment. It does feel nice to be treated as a human being, however, especially by a member of the opposite sex.

Jen's boyfriend pours a shot of Jack Daniels from one of the bottles beside the couch. He pours one for Jen as well and asks if the others want a drink. Joanie tells him later, as does Justin. Kylie and Jason pound a few. After a while they put on some music - lighter rock like *Rise Against* and *Shinedown* - but KJ doesn't mind in the least. When the topic of conversation inevitably turns to music, KJ can interact with the others. She

tries to forget all the aggravations, worries, anger and denigration she's felt these last few years. It works for a little while. The others even show some interest when she mentions the Seattle club scene.

Justin goes out to his car and comes back with an acoustic guitar. He shows his talent in the first chords he plays; he also shows that it's being wasted. After playing some familiar riffs, he begins playing a song that he says he wrote. The music mirrors both the good and the bad of his playing. When he hits it, the sound is remarkable. More often than not his lack of dedication to his art smothers his brilliance. To KJ it is like flames among a great deal of dry wood; so much wood, in fact, it smothers the fire. It does have a soothing effect on her mind. She forgets her pain for a little while longer, though the part of her that doesn't like to forget the reason she's hurt gnaws beneath the surface. After three songs Justin sits down the guitar and reaches for the bundle. KJ feels the gnawing pain get sharper.

Inside the bundle of paper are three stacks of marijuana cigarettes. Once it's open, Justin and Joanie reach for a cigarette. Joanie does not light hers. She looks at KJ with incredulity.

"You don't want one?" she says, the cigarette hanging on her lips.

Like many of the students at Uniontown High, she assumed that KJ is a stoner.

"No," KJ says, "I'm not into that shit."

Joanie leans over so that Justin can light her joint. The lazy smoke flows out of her mouth. She looks at KJ.

"Seriously?" she asks.

KJ nods. Joanie starts to laugh. She looks at Justin, who shoots Joanie an annoyed glance.

"Let her do what she wants," he says.

The others ignore the threesome. They have other things on their minds.

Justin begins to play again. The effects of the weed seem to aid his ability, though it cannot substitute for dedication and hard work. It also steers him toward a less serious composition, one that is more interesting to everyone save KJ, who laments the loss of wild passion that he flirted with in his first three songs. Kylie and her guy listen to Justin while Jen and Jason whisper and then leave for the hallway.

KJ doesn't answer when Joanie asks something. She listens to Justin's playing. It's a real shame he's pissing away his rare natural talent.

"Jane..." Joanie says. She stares at KJ.

KJ looks at her.

"Seriously, try it," she says.

She hands her cigarette to KJ.

KJ shakes her head. She's had this opportunity several times before. Just last week she found a roll of her father's joints, lying in the basement where they fell out of his jacket. It's the first time she's found them at the Campbell House in Uniontown. Back in Kirkland it was a different story entirely. She wonders if the racial incident convinced him to seek refuge yet again in the chemical lie.

"It's good for you, Jane," Joanie says, "It'll help take the edge off." She puts the joint to her lips and takes another drag. "All that shit you got going on in your head, you need it a lot more than I do."

"I don't do that shit, Joanie," KJ says.

She doesn't feel like explaining why not to someone sucking on a joint. She'll have to, though.

Joanie takes another puff.

"Why not?" What's wrong with you?" she asks.

"Maybe there's not a good reason to feel happy right now," KJ says, "Maybe I don't want to feel good until it's real."

Joanie waves her hand.

"There's always a good reason," she says.

"Not's when it's a lie," KJ says, "Sometimes it's right to be angry. Fucking pissed, actually."

Joanie starts laughing.

"You're such a buzzkill!" she says.

KJ doesn't respond. She doesn't really care what Joanie thinks.

So this is the young white revolution - laughter and a puff of smoke. We always try to escape the pain and anger. But why escape? Why not fight?

Then Joanie does something surprising. She hops over near KJ and throws her arm around her. For a moment the laughter stops.

"Don't ever change, Jane," Joanie says.

Joanie slides back to her original position and then beyond, closer to Justin. She watches him as he begins another song, this one a cover of an old *Green Day* hit. KJ listens for a while and then talks to Joanie and Justin after he finishes playing. The giggling is annoying and Justin's attempts to play after he's drunk as well as baked are an embarrassment for a boy who should respect his art. Still, it beats the hell out of the Campbell House.

Kylie and her guy go to the hallway and disappear into one of the bedrooms. Joanie and Justin never depart for the hallway, although they laugh and kiss and his hand finds her leg more than a few times.

The hour is very late when they rise to leave. Justin is the last outside. He leaves the door unlocked. KJ watches him stumble to his car and then she reaches inside and locks the door before closing it. Bailey Avenue is not free from crime.

We're so trusting, KJ thinks. And suicidal.

The four who remain give their bodies to each other. None will cherish the full extent of such a gift. As she walks away from the house, KJ reaffirms a solemn pledge she made not long ago.

I won't cross that line until I find the right man. I will be his and only his, and he will be mine and only mine.

It is the ultimate rejection of the feminist religion of her parents and her relatives; those who claim the key to liberation is the cheapening of the flesh, and the way to a bright future is the betrayal of your brothers in race. KJ has never and will never reject much of her liberal and leftist upbringing. She is, and shall remain, to some degree a socialist. Concerning race, and the love between a man and woman as well as the beauty and gift of childbirth, KJ has rejected her parent's anti-white and feminist worldview in totality.

Justin offers to take them home. KJ asks if he'll ride with them instead, and Joanie agrees. Joanie quit drinking and smoking two hours ago. Justin's in worse shape than Joanie ever was. He refuses the offer, however, and gets into his car. The vehicle is still sitting beside Kylie's house when Joanie and KJ leave.

On the way back to Uniontown, Joanie asks KJ a question. The quiet manner in which she asks means it's a serious one.

"Seriously, Jane," she says, "Why not just let it go? You said, sometimes it's right to be angry. But I've been thinking, you know, what's the point? Why not just, you know, move on?"

KJ watches dark forms fly by outside the window as they drive past Everson, Pennsylvania. In the pale moonlight she sees that the forms are covered bales of hay.

"They won't leave us alone, Joanie," KJ says, "Not until we're gone from the Earth."

"How do you know?" Joanie asks, "Why would they do that? Who's they, anyway? I don't see any army out there killing white people."

"Yesterday afternoon my father was watching television," KJ says, "I sat down for a few minutes and in that short time I saw three anti-white ads. Three, Joanie. In the first ad, the white guy's fat and stupid, and his own fucking wife conspires with a smart-ass black asshole to make him look like an idiot. Tell me, what message does that send to boys and girls?"

The next ad had all those non-white faces telling me they're just as American as I am. Actually, they're more American, but that's beside the point. The point is, the director of the ad is saying that Africans and Indians are just as American as whites are. He's saying that we can be replaced. You know, genocide doesn't always mean bombs and bullets. Swamping a white country with non-white immigration is also genocide. So is the promotion of assimilation and race mixing."

Joanie is silent for a short while.

"The government and most companies are run by white men," she says, "Why would they want their own people to disappear?"

"For some of them it's a religion," KJ says, "It's a death cult. They call it anti-racism, when it's really anti-white. Those who drive the anti-white genocide believe that equality is all that matters. They've replaced their love for their race with a love for an abstract black man who doesn't exist. Watch almost any movie. Blacks are always intelligent and decent. You might find a few like that in real life, but the truth is, they stand out so much because most of them are aren't anywhere near that bullshit fucking ideal. But, you know, truth doesn't matter to anti-whites. They enjoy punishing white racists because it makes them feel morally superior. It's no different from any inquisition, whether you're in Spain or Salem or modern America. Say the wrong fucking word, even tell an innocent joke, and you end up having to grovel or you lose your fucking job. They say they're radicals, fighting white racism and standing up to the powerful, when they're just fucking tools following their anti-white religion or making money off of our slow death. Anti-racism is a religion, and anti-racism always means anti-white. Always."

KJ waits for Joanie to respond but she does not. Instead, she turns off her iPod, which was barely audible to begin with.

"Companies are a little different," KJ says, "Big fucking companies go along with white genocide because they make money off of it. We unionize and demand our rights, and we demand accountability from supervisors and managers and all those who grow rich from a white man's labor. We demand respect for the environment and for fellow workers. The average black worker might not be as hard-working or innovative, but he'll be hella easier to control. Give those motherfuckers a Colt 45, a little weed and access to pussy and they'll never, ever threaten the status quo."

Joanie remains silent.

"And other thing," KJ says, "Have you ever noticed that most environmentalists say that we shouldn't be having children, because it's, like, bad for the environment? It's always white babies that are bad for the

environment. If some African country has a population boom or Mexicans turn California into a toxic fucking cesspool, there's never a word of protest from the so-called environmentalists, but just let Whitey say the wrong thing and the anti-whites come out of their parents' basements to raise all kinds of fucking hell. It burns me up, seriously, because whites are the ones who fucking love and protect our wild places. For fuck's sake, I'm an environmentalist! But I love my race and I will love my children, and I don't give a fuck if a man's an environmentalist or a capitalist, if he wants my race to disappear, then fuck him!"

KJ waits a minute for Joanie to respond. She does not, so KJ finishes answering her question.

"Those with money and power want to replace us," KJ says, "We're the only ones who create and adapt. We're the only ones who fight for higher principles and for generations who we will never even know. Politicians want non-white votes so they can remain in power and companies want cheap, malleable labor. Right now, that means supporting the anti-white status quo. Rich men don't want to rock the boat and jeopardize their wealth and status, and if we stand up for our race it will definitely fuck up the status quo."

"Do you believe it's all a conspiracy?" Joanie asks.

"No," KJ says, "It's all out in the open. Businesses use the affirmative action scam for PR purposes, they hire minorities to drive down white men's wages and eliminate white men's jobs. They they hire wannabe directors who create anti-white ads, like the ones where the criminal is always a white male, and the good guy at the security company is black. That keeps the anti-whites off their backs. They couldn't care less what other white people think, since most whites have internalized at least some of the American anti-white religion and are deathly afraid of being called racist. The opposition rolls over and plays nice so they can remain respectable in the eyes of people who don't give a fuck if our children are ever born. It's a cycle that keeps making money and keeps growing larger. Capitalists don't care if we eventually go extinct. They don't have to live through it, so they don't give a fuck what happens after they're dead. Money and power are all that matter to those evil motherfuckers."

"You've thought a lot about this, haven't you?" Joanie says, "I don't think they made you this way when they assaulted you. You must have had these feelings before they did that."

KJ looks at her. She wants to say "no shit" but refrains.

"I pulled the film off of my eyes," KJ says, "and I could finally see and accept the truth. It's not a conspiracy. It would be better if it was. We could

just kill the motherfuckers and it'd be over. But it's not that way. Millions of people are driving our race to extinction because they profit from it, and a lot of them don't even realize what the fuck they're doing."

"Jane," Joanie says, "You're not a Nazi, are you?"

"I want a family someday," KJ says, "I want my husband and my children to look like me. I want my family to live in a world where being white is not a fucking crime. Does that make me a Nazi? Does that make me a monster?"

"No, Jane," Joanie says, "I didn't mean it that way. Fuck, I don't even think about that kind of shit. I'm 16 for fuck's sake!"

"There are more fools who are sixty than sixteen," KJ says, "Just look at what they left for us. Very few white people think about their children's future, beyond providing them with a worthless college degree or a roof over their heads. They think about themselves, mostly, and they resent the fuck out of anything that threatens their comfort. My mother is a conceited feminist who hates her daughter because I dare to love my race. My dad's a weak fucking tool who thinks smoking weed is an act of revolution. Then there's the fucking faculty at Uniontown High, who think that I'm more dangerous than those motherfuckers who..." KJ sighs hard. "Who fucking assaulted me. All of those assholes tell me to be a rebel; as long as they approve of what I choose to rebel against. They're just fucking tools. I'll tell you what, if anti-whites leave us alone, then I'll quit all this shit. If they fucking let me love my race, in the open, then I'll let it go. Until then I'm part of the fight."

"I wondered why you wear army boots," Joanie says and laughs. "You're Rebel Jane!"

Once they pass Dunbar, both Joanie and KJ become quiet. Joanie's iPod needs charged so she turns on the radio but, finding nothing but annoying talk and country music, she turns it off. It doesn't take long for them to arrive at the Campbell House, anyway.

KJ exits the car. The lights are out in the house and the hour is very late - 3:30 AM.

"Thanks for sharing your beliefs, Jane," Joanie says.

KJ's neighbor is hard to figure out.

"It was a trip," KJ says, "Thanks for taking me."

The night is clear and beautiful. KJ uses the secret copy of her key to sneak inside.

All extenuating circumstances aside, September is a beautiful month. The transition to the ephemeral beauty of fall is palpable from the start and grows more evident with each red-lined leaf and nodding Joe

Pye weed. The morning sky has the beautiful pastel colors of fall and the day brings pleasant warmth rather than torrid heat. The fall was once a time of splendor. It was KJ's favorite season. For KJ and the youth of America and Europe, fall now means a return to the spiritual and mental oppression of public education.

On the very first day of classes, Mr. Majoros, KJ's homeroom teacher, begins reading the roll call for this year's group. He reads a name, then another, waiting for a response. He arrives at Marjorie Cameron, who is absent today. Then the routine is interrupted. Majoros sees a name that he doesn't care to see. He sighs and then rubs his head. Without looking up, he calls out the name as if it's one word.

"Campbell, Kaylee," he says.

KJ looks at him. He is white as is his wife and their two sons, one of whom gave his life years ago so that Iraqis could paint their fingers.

"I'm here," KJ says.

Majoros doesn't look at her. He goes to the next name.

"Cannon, Joshua," Majoros says.

Joshua responds and Majoros looks him in the eyes.

KJ is still a pariah.

On the second day of school, Sidell Wilson shows up in KJ's art class. He is a black wide receiver on the high school football team and one of Duane Carter's accomplices, though he was not present on the day of the assault. There is no doubt that he knows what happened. On occasion KJ catches him glancing at her. He looks back at the front of the room when she does. The next day he continues his unimpressive game until the teacher leaves for one reason or another. Then he turns and looks at KJ. She returns his glare. He smiles and makes an obscene gesture with his tongue. A smug look appears on his face and he turns around.

The teacher is late in returning, so Wilson turns toward KJ for some more fun. Once he sees that KJ is looking at him, he makes another sexual gesture. He is stunned by her reaction. With a stabbing motion, KJ slams the point of a pair of scissors into her desk. She looks into Wilson's stunned face and imitates his obscene tongue motion. There is a big difference between their performances. KJ never smiles, nor does the angry flame in her eyes abate. Wilson turns back around.

On Friday morning of the first week of school, KJ meets Joanie in the hall. They don't share any classes and it looks like meetings at school will be uncommon. The two girls talk about the new school year, and Joanie mentions her anxieties as a new student. The two also discuss plans for the weekend. They will go to Diamond this evening. As usual, Joanie will

meet KJ at Kaminski's garage. Joanie lauds the band that will be playing tonight and both look forward to the show.

It's another busy work day at Kaminski's. Good old Kaminski hasn't been in all week. He must really be sick. The last time he took off an entire week was when he had a minor heart attack. That was ten years ago. He's been a rare positive influence in KJ's life and the news troubles her the entire evening. One of his older mechanics spends a little time with KJ, showing her how to set the ignition timing in a 1964 Dodge fire engine.

Quitting time eventually arrives, and KJ goes outside to find Joanie waiting. Joanie is looking forward to the show and is quite impatient. She pulls out before KJ can close the car door.

"Fuck, Joanie!" KJ exclaims, "Good thing I got my fucking foot in!"

Joanie laughs and KJ punches her arm.

Joanie and KJ talk about school during the trip to Murrysville. KJ doesn't mention what happened in Art class. Joanie asks if her hair looks OK; she's having second thoughts since cutting it to shoulder-length. KJ, whose thick hair makes Joanie's hair look sparse, nods and assures her it's fine.

"I don't think Justin will mind," KJ says, "You know, he's in two of my classes - Art and weightlifting. Maybe he's getting buff for you."

KJ smiles.

"We're not going out anymore," Joanie says, "I mean, he's a good guy, but I don't think either of us is right for the other. He thinks so, too."

KJ doesn't ask which one of them came to that conclusion first.

"Are you alright?" KJ asks.

"Yeah," Joanie says, "We're cool. We're still friends. He's going to be there tonight, you know. He likes *Springheeled Jack*. I've heard him cover one of their songs.

KJ wonders if Justin is the reason why Joanie is suddenly so concerned with how she looks.

As Joanie predicted, Justin Harris is in the crowd. He's wearing casual clothes typical for a young man his age, yet the immaculate condition and matching colors of his attire shows an attention to detail. There must be a few things that he cares about. Justin sees Joanie and KJ as they enter and he works his way over as if nothing had changed between him and his would-be girlfriend. KJ begins to wonder if Joanie's desire to come has anything to do with the music.

KJ and Joanie missed a few songs, but they will catch the second half of the show. Before the first of two intermissions ends, Justin engages them in some small talk. He doesn't seem interested in KJ, which is fine

with her, but she is surprised and pleased the he still seems unafraid to engage her with civility. He's never mentioned her troubles at school and he'll even speak when the two meet within the school's halls and classrooms. It may only be "hey" or "how's it goin'" but he never hides the fact that he knows her. It's not much, but it's a little victory in her lonely life.

His heroism has its boundaries. KJ does not know that he was present on the day of the assault, or that Justin heard her cry for help. It wasn't out of malice or indifference that he did nothing. A part of him wanted to intervene. Fear is what kept him from acting; the fear of reprisal and, even more, the certainty that from then on he'd have been an outsider like KJ. Had he risked his popularity, had he preferred punishment to cowardice, had he steeled his nerve and jumped into the fray, he would have spared her a great deal of pain and anguish. She is following a difficult and painful path, one she chose well before the assault, but he could have been part of that path had he summoned the courage when she needed him. His lack of interest in her has nothing to do with her beauty; it is immense already, by far the most luminous at Uniontown High. Perhaps he could have been the largest part of her life had he chosen to be a man. Instead he chose apathy. Now the only way that he can win her body is through loneliness and despair. Should Kaylee Jane become that desperate it will surely lead to her destruction.

The night starts off a little awkward but soon Joanie is back to her old ebullient self. It appears to KJ that the three might remain on good terms. *Springheeled Jack* starts up again and both Joanie and Justin enjoy the music. KJ can tell that *Jack* is another skilled band, though their songs sound a little too "commercial" for her tastes. She hears Justin talking to Joanie about the previous song and how he'd like to play an acoustic version at the next party. Joanie tells him he should. KJ keeps herself from laughing. Despite his undeniable talent, even a sober Justin Harris would have difficulty matching the guitarist on stage. She says nothing, of course.

For much of the ride home Joanie is silent. This is unusual. Perhaps the break-up is more painful than it appeared. Whether or not that's true, Joanie doesn't ever say. Instead, for whatever reason, she decides to broach the subject KJ always finds her eager to discuss. KJ doesn't mind; not only is she not ashamed of who she is or what she believes, she holds out the slimmest hope that Joanie may someday awaken. Even if she does not, it is still a good opportunity for KJ to stick to her principles and to feel good about them.

"You OK, Jane?" Joanie asks to break the silence.

"Yeah," KJ says, "Are you alright?"

"Yeah," Joanie says. Silence broken, she moves on. "You know, I've been thinking about my parents' offer to pay for a trip to Guatemala. Maybe it'd be better to stick around here, you know, maybe head out west to an ecology camp or something like that. What do you think?"

"Fuck, that would be a lot better," KJ says, "You might actually learn something instead of spending most of your time on the toilet." She looks at Joanie. "If you're lucky."

She doesn't mention the heightened chance of rape that a white girl would face in such a dangerous environment.

Joanie laughs, ignoring the second part of KJ's message.

"You're probably right," Joanie says, "What do you think about the new environmental law with inhalers and shit like that?"

Several members of Joanie's family have asthma.

"I think it's a fucking shame that we let traitors and fake environmentalists co-opt our movement," KJ says, "They ban certain inhalers and at the same time don't do a fuck about water pollution or destruction of habitat, or all the bees and bats dying. Sure, they'll tell us not to have children, or to kill them if we get pregnant. But they never say a goddamned thing about non-whites having five or six welfare brats. No, that'd be racist. It's better to cut down all the forests and dam all the rivers than to offend Shaniqua and her thirteen bastard children."

Joanie laughs.

"Rebel fuckin' Jane," she says, "You're a trip, Jane, honest-to-God."

KJ smiles for a moment. She doesn't mind the nickname.

"Seriously, though," KJ says once the silence returns, "There are places and species that we have to protect. We have to preserve wild places for our children and their children to enjoy. You know, we're the only ones who ever preserve places like the Olympic Wilderness or the Everglades. We're the only ones who sacrifice for future generations." She sighs. "At least some of us do."

Joanie doesn't respond. She has a lot on her mind but tries to hold it back. She thinks about KJ and the fact that she is an astounding and rare young beauty. If Joanie was nearly as beautiful, she would go with the flow, and would no doubt have what everyone says is a happy life. Finally, Joanie can resist no longer and she speaks.

"Even if you're right," Joanie says in a low voice, "No one will let you talk the way you do. Look what happens to guys who say half of what you say. Half! They lose their jobs and have all kinds of trouble finding another one. Goddamn, it's terrible, Jane, I know, but it's the way shit is."

"Then shit has to change," KJ says.

The silence returns. For a moment Joanie worries about her neighbor, but she thinks about something else and the unpleasantness goes away.

The next two weeks are uneventful. Sidell Wilson doesn't repeat his antics. Others ignore KJ but no one antagonizes her, at least not to her face. Someone does superglue the dial on her locker, but the coward neither remains at the scene nor does he or she claim responsibility. KJ sees Joanie a few times and her new neighbor speaks; once, they even talk for ten minutes. Justin also speaks to KJ in his usual frivolous manner. Otherwise, she is *persona non grata*. Others consider it too dangerous to converse with her, even the many boys who covet her sexually. Some are tempted by their extreme desire for such a beautiful and physically robust young lady. None get too close for fear of being branded racists.

Diamond Crossing is closed the third week of September, but will reopen with a show by *Chironex* on the final Friday of the month. KJ is eager to attend. When the day finally arrives, KJ suffers through the school day and then hurries off to Kaminski's for a few hours of learning and helping with repairs. When she arrives at the open garage she looks for her boss and mentor, but he is nowhere to be seen. Mechanic Tom Nethkin, himself of about the same age as Stan Kaminski, tells her that Stan is pretty bad off. He's had another heart attack and is being treated at Uniontown Hospital. The evening is a somber one at the garage and it tempers KJ's enthusiasm about the night's show. Because there's no one to teach her, KJ has to wait outside for Joanie to arrive. Through the lamplight and dust of nighttime Uniontown she can see Ursa Major and Polaris. At the library she's perused websites about nearby stars and constellations. She's also read quite a bit about them in her spare time.

If we weren't betraying and destroying each other, we might be there someday.

The despair she feels when she thinks of all that her race has lost is the emotional equivalent of rubbing a razor a little too hard.

Joanie shows up a little late. KJ stifles her disappointment; Joanie offers her the only chance she has to see the show. The conversation during the drive to Murrysville is uninspired. For some reason, Joanie rarely gets interested, or interesting, until the return trip.

Not far from Diamond, Joanie pulls into the parking lot of a pet grooming salon. The place is closed at this hour. KJ steps outside and, with the building shielding her from view, changes into a pair of tight jeans. She puts her second pair of tall lace-up boots on over the jeans. She also

changes her t-shirt, from a plain blue one to a black shirt with *Black Flag* on the front and back.

The outside of Diamond Crossing looks the same as before. Inside, it becomes apparent that the sound system is even better than it was. It had been more than adequate, even superior for such a small venue. Now it is awesome. KJ wonders about the time and money invested in the place. How can they make money if the great majority of shows are free? Perhaps that's not the scope of Diamond Crossing. Whatever; she's just thankful it exists and the owners haven't censored groups like *Chironex*.

There is ferocity and urgency in the band's music. It is ever-present when they take the stage. Whether the song is "Rainelle," a superb, masterful tune about life and loss in Appalachia, or the vicious but righteous anger of "No Shelter for the Stray," the words and the beat leave a permanent impression upon those who long for honesty and strength in music. KJ is once again enthralled. In a world of lies and weakness, she sees through the fog and craves the slightest sign of resistance. For now, the only signs come from internet posters, from a boy who she'll never see again, and from the songs at Diamond Crossing.

The first song is "Rainelle," which is one of KJ's favorites. After the song KJ looks at the crowd. She sees Red over to the left. She does not know that Red saw her as soon as she came into the club. Red waves and KJ returns the greeting. Out of politeness, KJ stays with Joanie, though she knows that Joanie will drift away soon enough. She's not into punk music. KJ notices a few of the girls who hang with Joanie when she comes to Diamond. It's a relief; KJ will be left alone to meet with the red-headed girl. By the end of the second tune, she has her opportunity to talk. KJ looks over at Red and sees that she is approaching. She waits for the redheaded girl to get close enough to speak.

Red is dressed in black jeans and a t-shirt. Her thick red hair is in a long ponytail and her attire is just tight enough to show that she, too, is very fit.

"Hey," Red says, "What's up?"

KJ smiles for just a second. Her eyes are the same shade of blue as Red's. Red has more freckles on her face than KJ, though the number is in no way excessive. She is stunning in her beauty. That the two of them would stand face-to-face, the most beautiful girls in the Uniontown area, is a singular event. That the two might be loyal to their race is damn near impossible to believe.

"Hey," KJ says, "How's it going?"

"Good, you?" asks Red.

"I'm good," KJ says, and she manages to make it sound convincing.

"You from around here?" Red asks.

"Sort of," KJ says, "I live in Uniontown."

Red is silent for a moment. KJ hopes that nothing's wrong.

"I live right beside you!" Red says, "I go to Laurel Highlands. Do you go to Uniontown?"

"Yeah," KJ says.

She sighs.

"That good, huh?" Red says. "Oh, I'm Anna Murphy," she says as she extends her hand.

KJ, who is wearing gloves as usual, shakes Anna's hand.

"Nice to meet you, Anna," she says, "I'm Kaylee Campbell."

Anna is silent for a moment. The name has tremendous significance, though she cannot tell KJ that her little group is looking for her. Now, Anna has finally found the courageous young woman. She cannot ruin the opportunity.

Anna recovers and continues their conversation. She mentions "Rai-nelle" and KJ tells her of her fondness for the song. KJ also tells Anna of her support for white solidarity, which is the gist of the song. The conversation turns toward that inevitable subject.

"Have they ever punished you for your beliefs?" Anna asks.

KJ nods, a tired and sad expression on her face. She mouths the word "yeah."

"For a long time now," KJ says, "Some of them have even attacked me."

"Shit, Kaylee, I'm sorry," Anna says.

"Please, call me KJ," KJ says, "And... And it's alright. I helped one of our guys when a group of blacks tried to jump him. So after he moved away, they attacked me. One of them put his hands on my body, so I called him nigger."

KJ speaks in a normal tone. She does not whisper any of the words. If this crowd will condemn her for racism, then her people are truly lost. No one says a thing, at least not to her face.

"Fucking black bastard," Anna says, "I guess you got punished for saying nigger?"

KJ is shocked at Anna's candor.

"Yeah," KJ says, "They gave me three days suspension and other shit. I wouldn't apologize, and I never will. They're fucking lucky..." KJ doesn't need to complete the sentence.

Anna smiles.

"Good for you, KJ," Anna says. Then the smile disappears and she gets close to KJ. "If you ever have trouble again, let me know. I know some guys who can take care of it."

Anna steps back and her lovely smile returns.

"Thank you," KJ whispers, her gloved palms held together as a gesture of appreciation.

Chironex takes the stage after the short pause. Hill, who is always sharp, is having a flawless night. His energy is incredible. After the short pause, Hill and the band perform one song after the other. The sixth song, "Thousand Feet," is new to KJ. She takes an immediate liking to the song well before it's over. KJ's emotional side wonders why *Chironex* is not famous. Her rational side knows the answer to that question.

As with all great performances, time slips by and tonight's show is over way too fast. KJ looks around for Joanie. Again she's beckoning from the exit. Before KJ can leave, she feels a hand on her shoulder. It's Anna.

"Here," Anna says. She hands a piece of paper to KJ. "Call me if you ever need a ride, OK?"

KJ looks at the paper. Anna has written down a cell phone number.

"Thank you," KJ says.

As Anna walks away, KJ notices she has a tattoo on her right and left arm. Lush ivy winds around both arms, all the way down to her wrists.

The next morning KJ receives a phone call. It's Tom Nethkin. His tone tells her why he's calling. Stanislaw Kaminski passed away late last night. The shop won't be open today or all of next week. It may never open again. For the time being, KJ is out of a job. That's not all she's lost. There aren't many men of value in her life and another one of the few is gone. KJ waits for Nethkin to hang up before putting the phone on its cradle. She goes out on the porch. The sky is a dense overcast, though no rain falls. When she's sure no one is around, KJ covers her face and weeps.

KJ doesn't tell her parents about Kaminski. She's saved a bit of money from her two jobs and will use it to buy time until she figures out the best path to take. On occasion she looks at the number that Anna gave to her. At the library later that week, KJ thinks about calling her, but then she reconsiders. She does not want to irritate Anna with her losses and problems. The isolation and despair are pulling her away from a path she needs to follow.

Not long after Kaminski dies, another line is crossed at school. Again it is up to KJ to provide the lone voice of protest. It's Thursday after lunch and KJ is walking down a main hallway, past rows of lockers. Up ahead are two bathrooms. The scene at the entrance to the girls' bathroom

makes KJ stop in her tracks. Perry Smallwood, a smallish black male one year younger than KJ, is standing at the open door, leaning inside. He's flirting with a white girl who is in the interior of the bathroom. Another girl goes past him and enters. Then he leans further inside, his extended right leg holding the door open. He can easily see the stalls from his position.

Most students ignore the transgression. Some must desire to protest, but succumb to the weight of fear. They know that Smallwood can accuse them of using the "n-word" and it will mean at the very least a week's detention. KJ has slipped away from the stifling gag of political correctness. She is resolved to fight, now more than ever; even if she must fight alone. As she watches Ms. Tricia Stone walk by, fully aware of Smallwood's misdeeds yet predictably silent, KJ steels herself for the upcoming conflict.

"Get out of the girls' bathroom!" KJ yells.

The world comes to an instant halt. Smallwood is so startled he lets the door slip from his foot. It closes with him inside the girls' bathroom. He hurries outside. Only two or three students are looking at him; the others are staring at KJ.

KJ is resolved not to swear, though she comes very close to doing so. She does not want to give Weems an excuse for punishing her that has nothing to do with the incident. She wants to see how bad she'll be punished for making a stand. The privileged Mr. Smallwood charges from the bathroom and into the hallway.

"What's your problem, bitch?" he yells.

He approaches KJ. She does not retreat.

"You have no right to go inside our bathroom!" she yells back.

"Fuck you, stupid cunt!" he says without fear of punishment. His mind summons the predicable accusation. "Racist bitch," he says as he gets closer.

KJ looks into his dark eyes. There is defiance in her expression.

I'm not afraid of you.

She thinks of the push knife in her left boot, though he eyes never look away from his. No one in the gathering crowd says a thing.

"Fucking dyke!" he says, "You lookin' for a beat down?"

KJ doesn't flinch. She catches movement out of the corner of her peripheral vision. It's Ms. Stone, the white mother of two, who has come back to separate them. KJ already knows who it is. She's taught herself to be both rapid and exact in her observations.

"Mr. Smallwood!" yells Ms. Stone, "Get to class this instant! The principal will hear about this. I said get to class!"

Smallwood looks at Ms. Stone and then at KJ.

"Fuck it," he says and then turns to leave.

"Kaylee Campbell!" Stone says, "Go to the principal's office! Now!"

KJ turns and walks toward the office. Before she goes around the corner, she looks back. Joanie is looking at her. KJ cannot interpret her expression; it could mean a number of things.

Weems is hanging up the phone as KJ walks into his office. He looks older than he did yesterday. Today he's wearing a polo shirt. He's never figured out who he is. He knows his place, however, and again he'll blame the racist girl for at least some of the problem.

"Honestly, I don't know what to do with you, Miss Campbell," he says before she can sit down. He manages to look into her eyes this time. "We're not going to tolerate racism at this school. It's preposterous that in this day and age you would behave like you do. You're only pushing yourself out the door."

"Whether I'm racist or not," KJ says, "Perry Smallwood was in the girls' bathroom. You're going to punish me, for what? Because I don't want him in our bathroom?"

"The school's bathroom, Miss Campbell," Weems says as if that changes the nature of the infraction. "And Ms. Stone didn't mention anything about him being in the girls' bathroom."

"Ask her," KJ demands.

"I'll make that determination," he says.

KJ is prepared for whatever he throws at her. To compensate for his cowardice and inability to face a non-white miscreant, he'll take it out on her. She doesn't care anymore.

"I should call your mother," says Weems.

"I don't care," KJ responds.

"I'm going to recommend that your parents get you help with your anger issues," he says.

"My anger issues?" she says.

"What?" he asks.

"Never mind," she says.

He snorts in disapproval.

About this time a page comes in on Weems' Blackberry. It is from Mrs. Compton.

"There's a girl here to see you," she says, "It concerns the incident in the hallway."

"OK, send her in," Weems says. He then looks at KJ. "If you're smart you'll sit quietly."

His threat does not intimidate her. He could have a gun and she wouldn't be afraid of him.

The girl comes into the office. It's Joanie.

"You wanted to see me?" Weems asks.

"Yeah," Joanie says, "I wanted to tell you what happened."

Weems' face grows long and he fidgets with his pen.

"OK," Weems says.

"A guy was standing in the girls' bathroom and Kaylee caught him. A teacher was walking by but she didn't say anything, so Kaylee told him to get out."

Joanie doesn't describe the perpetrator.

"Is that it?" Weems asks, as if it's no big deal.

"Then he goes off on Kaylee," Joanie says, "Calls her names and stuff. Bad names, like..." She hesitates to continue.

"OK," Weems interrupts, "I get it."

He looks at KJ and then at Joanie. A few moments pass. He doesn't know what to do. He decides to dismiss Joanie.

"Thank you, Miss Mancuso," he says, "You may go back to class."

Joanie hesitates for a moment but then she leaves. KJ looks back at her but Joanie doesn't turn around.

Joanie would like to return and defend KJ. She'd like to praise her for her courage. But a nagging doubt rises in her mind. She's beginning to worry about associating with a person like KJ Campbell.

Principal Weems doesn't say a thing. He starts to speak but falls silent. His phone rings. Mr. Bice wants to see him. The principal tells him to come inside. He figures that he'll dismiss KJ in a couple of minutes, after he thinks of something to say to her.

Mr. Bice is sixty years old, though he is still an imposing figure. He's counting the days to retirement and a life of fishing and working on his vintage cars. He tries to ignore the mounting troubles around him. Still, he places some value in the truth, and he will not withhold information he deems vital to the proper investigation of an incident.

KJ looks toward the door as Bice enters the office. Weems stands up from his desk.

"Hi, Gerald," Weems says, "Have a seat."

Bice looks at KJ for a moment and then sits to her left.

"Well, Nathan," he says, "you're gonna have to deal with that Smallwood boy."

KJ notices that Weems winces ever so slightly when Bice says "boy." Bice continues before Weems can speak.

"A girl in my class says she saw him enter the girls' bathroom," Bice says.

Bice is tall and strong and his voice is commanding; he is a stark contrast to Weems.

Weems swallows hard. He deeply regrets inviting Bice into his office before dismissing KJ.

"I think you're right, Gerald," Weems says, "Still there were better ways to handle this unfortunate incident."

He looks at KJ.

"Yeah?" KJ says, "Like how?"

Bice seems surprised at her challenge.

"You could have told one of the faculty," Weems says.

"Like the one that walked by?" KJ asks.

"That's enough," Weems says. "I understand your anger," he says, as if he would even try. "Still we can't have these kinds of outbursts. They are disruptive and can easily escalate to violence."

Weems shows his fear of non-white students reacting with violence. It is a justifiable fear. His cowardice in the face of such fear is not justifiable, however.

Weems takes out a piece of paper from his desk. He fills out the paper and hands a copy to KJ. She knows what it is before reading it: it is a detention slip. She looks at the duration and the reasons for her punishment. She will serve three days detention for "unruly" behavior and foul language. It is, of course, a lie. KJ does not feel rage. It's utterly predictable that Weems would do this. If she complains, Weems will add to her punishment and no one will defend her. She folds the slip and puts it into her pocket. It's a small price to pay for dignity's sake.

KJ rises. Weems waves her off. She hears Weems call his secretary, and soon after Mrs. Compton pages Perry Smallwood. KJ leaves the office without another word.

Years ago, Bice would have protested Weems' treatment of KJ. Now he will do no such thing. He will not jeopardize his twilight years or his reputation among the powerful members of the education administration. He soaks his toes in the warm ocean as KJ drowns a few inches away.

Perry Smallwood must have been wandering the halls because he is already approaching Weems' office as KJ enters the hallway. The two will pass each other. KJ remains on her side but will not move any further. She will not cede anything to Smallwood. She stiffens her shoulder and prepares for the inevitable. Smallwood's motion toward her is noticeable only by the most attentive. She acts like she's not expecting anything; she

doesn't look directly at him. Then he makes his move. He's expecting to bump shoulders and to send her off-balance. He thinks he can send her into the lockers if he hits her just right. Smallwood, who is rather short and scrawny, couldn't be more wrong. He underestimates her strength and the lack of surprise. His blow meets a solid surface engaged in a counter blow, and he gets worse than he gives. It is a stunning repulse.

"Fuckin' cunt," he says as he continues to the open office door.

KJ knows that Mrs. Compton has to have heard Smallwood's profanities. She knows that Weems will not lift a finger.

KJ will never know what punishment awaits Perry Smallwood. If he serves detention at all, it is in a separate location from where she will serve her three days.

Gene Campbell picks KJ up after detention. Weems must have called him. KJ waits inside the school until she sees the minivan. She may not have an irrational fear of the pack but she's no fool, either. They may be waiting outside. No one will help her if they attack. At least, no one close enough to make a difference. She's relieved to see Gene pull up to the entrance, though her relief comes from the safety of the vehicle rather than the fortitude of its driver.

The trip home is typical. Gene doesn't speak to her. It's obvious that he's worried he'll be punished by Erica. KJ knows she'll be punished as well. She does not look forward to another round with her mother.

Erica meets them at the door. It's obvious she knows and clear that she's looking for a fight. She stares into KJ's eyes, her face showing just some of the fury she feels on the inside.

"What exactly did you do?" Erica asks as soon as the front door closes.

KJ doesn't respond.

"She used profanity, I think," Gene says.

Erica glares at him and he shrinks. Then she looks back at KJ. KJ avoids her glare. She's still shy at heart and at times her soul aches from the hostile attention. The years of conflict have forced KJ to be combative rather than withdrawn. Her courage overcomes her longtime shyness, and she finally looks into Erica's eyes.

Though KJ takes more after her father as far as facial shape and hair color go, it is easy to see her genetic disposition for beauty in the physique of her mother. In a picture, Erica is a beautiful woman - at age 40 she could easily pass for a woman ten years younger. Her blue eyes are a mirror of KJ's, perhaps just a shade darker. Her shiny, dark brown hair has resisted all but the slightest graying and this she dyes away. Her face is a

delicate contrast to KJ's unique features, though it is beautiful as well. Her body still draws a great deal of attention and is a seductive distraction both inside and outside the courtroom.

KJ is on pace to far surpass her mother, both facially and physically. Erica is not the type to be content with her own gifts and to rejoice in the gifts of her daughter; jealousy is certainly one reason for her antipathy toward young KJ.

Of course, envy is not the only factor. As living persons the two are opposites. Erica has long ago forsaken any sense of kinship with her race; KJ's love of her people has already grown to great proportions. Erica demanded that Gene be willing to subjugate his own identity and desires, otherwise he'd have had no chance to remain with her. At the same time, she craves the attentions of an aggressive adulterer. KJ is repulsed by the weakness of the subordinate male and is disgusted by the infidelity of the adulterer - and the adulteress. She longs to be a true partner, the woman of a strong and honorable man, his wild and passionate lover as well as his faithful wife. The world created by those who hate her race is forcing her to become something else: a fighter. Erica bends and moves with the system. She uses it to her advantage and will not challenge the anti-white religion that drives its heart. KJ defies that same system. With direction and support, her defiance could become resistance.

KJ's family will not provide the companionship and support she needs. Erica physically blocks her from going to her room, the only vestige of a refuge in the Campbell House. She bites her lip as she looks KJ over from top to bottom. Gene ceases to exist in either female's mind. Erica shakes her head, and then speaks.

"I carried you for nine long months," she says, "I chose to give birth to you, that was most certainly was a sacrifice. Do you think it's easy to carry a child?" she asks.

"It's supposed to be wonderful," KJ says.

Erica ignores her and continues.

"I chose to keep you," she says, "It was my decision alone, Kaylee. A woman can chose to terminate, but I chose to keep you. My career never recovered. I'd call that a sacrifice. How have you repaid us? Hmm? We clothe and feed you and what do you do? Embarrass us over and over and over again."

KJ realizes what just slipped out.

"So you'd go back and kill me if you could?" she asks.

Suddenly Erica loses her desire to fight. She steps to the side, opening up the escape route.

"Get out of my sight," Erica says, "We'll talk about your punishment later."

KJ hesitates for a moment. Though she'd love to stand up to Erica, she's tired and disgusted and not too sure what to make of Erica's sacrifice statement. She heads to her room without saying another word.

Alone in her room, KJ thinks about what Erica has said. She turns on her old iPod, which she hid from her parents. It hasn't been updated in a year though she's managed to keep it charged with a power dock - all in secrecy of course. While "Fly Away" plays in her ears she wonders if Erica has ever had an abortion. She wonders about her dead brother. If he were still alive he certainly would have protected her and supported her in her struggle. She turns up the music. A second *Eyes of Fire* song begins playing. KJ chases the thoughts from her mind. If for a second she thought it might be true, that Erica had chosen to kill her brother, it would tear her to shreds. She can't take that kind of pain right now.

The next day, Gene drops KJ off at school. She still doesn't know what her punishment will be. She's hoping for a quiet and uneventful day. She does not let that desire cloud her mind to reality; she will not let down her guard. Perhaps Smallwood and the others think that an attack on her might be more painful than they'd prefer. Their hesitation will not last forever, but for now they avoid her. Many white and most non-white students say that she's crazy. That belief may be helping her right now.

KJ comes close to getting the uneventful day she desired. Near the end of the school day, during the exchange of the final two classes, KJ sees Joanie approaching down the hall. Joanie has her hair back in a ponytail. It's the first time KJ's seen it like that and it looks nice. KJ steps toward Joanie to offer her compliments.

"Hey, Joanie," she says. Joanie doesn't acknowledge her. Still, KJ continues. "I like your look, it's pretty cool."

Joanie looks at KJ, and then down. She accelerates her footsteps and walks on by. KJ is stunned. She watches in silence as Joanie leaves. Reality takes a little while to sink in, and when it does KJ feels a good deal of pain. She feels more alone than she's felt in a while, even more than when she faced Erica and Gene after the assault. A white girl from KJ's advanced French class watches and snickers.

Gene picks up KJ after detention. She gets into the Grand Caravan without a word. The trip is the same. Gene doesn't speak. He hopes her silence is a sign of acquiescence. He lost the ability to read or feel for his daughter years ago. When they arrive at the Campbell House, Erica is waiting at the door. KJ approaches without looking at her. Erica's arms are

folded. She watches KJ take off her boots and then sit on the little couch in the foyer.

"Your father and I have discussed your punishment," Erica says. No doubt she told Gene what they'd do to KJ. That's the meaning of a discussion for Erica. "You have a choice, Kaylee. Your first option is to attend an anger management course. Should you refuse, or fail to complete the course, your other option is to begin attending the George School in Newtown."

She expects KJ to look at her in shock and anger. Instead she keeps looking at the floor.

"Well?" Erica asks, "What will it be? I promise you, Kaylee, this is no idle threat."

Erica is annoyed by KJ's lack of outrage.

"I'll go to the class," KJ says without looking up.

Erica is shocked by KJ's lack of resistance. She's also disappointed. She wanted to play the role of master, but this is only fun for her if the doomed target puts up a manageable challenge.

Without looking up, KJ asks, "Can I make something to eat?"

Erica hesitates. KJ looks up at Gene. Gene looks at Erica.

"Alright, go," Erica says, waving her hand.

KJ walks to the kitchen. Erica already scheduled the anger management courses. They begin on November 1st, the day KJ turns seventeen.

Before dusk, KJ goes out on the porch. She takes one of her school books with her. Beneath it is *Atonement*, the book that she will actually read. The leaves are turning brown and the wind is chill. KJ reads a little but finds the task more difficult than usual. After a while she closes her book and looks at the pin oak across the lot. Oaks always seem to lose their leaves last. Maybe they hold on longer. Maybe their leaves are dearer to them. KJ notices a walking stick on the porch rail, opposite the glider. She watches its methodical movements in the crimson and orange of a fading sun.

The quiet approach of another person breaks KJ's near-trance. It's Joanie. Her hair's down again.

"Hey, Jane," she says as she comes to the steps of the back porch.

KJ looks at her. There's no expression on KJ's face. Her despair is too great at the moment. KJ doesn't speak.

"I wanted to talk to you about school," Joanie says, "I'm...I'm sorry about what happened. I'm not like that, really, I'm not. Just...a lot of people are afraid of you, and what you might do. They even talk about Columbine and shit like that."

In KJ's mind she thinks about the irony of this statement. Alone, in peril of ambush, ridiculed at home and in school, unprotected and despised, she is the object of fear.

They don't fear me. They hate me. Saying they fear me makes them feel better about themselves.

"I know you're strong," Joanie says, "Maybe I'm not. Not like you, anyway. It's just... I can't..." Joanie looks down and breathes deep. "OK, you deserve the truth. I can't hang with you at school I got a lot of shit going on. Not like you do! I mean, I admire you, Jane, being so strong, but I can't handle the shit you can. I'm new here and I can't handle all this shit."

KJ wants to ask if someone threatened her, or if she's afraid of what the "others" might do to her. It's a legitimate fear. It's no reason to abandon your kin, though. KJ doesn't ask.

"I'm sorry, Jane," Joanie says, "I hope we can still be friends. If you don't want to, I understand."

KJ nods. She runs her gloved fingers through her thick hair.

"Yeah, it's cool," KJ says.

She tells herself it's no big deal. The emotional pain she feels tells her otherwise.

"Cool," Joanie says, "I'm really glad, Jane." Relieved of her guilt, Joanie hops off the porch. She turns toward KJ once she's about three steps out in the yard. "Hey, thanks for what you said about my hair."

KJ forces a little smile. Joanie goes home. When KJ looks back at the porch rail, she sees the walking stick lying motionless on the floor.

The anger management class that Erica set up for her daughter lasts eight hours and is administered online. Her parents permit KJ to use the computer in the den. Erica knows that her daughter will peruse the internet if given the chance, so KJ will have four hours the first night and four the next night to complete the task. She must achieve the certificate of completion. Since KJ is very bright and might finish a little quicker than Erica expects, or might have other windows open on the computer, Erica will make several surprise checks to be sure that KJ is reading class materials only.

On her birthday and during the evening of November 2nd, KJ completes the anger management class without attempting to defy Erica's strict ban on internet use. Erica seems satisfied but does not complement KJ. Perhaps her satisfaction is from her victory over her daughter, rather than the foolish notion that KJ will now forsake her principles based on psychological hokum.

The second week of November closes with a premonition of winter. The first snow of the year falls on the day that KJ hopes to attend the nighttime show at Diamond Crossing. It is not enough to disrupt her plans. She hasn't told Erica that Kaminski's garage is closed, only that her work schedule is no longer regular. To keep up the ruse, she'll have to spend two hours in downtown Uniontown. She cannot spend the time at the library. Gene might find out she was there instead of at work, and it will be closed at that hour anyway. KJ keeps paying for food and other necessities out of the money she's saved from her two jobs. Now she is unemployed she's feeling the need to find another job, though it is not yet urgent. On this Friday she is more concerned with Joanie arriving on time to take her downtown, and then to pick her up later. *Chironex* is playing tonight and she hopes Joanie won't flake on her.

Joanie comes through in the end. She drops KJ off and then two long and boring hours later, picks her up near Kaminski's garage. The place is unaltered and this helps KJ sell the ruse to Gene. Still, it's a matter of time until he finds out. She doesn't worry about that tonight. Nor does she broach any intense subjects on the way to Diamond. Joanie talks a little about the music, again mentioning how *Chironex* is a good group that "grows on you," and she also mentions that she and Justin are still friends. KJ listens but does little talking. She hopes to see Anna at the show. She still doesn't know how to get closer to her or her friends. Anna's cell phone number is in KJ's jeans pocket. There is also a copy in her room, in a secret and secure place.

A quick scan of the audience reveals both Anna and the young man she's talked to in the past. Presently she's conversing with another person, a man in his early twenties. He is one of the most beautiful men KJ has ever seen; a rival to David Hill if not more so. This man has longish blond hair and is in excellent shape. Though he's wearing jeans and a short sleeved button down shirt, his athletic physique is visible even at a glance. His face is angelic; it's features are soft and beautiful. Could he be one of the men Anna mentioned, one of the men who would deal with those who might attack KJ?

The band comes out and KJ's attention is captured by Hill and his mates. They thank the audience for coming and then jump into song. The first selection, "The Best Haters," ignites KJ's aching soul. In this heavy tune, the first metalcore song that *Chironex* has ever played live, Hill rages against teachers and professors who teach white children to hate their own skin color. Unlike so many anti-white takes on this theme, Hill makes it clear that the children in his song are white. KJ observes that the

majority of the songs *Chironex* plays are more and more belligerent and race-conscious. It is an extraordinary development. The music has become a star in the darkness of her life. There are still white men unafraid to speak. It is exhilarating to see such men, and yet it is painful to know that they are so far away, even if she can almost touch one of them.

At some point Hill notices her, if he hadn't already. He must read the emotions on her face, for he looks into her eyes when the next song reaches its powerful climax. It's the hardcore song "Rainelle," perhaps her favorite from among their discography. Many times over the upcoming weeks KJ will remember this moment.

During the first intermission, KJ approaches Anna. Anna's already seen her. She says something to the blond guy and then waves. KJ waves in reply. The lights come on for the intermission and when she gets close, KJ realizes that all three of them share the same eye color.

Anna is first to speak.

"Hi, KJ," Anna says. Without much pause she introduces the blond man. "This is Garret. He's a good friend of me and my dad."

Garret shakes KJ's gloved hand.

"Pleased to meet you," he says.

His eyes never stray from hers. KJ is impressed by his demeanor.

"I'm pleased to meet you, too," KJ says, "I'm KJ."

She figures that Garret is European. Something seems exotic about him, like he's from far away. His accent did not seem foreign, however. Garret doesn't reveal where he's from. In fact, he does not stay for long after the introduction.

"Enjoy the show," he says to the two of them, "Anna, I'll see you tomorrow. I hope to see you again, KJ."

As he leaves, his stride is one of strength and pride, while his eyes were sincere and showed both strength and humility. At least that's the first impression he makes on KJ. There aren't nearly enough like him. That his day is ending, and he's an echo of the past, is a painful thought.

KJ realizes that Garret is leaving before the show is halfway over.

"You're friend's leaving?" KJ asks, "Doesn't he like the music?"

"He's into classical stuff," Anna says, "Don't worry, though, he's into the message as much as we are. He's met David Hill more than once."

Anna's reassurance quashes KJ's rising concern and she feels a great relief inside. Garret must be one of the men that Anna mentioned. KJ wants to ask more questions, many more in fact, and she believes that Anna will not mind. The small chance that Anna will resent the intrusion keeps KJ from asking.

"Have you ever met the members of the band?" KJ asks.

Anna nods.

"I didn't get to talk much," she says, "but it was cool, you know?"

"Is this for real?" KJ asks.

She wants to believe that this extraordinary series of events is as real as it seems. She needs to believe it. She has to know if this is an act, even if it will destroy her.

Anna looks into KJ's eyes. For a moment KJ wonders if she's blundered. Then she realizes it's a necessary question in modern America. Very little is real anymore.

"Yes, they're real," Anna says, "It's all real. Who'd sing these kinds of songs if they weren't for real?"

A small laugh escapes from KJ.

"Yeah," she says, "I see your point. Who would throw away their career for shit you don't believe in?"

Chironex plays into the late hours of the night. KJ never worries if Joanie will leave or not; Diamond Crossing is a small world apart from the dark one that traps her. Here she can escape the pain and loneliness without resorting to chemicals and false highs. She won't be troubled by the loss of a ride home. She'd probably have to wait until the next morning to call Gene, and then Erica would be eager to punish her. Now she has another option - Anna Murphy; though it's an option she has no intention of abusing.

Tonight is like the other nights. Joanie stays the entire show and waits for KJ, though this time she's already beside her car when the last song ends. She feels a little bad about the arrangement as KJ pays much more than necessary for the gas to Murrysville and back. Since she doesn't care as much for hardcore, she consoles herself.

Joanie need not feel bad; KJ knows she's paying more money than necessary for the trip, but it is a great value for her, considering what she's getting. She is closer to members of her people who, unlike the masses, are awake and aware of their race's struggles. She's also convinced herself that they will not surrender without a fight. This realization alone is worth the extra cash.

On the trip home, Joanie is chirpy and in good spirits. She talks about the show and asks about the handsome blond man - the one who shook KJ's hand. KJ tells her they just met. KJ is glad that Joanie is talkative but also confines her inquiries and soliloquies to humdrum topics. She doesn't figure things will ever get better between her and Joanie, so the chance to rest and enjoy a pleasant if meaningless conversation is ra-

ther welcome. Unfortunately for KJ, it's not Joanie's intention to limit the discussion to such safe topics.

Not far from Scottdale, Joanie falls silent. The sound of the tires rolling over the small grooves in the pavement is significant to KJ. Joanie always brings up something serious after long periods of silence.

"Can I ask you something, Jane?" she asks, "I don't want you to get upset."

Oh, great, thinks KJ.

"Go ahead," KJ says.

"After you had that run-in with that guy, what was his name? Smallwood? Yeah, anyway, if he'd been white, would you have been so angry about it?" Joanie asks.

"If he'd have been white," KJ says, "would Ms. Stone have walked by? Would the other girls have looked the other way or would everybody have screamed? Would he have fucking done it in the first place?"

Joanie senses a rebuke.

"If you don't want to talk about it, just say so," she says.

"You know this shit is important to me," KJ says, "I'm like this. I'll talk about it if you want, but I'm not going to tone it down."

"OK, I get it," Joanie says, "I think you're right about Stone. She would have messed herself if he'd been white. But would you have yelled if the dude had been white?"

"Would you, Joanie?" KJ asks, "Would you have yelled if you saw Smallwood in the bathroom?"

Joanie feels flush for a brief moment. She knows what KJ's saying without using the words. Joanie saw Smallwood standing inside the bathroom entrance and she said nothing.

"Jane," she says, "You really have to let all this go." KJ snaps a glare at her but Joanie continues before KJ can reply. "I'm not saying be someone other than who you are, and I'm not saying you're wrong, OK? Just..." She pauses and KJ waits for her to continue. "There's a lot of people who will harm you for what you say and believe. You can't be this way all your life. I wouldn't want to see you get hurt, Jane."

KJ softens her glare and looks out the right window.

"If I deny who I am, how do I live with myself?" KJ says, "How can I ever look at a white baby without feeling ashamed of myself? I practically spit in his face when I abandon my beliefs. I can see hands on his throat and I'd be letting them choke him. How do I do that?" KJ closes her eyes and breathes deep, and then she looks at Joanie again. "I know they'll try to hurt me. But they can never have me. I'm not for sale."

Joanie is silent for a while; so is KJ. Joanie eventually speaks.

"You think about shit no one else does," she says, "I've never heard anyone talk like that. You're what, sixteen?" KJ nods and Joanie continues. "Damn, Jane, I worry about school and what to wear at the dance, and if my car will start."

"There's no going back once you know," KJ says, "But you know, I wouldn't go back to ignorance if I could. Even if it meant a lot less pain."

"How will you stay strong all the time?" Joanie asks, "I mean, in face of all the shit you're gonna face?"

KJ is silent. She'd like to say she'll find a man to share the trials and tribulations, one who will hold her when she feels weak, one who will stand beside her when she needs his love to keep steady. She cannot say that this will happen. She cannot answer Joanie's questions with certainty. She tells her the truth.

"I'll try," KJ says.

"I can't see shit the way that you do," Joanie says, "God, I hope you're wrong. I hope nobody hurts you."

"They will," KJ says.

The grooves in the road are long gone; now it's only the whine of rubber on pavement that makes a noise.

"I can't hang with you at school if you keep fighting," Joanie says, "I'm sorry, Jane, I don't want to be cold."

"I know," KJ says.

"You mad?" Joanie asks.

"No," KJ says.

Those who would stand with her through all the troubles and outrages are very few and far between. She's not angry with Joanie. KJ has resolved to love her race and her people, despite their weaknesses and lack of fortitude. She will not betray them. Rather than anger, the feeling is one of isolation. It must be how the last walking stick feels before winter.

"I saw Mr. Andrews opening your locker," Joanie says, in a voice as soft as a whisper, "Do they do that very often?"

She fears the answer she already knows.

"At least once a week," KJ says, "Sometimes three or four times. I try to catch the asshole but he's good at being a coward."

"What will you do?" Joanie asks, "Maybe it's the ones who attacked you."

"No," KJ says, "I think it's one of ours. Blacks don't do that kind of shit. I'd be very surprised if they did. I don't give a fuck, really. If I catch whoever's doing it, I'll fuck them up."

Joanie's eyes get wider.

"Really?" she asks.

"Fuck yes," KJ says, "Someone has to stand up."

"I bet you could fuck up some of those assholes with those big fucking biceps you got," Joanie says, "I hope I don't get on your bad side." Joanie laughs.

KJ laughs a little as well.

"I work hard to get them like this," KJ says.

She flexes her left arm. She has been very careful not to destroy her femininity, yet she has managed to grow her white arms to a very impressive size, especially for a girl of her smallish stature and young age. When at rest, her arms are very large but do not look lean like a bodybuilder's. Like a weightlifter's, however, those big arms bulge when she flexes.

KJ looks down at her chest.

"I don't want these to disappear," she says.

Joanie laughs again and shakes her head. The laughter is brief and Joanie's face takes on a serious look, almost painful in fact.

"I talked with Justin during the intermission," Joanie says, "He asked if I'd be OK with it if you two hooked up."

"What?!" KJ exclaims. She looks up from her chest. "Where the hell did that come from?"

"He likes you," Joanie says, "He still speaks to you at school, doesn't he?"

"Yeah," KJ says, "but that doesn't mean we're in a relationship!"

"I know," Joanie says, "I just wanted you to know I'd be OK with it if you were."

"Alright," KJ says. She wonders if Joanie really would be OK with it. "To be honest, I'm not really into him."

Joanie changes the subject back to something more comfortable for the both of them. KJ continues to think about Joanie's bringing Justin into the conversation. She sees absolutely no reason to date him. It may be a blind rush, but KJ is running forward; he's drifting away. She wants something serious that will develop and hopefully last forever. He has never stayed with the same girl more than six months.

Near Connellsville, Joanie mentions that she and Kylie are going to Starbucks after school on Monday. If KJ wants to meet them there, she'd be welcome to do so.

"I might," KJ says.

KJ looks out the window at the passing lights. South of Connellsville the darkness and the trees return. Their leafless forms rise from the re-

mains of the season's first measurable snowfall. KJ puts on her black toboggan, leans back in the seat and closes her eyes.

The weekend is gone in an instant. On Monday morning, KJ has even less desire than usual to go to school. She expects to find her locker glued. A different surprise awaits her. Sometime over the weekend or before she arrived this morning, someone wrote "Nazi Cunt" with a sharpie pen across the length of her locker. She opens the locker door without batting an eye. When she bends her arms to pull out her notebook, she flexes her arm muscles.

Someday, I'll catch you.

On Wednesday evening, Joanie visits KJ on the back porch of the Campbell House. She's already excited about a return trip to Diamond Crossing. *Piston Effect*, an alternative rock and metal band from New York State, will be playing on Friday. She asks if KJ has gas money and then asks if KJ would like to go. KJ nods. Joanie is very familiar with *Piston Effect*, they've played in her hometown, and are not unknown on the nationwide music scene. Joanie mentions this and then she runs off before KJ can say more than a few words.

The next day there is only a trace of the coward's writing left on KJ's locker. Mr. Andrews the janitor is beginning to check KJ's locker every morning. She gets her notebook and heads off to homeroom. On the way she passes Joanie and Justin. The two are talking but not holding hands. It looks like the deeper relationship is over, at least for now. Joanie doesn't make eye contact, nor does she speak. KJ is not surprised. She tells herself it doesn't matter. It does of course; KJ still waves hello to the two of them.

Justin stops in his tracks. He's lost, probably hopeless, but there's still a trace of a man in him.

"What the hell, Joanie?" he says. He shakes his head and looks at KJ. "You going to Diamond Crossing this Friday? It's going to be a hell of a show. I can't believe a big band like that's coming to a place around here."

"Yeah," KJ says, "I'll be there."

She doesn't say how she'll get there.

"Cool," Justin says, "Then you've heard of *Piston*, huh?"

"Yeah," KJ says, "I've heard of them."

Justin knows she's into the heavier sounds, but still knows and respects alternative rock.

"Some of the guys might come, too," Justin says, "I think Kylie's coming. It'll be her first time."

KJ glances at Joanie, who is looking everywhere except at KJ.

I'm almost done with you. I'd rather be alone than the object of embarrassment or pity.

Joanie leaves them behind. Justin makes a circular motion with his fingers near his head, meaning Joanie's "nuts." KJ laughs a little. She can't help it. The two part company with a wave and a smile. Otherwise, it's another long day for KJ. Most of them turn out to be long, in the stifling asylum of Uniontown High.

The coward or cowards relent on Friday and KJ's locker remains unmolested, but the day still crawls forward with agonizing slowness. KJ is not enthusiastic about the evening. As usual, she's glad for the possibility of escape.

The trip to Kaminski's old garage is tense. Gene notices that the inside lights are off but KJ doesn't try to explain. She says she doesn't know why. Gene offers to stay if she'd like. KJ does not lose her cool. She tells him she'll call if no one shows up by 8 PM. Gene accepts without argument and drops her off by the parking lot across the street.

It's another long wait until Joanie arrives. She's early for once. KJ notices before the Volkswagen stops that there is a passenger in the front right seat. Thanks to practice, her powers of observation tell her it's Kacey Hawkins. Just a momentary glimpse in the streetlight is enough.

KJ knows Kacey from school. The two have never shared a sentence. It's more than a little surprising to see her with Joanie. In spite of her attractiveness and rising popularity, Joanie is still in the gray part of the social strata - the stoners, the strange students who are just powerful enough to ward away tormentors and bullies, and other misfits who are willing to put up a fight. It's true that Joanie is no social leper like KJ, but Kacey is popular enough to someday be a homecoming queen or head cheerleader. She's also beloved by faculty for her studious ways and propensity to agree with thinly-veiled opinions. KJ wonders if she's somehow misjudged Kacey.

Her intuition is more accurate than her hopes. Joanie unlocks the rear left door and KJ climbs inside. In an instant, Kacey looks her over. She snorts and turns toward Joanie. KJ can see the streetlight reflecting in Kacey's green eyes. A few strands of long auburn hair hang in front of them.

"I didn't know you were picking up another person," Kacey says.

KJ knows it's bullshit. Kacey is afraid to say "her" or "Kaylee" or "that bitch." KJ can read it in her expression. KJ's paying for gas. There is no way she's getting out of the car. Kacey can walk.

Joanie ignores Kacey and pulls off the curb, back into the road. Kacey turns her head and looks out the passenger side window. No one talks for a while. KJ has the impulse, born of pain, to bait Kacey into a verbal altercation. She's tired of being hurt. She doesn't indulge her feeling. Kacey is a fool, for sure, but she is not a traitor. Her boyfriend is white and as far as KJ knows neither one cheats on the other. She is one of KJ's people; a sister in race. KJ should not take abuse from anyone, Kacey included, nor should she look for an excuse to inflict abuse upon her kinfolk. KJ looks out the window and lets the incident die.

On the road north of Connellsville, Joanie breaks the silence.

"I still can't believe these guys are coming to such a little club," Joanie says, "They played at Lollapalooza last year."

KJ was wondering as well. Someone must be supporting Diamond Crossing; some eccentric or great lover of music, or both. Regardless, the supporter or supporters must believe in free speech, and not just the bull-shit "fight the power, obey the elites" sanitized "speech" that never gets anyone into real trouble. The owners of the club do not censor white racial speech, which is the ultimate test for free speech advocates. KJ imagines that the true powers-that-be will close the club sometime in the near future. She's surprised they haven't already.

Kacey finally speaks.

"Yeah, I'm surprised it's a free show," she says. She then looks at Joanie. "You're sure about that, right?"

"Yeah," Joanie says, "KJ found the place and we've been going ever since."

"You two go together?" Kacey asks.

Joanie doesn't respond. She didn't want to say that. She feels a fear creep into her mind; a fear of the consequences for associating with Kaylee Jane Campbell.

"We're neighbors, Kacey," KJ says.

She knows Joanie is beyond hope and will not awaken. Still she does not have malice toward her, and does her this little favor.

"You two are neighbors?" Kacey says to Joanie.

Joanie nods.

"Lucky you," Kacey says, louder than she would wanted.

KJ laughs. Joanie is terrified. She knows KJ is a fighter. She'd like to warn Kacey. Instead she vents her annoyance on her new friend.

"Shut up, OK?" Joanie says, "I'm not in the mood for an argument."

"Sorry, Joanie," Kacey says. She doesn't apologize to KJ. Kacey changes the subject. "Is anyone else we know going to be there?"

"Probably Justin Harris," Joanie says.

KJ isn't paying attention to their words. She's looking outside. The sky is so clear you can see the stars in spite of the street lamps and house lights.

The three arrive well before the show starts. The crowd is the largest ever for Diamond Crossing. KJ scans the audience for familiar faces. Anna is not there, nor is Garret or the guy with the glasses. KJ sees Justin Harris long before he sees her. She thought the Honda outside was his. He finally notices though it takes him some time to work his way over to the three girls.

Justin addresses KJ first. Kacey doesn't look at him, and Joanie greets Justin like a good friend. KJ knows he's not the one for her. He may have ulterior motives for speaking. KJ is aware that, minus her reputation and melancholy, introverted ways, she would be a highly desirable catch for those interested in a physical conquest. She'd be the most desirable, in fact. Just maybe she'd be the most desirable catch for a young man interested in a permanent relationship. KJ feels the acute sting of loneliness and the growing weight of despair. It's threatening to suffocate her good sense and best judgment. It just feels so good for someone to be unafraid to talk to her, especially a guy. Perhaps he's not just looking to score. Perhaps, for all his faults, there's a real man somewhere inside. It's nice to ignore intuition and reality once in a while. It's also deadly.

Although Kacey is silent for a long time, when she finally speaks to Justin it is clear that the two know each other quite well.

"How have you been, Kacey?" he asks.

His body language is reserved, much more so than usual.

"OK, I guess," Kacey says.

She finally looks at him.

Justin puts his hands in his pockets, thumbs out.

"It's good to see you here," he says, "I didn't know you were into this music."

She nods.

"This is a good group," she says and smiles, "I don't just listen to country, you know."

"Cool," he says.

Justin takes a place nearest KJ. It's not long before the show starts.

Piston Effect, a band out of Albany, New York, is among the most polished and professional acts to play at Diamond Crossing. Their music is apolitical with a few notable exceptions, whose themes include the destruction of American workers with outsourcing, as well as one song that

could be interpreted as mildly anti-abortion. No doubt the owners paid quite a sum for the band to play in their small-town club. KJ looks around the place and sees a few advertisements for upcoming shows. *Chironex* will be returning, among others.

During quiet moments on the porch of the Campbell House, KJ has contemplated the selection procedures at Diamond Crossing. She cannot recall hearing any anti-white songs at any of the shows or seeing any anti-white bands among the lists of those who have played there in the past. Such anti-white themes are ubiquitous in music. Musicians can feel like revolutionaries while attacking a reviled but harmless target. That target is, in fact, the one and only legally oppressed racial group in America. KJ hates this harmlessness. It invites escalation. It is exhilarating that Diamond Crossing does not cater to bands that parrot popular anti-white opinion. It may not be overt on their part, but at some level of the selection process, the owners of Diamond Crossing exclude anti-white bands from playing at the venue.

The music is quite good tonight. The band has a refined sound, every bit as good as most of the better-known groups in the genre. Shortly after the second intermission ends and *Piston Effect* begins the finale of their show, Justin moves much closer to KJ. He puts his arm around her shoulder. Her impulse is to step out of his embrace, and to tell him in kind but firm words that there is no chance for a relationship between them. The thoughts are true and the motive is right. It is a bit of loneliness that she must endure; the alternative would be much more painful in the end, and could be devastating. KJ looks around. He's the only one there who seems unafraid to treat her like a human being. It's foolish to indulge this feeling. He's not after anything eternal. But what is eternal, save sadness and despair? It's a wicked, ruinous thought. She's ashamed of it. She should step out of his embrace and let him know they cannot be together, not even for a fling; especially for a fling. This is wrong. It's bad for him and terrible for her. She has to step away. She does not.

The embrace doesn't last long. It feels so nice while it does. KJ needs a man's strength to help bolster her own considerable strength. Her father should be providing it, but he's about the last male who would make a stand for his racist daughter. Justin won't, either. She knows this. It's just too difficult to walk away, alone, back to her hard life. She can't imagine how she'll live; only that it will be a brutal life should she refuse to betray her race and herself. When Justin lets go a powerful urge in her soul yearns for him to hold her again. It was a simple embrace, yet the humanity was potent.

Justin looks at her, into KJ's pale blue eyes. She looks into his. He does not see rejection. His boyish face is handsome and compassionate. His is a story of what could have been, and what probably shall never be. She knows all this. She feels too good to face reality right now. But reality scorned returns with a vengeance. Justin rubs her back. He looks at the other two. They've not been paying attention. He smiles at KJ and then removes his hand.

"I'll see you around, OK?" he says.

She nods and forces a smile. It should be natural. She knows why it's not.

He smiles back at her.

"Joanie, Kacey, drive safe," he says.

It's the only time KJ's heard him say such a thing.

On the trip back, KJ is the outsider. She's used to the role. Her interaction with Justin troubles her more than the opinions of schoolmates. She's not embarrassed at what happened. There's nothing wrong with a girl desiring the company of a strong male companion. Justin does not meet that description, and though she tells herself that nothing would have come of it, she knows that she might have been willing to go much farther had she been as lonely and depressed as she's been in the recent past. This thought frightens her. She needs to be more resilient despite her natural urgings and desires. At the same time, she must not wall off her one avenue of true fulfillment, should she meet a strong white man who does seek eternity with a strong white woman. It will not be easy.

Joanie and Kacey talk about the show, which they both enjoyed.

"Are any of the other bands as good as *Piston*?" Kacey asks.

"No," Joanie says, "Most of them are harder. Most of the bands are punk and metal."

KJ doesn't speak.

The hour is very late when Joanie drops off Kacey at her home in downtown Uniontown. She hasn't said a word to KJ on the return trip, nor does she wait for KJ to change seats in the car. Joanie backs out of the driveway and continues toward the Campbell House much slower than usual. KJ feels a little anxiety. She waits for Joanie to break the silence. Perhaps she did see Justin's arm around her shoulder, and perhaps it's not so cool for him to put it there.

"I've never known anyone like you, Jane," Joanie says, "Not here and not back in Jamestown. No one talks like you or has those ideas. You're so damn sure of yourself, too." There is a silence and then Joanie continues. "I admire a lot about you, you know?"

KJ waits for the inevitable “but.”

“I mean,” Joanie says, “You could be whatever you want. Fuck, not just at school, but anywhere. Look at you; shit, you could have any guy you want, but you won’t change, not even to be happy. But what if you’re wrong, Jane?”

She glances at KJ as fast as she can without jeopardizing them or the car. The streets of south Uniontown are mostly abandoned at this hour.

“What’s all this pain and loneliness doing for you,” Joanie says, “especially if you’re wrong?”

KJ doesn’t respond.

“Jane, really,” Joanie says, “I hope everything turns out right for you. I’m...I’m sorry Jane, but I’m gonna have to back off.”

There is much that KJ could say in response. She could tell Joanie that she’s already made her decision and has already “backed off” from KJ. She could ask Joanie about happiness and joy. What kind of joy could she have in the company of those who ignore the genocide against their race, and the extreme peril that their children and grandchildren will face in a world that is increasingly hostile toward them because of their skin color? What kind of joy can a person have if he lives a lie?

KJ spares Joanie. She doesn’t feel like arguing right now. She feels like curling up in bed, all alone.

“OK,” KJ says, “If that’s how you feel.” She does have one question that she cannot resist asking. “Were you threatened?”

“No, not yet,” Joanie says, “but I see what you go through. I honestly don’t know how you can take it. It scares the hell out of me.”

“Alright, Joanie,” KJ says.

The two arrive at Kimberly Drive. Joanie stops so that KJ can exit. She gets out and closes the door with minimum noise. Joanie rolls down her window.

“Jane, I’m sorry,” she says.

KJ nods and turns away. Joanie drives away from the Campbell House. She does not go home, even though she’s right next door. KJ is already inside when the lights of Joanie’s VW disappear down Township Drive.

Behind the relief of having completed her odious task, Joanie feels a disagreeable sensation. It’s not strong but it does make it hard for her to swallow. She turns on her iPod. The *Blink-182* song that comes over the car stereo almost erases the unpleasantness.

Tonight is the last time that Joanie and KJ will ever speak to one another.

December begins with a minor warm spell, the last of the year. The first Monday of the month is beautiful for the time of year. KJ wears a black sleeveless shirt under her hoodie. Emblazoned on the top is a fearsome angel which plunges its sword into a bat-winged monstrosity. She hopes to be wearing such a battle-worthy top, her strong arms showing, when she catches the coward who's been defacing and gluing her locker.

On Monday the 3rd the coward strikes again. Her locker dial is frozen. KJ curses and then goes to find Mr. Andrews, who knows before she tells him what's happened. When they arrive at the locker he shakes his head and looks at her.

"Have you always been this popular?" he asks with a smile on his face.

"I have my fans," she says.

He laughs. Mr. Andrews is too old and comfortable with his life to admit that he sees eye-to-eye with her. He's not Mr. Bice, however, and there are limits as to what he will allow to happen to a girl like KJ. She's no monster in his eyes and she deserves to be protected.

Mr. Andrews tries to unlock the dial with his keys and finds that the coward has broken off a key or a similar piece of metal inside the lock. He'll have to remove the door and replace the lock.

"That son of a bitch," he whispers just loud enough for perceptive KJ to hear.

He unbolts the door and allows KJ to remove her notebook and other paraphernalia.

"Here you go, KJ," he says. She's asked him to call her by that name. "Same time tomorrow?"

"You know it," she responds and smiles.

The coward doesn't bother her locker for the rest of the week. Not from a change of heart, of course, but rather out of fear. Mr. Andrews increases his presence in order to catch the culprit. Though unsuccessful, it scares the vandal for a short while. This does not mean the week will be uneventful. Thursday begins with a brief but sharp argument with Erica over KJ arriving late on Fridays. KJ won't be going to Diamond Crossing this Friday, even if she could get a ride.

After lunch on Thursday, KJ heads back to her locker. As she advances down the hallway, KJ passes a group of girls - all three white - that includes Kim Garrison. Kim is very pretty to the eye. Her blonde hair is long and thick, and her body is a rival to KJ's with one major exception: she is nowhere near as strong. The contrast doesn't end there. Today, Kim is dressed in a sharp white blouse with a black long-sleeve top. She's

wearing stylish shoes and a watch that cost her father quite a bit of money. KJ's tight jeans are tucked under her boots, and she is wearing black gloves. Her t-shirt is black as well, with *Amon Amarth* in blazing orange on the front. The sleeves are tight as usual and show her arms' impressive size.

Athletes often pursue Kim, while lesser males dream in vain of winning her heart. She's never spoken to KJ and would view her beauty with envy were KJ not a figurative leper. Still it is natural for Kim to view KJ as some kind of rival. Should opinions change, KJ, the most beautiful girl at the high school, would be immensely popular. That jealousy compels Kim to harass KJ and she chooses this Thursday to annoy her rival.

"Hey, Kaylee," she says.

Her friends look at her in shock. Several boys are walking by but they ignore the outburst, as does KJ.

Kim is not deterred.

"You know what's white and twelve inches long?" she says, "Nothing!"

Her pathetic joke is loud enough for KJ and the boys to hear.

The boys, and KJ, continue walking. Kim laughs. The noise of her laughter is hideous. It's another obnoxious trait that her sex appeal makes tolerable to those interested in tasting her fruit. The boys, all of them white, choose to ignore this degrading insult spoken by one of their own white sisters. At least one of them feels outrage; a desire to slap Kim. He wouldn't dare voice even the mildest disapproval.

KJ knows what will happen. No one will challenge the bitch. She knows the administration would destroy any boy with the courage to respond. She knows that if a boy does respond, there will be a vicious cry from anti-white feminists, and further attempts to widen the already tragic and unnatural gulf between white men and women. KJ has no intention of aiding her enemies. She also has no intentions of letting this pass.

Why do fucking traitors always escape punishment?

KJ turns the corner and then she spins around. She walks back, careful not to stare at Kim. Her adversary is confident in the supreme. Her confidence, born of a system that rewards and protects the degradation of her race, blinds her to possible retaliation. No one ever retaliates; why should she concern herself?

KJ arrives within striking distance. Her opponent is still oblivious. One of Kim's friends notices and interprets KJ's motives. It is too late. KJ's reflexes are lightning fast; easily the quickest in the school. Her back still turned toward KJ, Kim doesn't even realize what's happening as KJ

swoops upon her. KJ grabs both of Kim's arms and pushes her against the wall. KJ is careful not to slam her. She'd love to slap Kim until her face bleeds. It would be a great satisfaction. It would also result in a severe punishment and probable exile to boot camp or the hideous George School. It would result in a permanent loss of contact with Anna and the others at Diamond Crossing. Should Kim escalate, however, KJ will destroy her. Kim may not realize at first, but she is one misstep away from a severe beating. The realization sinks in when KJ turns her around and she looks into KJ's blue eyes. It is a lone wolf's stare she meets; full of rage and pain and a wild flame that could rise or fall, but it is a wolf's stare to be certain. Kim is one of the sheep.

There is a smirk on KJ's face that grows when she sees the fear in her adversary's expression. KJ stares into Kim's eyes, looking back and forth into each eye but never averting her gaze.

"I was just giving you a hard time," Kim says.

Kim's friends are too afraid of provoking the she-wolf to intervene. Neither of them desired a confrontation to begin with. KJ may be a pariah, despised and ridiculed, but she is a known fighter and that part of her reputation is growing fast.

KJ never averts her gaze. She sees the fright in Kim's eyes. KJ is not satisfied, but for her own future's sake she loosens her grip. Kim's sense of self-preservation prevents her from trying anything rash. She stands still as KJ slides away. Then, in an instant, KJ turns and enters Kim's space again.

Kim wants to plead, to flee, anything to escape what she's unleashed.

"Don't ever fuck with me again," KJ says.

Again KJ never averts her gaze, not for a second.

"OK, Kaylee," Kim says.

KJ backs away this time, turning only when she's out of striking range.

The victory is minor. Kim won't change, though she will fear and avoid KJ. No one who heard the vile anti-white insult will think twice about the long-term ramifications of such constant, approved degradation. None will realize that degradation is the usual first step toward genocide. None save KJ; and she's the pariah.

Chapter IV

Blue

The next week, the second full week of December, offers KJ a rare opportunity to use the internet at home. Gene accidentally leaves the computer on and unlocked while he takes the minivan to the repair shop. Fortunately, it's not Kaminski's, so KJ's ruse is still valid.

KJ makes the most of Gene's inattentiveness and checks the upcoming schedule at Diamond Crossing. *Chironex* will be playing this Friday.

KJ checks her email. She frowns when she sees it's closed due to inactivity. More worrisome is her dwindling money supply. She spends money only on the strict necessities yet she's still running out of cash. It's been a while since she's worked and her lack of employment is becoming an acute problem that weighs on her mind. Even if Joanie still offered to take her to the show, she couldn't pay for gas and stretch her food money another month. She thinks about calling Anna Murphy. She even lifts the kitchen phone. KJ longs to belong to a group of like minds, if such a little society even exists. She almost overcomes her despair, but in the end she puts the phone down and goes outside.

Tuesday comes and KJ is depressed. It's unlikely she'll be able to attend this Friday's show. She's been angry all day; sometime before lunch, the locker saboteur wrote another Sharpie message on her locker, this time calling her "Racist Cunt." While descending a crowded stairwell, an anonymous hand shoved her from behind.

It's raining outside when the school day finally comes to an end. Normally KJ likes the rain, except today Gene is late and Mr. Olszewski the history teacher tells her and a few other students to wait outside under the roof. For the others it is a cold inconvenience; for KJ it is nerve-racking. Being outside exposes her to possible attack. Teachers who don't give a damn for her will not want their careers ruined by allowing a violent assault within the halls of the school; if it occurs outside, they can claim igno-

rance. Most of them would probably not allow such a terrible thing, but any increased chance of an attack distresses and angers KJ.

In her peripheral vision, KJ can see a person approaching up the lane in front of the school. She snaps her head to assess the possible threat. It's Justin Harris.

"You OK?" he asks as he arrives.

She looks at the parking lot.

"Yeah," she says, "My father's just late." She looks back into Justin's face. "Thanks for asking."

"Hey, no problem," he says, "You want a ride home?"

"No, thanks," she says, "He'll be here soon."

"Kaylee," he says, "I wanted to give you my number, in case you want to hang out..."

She interrupts.

"Justin," she says, "It won't work, I'm sorry. I should have..."

He interrupts her.

"No, no, no," he says, "It's not like that. I mean, if you wanna go to Diamond or someplace like that. You know, just hang or kill some time."

He takes the cell phone number out of his pocket. It's already written down.

"You could text me if you want," he says.

She shakes her head.

"My parents won't allow it," she says, "My fucking email just died from lack of use."

He laughs and shakes his head. KJ looks down at the piece of paper with his cell phone number.

"Hey, keep it," he says, "There's no obligation."

KJ stares at the paper and Justin starts to walk away.

"Take care, Kaylee," he says, "I'll see you around."

He waves before leaving, though she doesn't see it. KJ puts the number in her jeans pocket and looks back at the parking lot. Gene still hasn't arrived. KJ breathes deep and then continues her tense vigil.

The next day, KJ convinces Gene to drop her off at Wal-Mart. She buys a track phone and card, which is a giant sacrifice considering the pitiful amount of money hidden in her room. It is not for calling Justin. KJ has resolved to call Anna. KJ must wait in line behind a belligerent black woman who demands to use the express lane even though her items total eleven above the limit. The manager swoops in and forces the cashier to allow the transgression. KJ watches the manager as she walks away, and then looks at the obese Negro.

She didn't even have to call them racist.

Back home, KJ goes for a short walk. Once she's out of earshot of the Campbell House, she calls Anna. KJ memorized the number. She is quite nervous as she enters the digits and swallows hard when the call begins to go through.

Someone accepts the call but does not speak. KJ waits a moment. She feels so nervous she shakes, which, in spite of her overall nervous nature, is a rare phenomenon.

"Hello," says a female voice.

It sounds like Anna, but KJ is not certain.

"Hi...Um...This is KJ," KJ says, "KJ Campbell."

"Hi, KJ, I was hoping you'd call," Anna says, "How are you?"

KJ feels a great deal of relief.

"I'm good, thank you," KJ says, "I was hoping you didn't mind my calling. How are you, Anna?"

"Good, thank you," Anna says, "I'm going to Diamond this Friday, you wanna go with me? It should be a kick-ass show."

"I can't," KJ says, "I don't have a car and I don't have enough money for gas."

"When can I pick you up?" Anna asks.

"I can't," KJ says.

"Come on, KJ," Anna says, "I'm asking you to come with me, not to buy my way there. It'll be a good show, come on. Where can I pick you up?"

KJ thinks for a minute. It will be an opportunity to get closer to Anna and her world. It would be a lie to say she doesn't want to go to the show. She gets a little smile on her face.

"OK," KJ says, "How about we meet at Kaminski's on Fayette Street. Do you know where that is?"

"I'll find it," Anna says, "I'll be there at eight. Is eight OK?"

"Yeah," KJ says, "Remember, I owe you."

"No, KJ," Anna says, "it's not like that."

KJ doesn't speak for a moment.

"Thank you," KJ finally says, and not for the ride.

"See you then," Anna says.

"Bye," KJ says. She waits for Anna to close the call before shutting off the phone.

KJ looks up at the gray sky. A few snowflakes come down, though none survives the journey to the earth. KJ feels a little happiness, the first time in quite a while. The little smile returns for a few seconds.

Her new-found hope is almost crushed on Friday. For once it's KJ's good fortune that Erica revels in the moment and neglects to be vindictive. Otherwise she would force KJ to come home early. After a shower and dressing for another terrible day at Uniontown High, KJ checks to be sure her few prized - and hidden - possessions are safe. As she kneels to remove the cut piece of paneling that hides her secret stash of books, a nasty realization hits her. Before taking her walk last night, she read a little from the Bible she bought at the mall. When she finished, she shoved the book under her bed, intending to put it in its proper hiding place later that evening. She forgot to do so. A frantic and unsuccessful search under the bed forces her to accept her worst fear. Erica or Gene scoured her room last night while she was gone. There'd be no use searching the garbage; they've surely destroyed the Bible by now.

KJ isn't convinced about anything she read in the Bible, but it was comforting to be able to read and contemplate its meaning. It hurts and angers her that her parents would take away her book, and with it her right to decide what she believes and what she does not.

At breakfast, KJ is silent. She doesn't even look at her parents. Erica has a difficult time not gloating. Gene is withdrawn as if he'd done something vile but doesn't have the backbone to admit it. He looks down at the table and the floor. He doesn't dare make eye contact with his youngest daughter. It is up to Erica to break the silence.

"Stephanie's coming on Saturday," Erica says, "She'll be spending the night here." She looks at KJ. "I expect you to be on your best behavior."

KJ doesn't look at her. She thinks about beating up Kim Garrison just to ruin Erica's weekend. It's an amusing but frivolous thought. KJ doesn't want to go to the George School.

"She might be coming with her boyfriend," Erica says.

"How is Ted?" Gene asks.

It's an innocent question. He hopes the conversation will distract his mind from recent events.

Erica throws a furious glare at Gene. He's stunned. Unfortunately, KJ doesn't see the response. She could have used the amusement.

"Richard," Erica says, "His name is Richard."

KJ looks up at the two of them. The desire to avoid being grounded keeps her from erupting into laughter.

"You've been quiet all this time," Erica says to KJ, "Stay that way!"

Gene is silent. His face is bright red.

"Considering all you've done the last year," Erica says, "We're taking quite a risk by having you here, should Richard come."

Erica glares at Gene when she says "Richard."

KJ wonders what is so significant about Richard. Is he black? That would figure. Stephanie's list of college lovers includes the almost-mandatory affair with the lesbian Monique. Stephanie eventually decided that she wasn't a lesbian, almost as fast as she decided that she was.

It turns out that Richard is white. He's an anti-white, passive-aggressive coward of course; otherwise he'd have no desire for a girl like Stephanie. KJ wants to goad Erica, to ask if Stephanie's found another effeminate male to hang on to her dress. She remains silent. It would be a mistake to antagonize Erica right now.

Tonight promises more than a show. It's a chance to talk to Anna, away from the crowds.

KJ looks at the clock above the door. She counts the hours until the meeting with Anna. It will be a long day, and she knows it. In fact, it will be longer than she realizes.

Another message from the locker saboteur greets KJ when she arrives at school. "Inbred Cunt" it says, and the locker's glued again. The petty acts usually don't bother her as much as they do today. Her parents' violation of her privacy and the destruction of her Bible were major blows. On top of this, she has had to take Erica's abuse, lest she jeopardize tonight's meeting with Anna. KJ is as nervous and upset as she's been in a long while. Today she cannot shrug it off. She is enraged and wounded by the coward's vandalism. She doesn't get Mr. Andrews. She folds her jacket over her arm and goes to class.

After lunch, the day goes from bad to worse. On the way to her locker, KJ observes two black girls standing not far from her defaced locker. They are whispering and looking her way. KJ hesitates.

Not today, of all days, you goddamned, fucking pieces of shit.

When the two see that KJ will not get too close, they advance. KJ gets ready for a fight. The two pass to her right and continue forward. KJ turns to face them. She expects them to jump her from the rear. She glances over her shoulder to see if a third assailant is approaching from behind. The second black girl, Janine, pushes the first, a big manly female named Nadifa. Nadifa turns around and screams at KJ, who is too far away to have pushed her.

"What's your problem, bitch?" she yells.

KJ doesn't know it, but Mr. Harrell is coming up behind her. The two black girls hope to goad KJ into retaliating. They know Mr. Harrell will hear them curse and antagonize KJ. They also know he won't dare punish them for mere words.

KJ is silent. She will not retaliate unless her tormentors start a physical conflict. Then she will fight them tooth-and-claw. Nadifa is much taller than KJ and her body is massive, but her size is more from fat than muscle, and KJ would thrash her in a fair fight. If KJ must fight, even if her assailants are the first to throw a punch, she will lose her chance to meet with Anna. Even if she doesn't fight, the two blacks might make up a story and the ensuing scandal will bring down Erica's wrath on poor KJ. KJ feels a strong desire to run away and weep. She almost does. Instead she summons her inner strength and stands her ground. Her race has done enough running away.

"I said what's your problem, skank?" Nadifa yells, "Your hood-rat, skanky ass loves to start shit, well, now you got what you want! Show me what you got, skank!"

KJ doesn't look away or back down. She doesn't say a word, either. The fury is rising inside her yet she cannot succumb to anger or pain.

Be patient.

KJ looks into Nadifa's black eyes.

You are not winning. The goal is bigger than you. You are not worth the chance that I might lose.

Nadifa approaches KJ, followed by Janine. She walks up to KJ and gets very close to her face. KJ feels an overwhelming urge to fight. They are dangerously close. She should never let them get this close. Her attention is riveted on the two, and if someone comes up from behind she is in deep trouble. Should Nadifa or Janine or some other person cross the line between bluster and combat, KJ will fight with desperation, as if she's in jeopardy of dying. She very well could be. Her face never flushes. No one in the crowd interprets the significance of this subtle sign.

Nadifa's eyes flash to something behind KJ. She takes a few steps backward. This could mean that those who assaulted her are approaching. It could also be a ruse to trick KJ into turning around and exposing herself to a sucker punch. KJ steps back, out of range, and then casts a rapid glance over her shoulder. She sees what captured Nadifa's attention. It's Mr. Harrell. He didn't leave after all. He did nothing to stop a potentially violent altercation. When he realizes that KJ sees him, he finds the courage to intervene. His ire is, of course, directed at the safe target.

"Kaylee Campbell!" he yells, "Nadifa Williams! Get to class right now! Miss Campbell, you stay here!"

A smirk grows on Janine's face.

"See you around, bitch," she says.

KJ hears and Harrell probably does as well.

KJ longs to attack her gloating antagonist.

I could destroy you. But other whites would betray me and feel satisfaction while I suffer. How did this happen? How can my own brothers and sisters hate each other so much? How could they let you abuse one of their own?

KJ feels like crying again. She fights it off. She will not let her weaker kin think the black savages brought her to tears. They wouldn't realize that it's their silence and treachery that are killing her.

"Kaylee Campbell!" Harrell yells, "I've half a mind to send you to Principal Weems' office. Stay out of my sight, if you know what's best for you. Now get to class!"

KJ knows the reason he doesn't send her to Weems' office. There are witnesses to the event and there is a small chance that someone will tell Weems that KJ is innocent, and that Mr. Harrell did nothing to prevent escalation. KJ heads to class, already late. She doesn't bother to explain to Ms. Grummons why she's late. There's no use. She's warned not to let it happen again.

Mr. Van Tassel is the instructor in KJ's Guitar II class, the last class before she can finally escape the hell of high school and return to the hell of the Campbell House. There is no respite during his class, which is ordinarily her favorite aside from French. Near her instrument is an open note asking for oral sex. The crude, pathetic author writes that as a "Nazi whore" KJ must be an expert. Mr. Van Tassel notices when she reads the note and demands to see it. KJ obeys and then stares into his green eyes as he reads the vile message. When he's finished, he crumbles the note and walks away. At the end of class Mr. Van Tassel makes KJ stay late.

"What was that all about?" he asks, "Did you write that filth?"

"No," she says, "It was beside my axe."

She wants to say "Sure, I wrote a vulgar note to myself, asking for a blow job."

"You know, KJ," he says, "if you got help, and maybe changed your archaic opinions, you might not get notes like that."

The most depressing thing is that he actually believes he's helping her.

"May I leave?" she asks.

He waves his hand and starts collecting his bag and coat.

Outside, Gene and Erica are waiting. Erica is in her traditional spot behind the wheel.

"What took so long?" Erica asks before KJ can close the door, "Are you in trouble again?"

"No," KJ says.

She has no desire to fight right now. She'd like to take off and never return. She knows that she has to endure, but knowing is one thing. Actually living with the oppression and despair is becoming more and more difficult for the young white rebel. There's just too much pain from too many places.

KJ doesn't say a word to anyone during the trip to the Campbell House, nor does she speak as the hour of her meeting with Anna approaches. It's cold out but she finds the porch more comfortable than the warm house. The weekend should be peaceful. Stephanie won't be over this Saturday. Instead, she'll come next Friday. It's typical for her to announce a change in plans a day in advance of fulfilling them, if not the same morning.

As six o'clock nears, KJ goes to her room to get what money she thinks she might be able to spare. While there, she has a premonition and checks the slots in the wooden paneling. She recoils in horror when she finds that the space behind is empty. Gone are her copy of *Red Rock*, printed over three month's time from a .pdf file she prayed wouldn't disappear from the hard drive. Gone, too, is her copy of *Eastern Wildflowers*, an innocuous field guide whose disappearance is an act of sheer malevolence. It's another heavy blow. The sum of today is too great for her to stave off her emotions. KJ sits on the floor. Shielded by her bed, she weeps.

Ten minutes later Gene yells for her. It's time to leave. She's resolved to jump out of the vehicle and run if he discovers that Kaminski's is closed. She doesn't look at him as she descends the stairs and jogs to the car. She doesn't want either of them to see she's been crying.

Gene hesitates near Kaminski's garage. KJ hops out and says she'll be back later. She's surprised her parents haven't tried to stop her Friday outings. She doesn't realize they're serious about sending her to a boarding school or boot camp. Two schools, one in Virginia and one in Massachusetts, have already refused to take her.

Gene pulls out. The dusk-to-dawn lights along the garage entrance help her escape this time. It probably won't work again. KJ needs to find a real job, soon, or they'll deny her this one small chance for like-minded companionship.

The two long hours in the café near Kaminski's are a time of contemplation and sorrow. Her tiny library is gone and her money is very nearly so. Fortunately, the café owner will allow her to stay for hours and she only has to buy one small cup of coffee. She sits and stares at the empty

cup. She removes her toboggan and then puts it on again. KJ realizes that the violence directed against her at school is escalating. The only boy who might have stood with her is just a memory. Teachers will not help her; no one will, not even her mother and father. She does not weep but the pain is hollow and relentless.

At a quarter till eight KJ leaves the café for the parking lot of Kamin-ski's. The old Dodge tow truck is still there. KJ knows where the key is hidden and she unlocks the door and climbs inside. It will provide a little shelter until Anna arrives. Ten minutes later, KJ jumps from the cab when a white Chevrolet pickup pulls up to the curb. She realizes in an instant that Anna is at the wheel. The fair-skinned, redheaded beauty is unmistakable. Anna reaches over and opens the passenger door for KJ, who greets her would-be friend and climbs inside. She looks down and tries not to show that she's upset. Anna can tell right away. Anna expected KJ to be less than happy, but the despair she glimpses on KJ's face troubles her.

"Hey, how you been, KJ?" she asks.

"Alright," KJ says.

She shrugs.

Anna isn't sure how to proceed. She doesn't want to burn the opportunity to reach KJ, to show her she's not alone, yet this could cut both ways. If she talks about something frivolous, KJ may suppress whatever is troubling her exactly when she needs to open up to Anna. She could be in real danger. Or KJ may interpret Anna's frivolity as a lack of interest. Such a tactic could drive KJ further into the shadows and away from Anna and her dearest friends. Anna decides that it's better to be open.

"You sure?" Anna asks. KJ doesn't respond. "I don't want to piss you off, I'm only asking because I know it's hard. If I were to guess, I bet you've been through a lot more than I have."

The roadway is clear and Anna begins the drive toward Diamond Crossing. KJ is still silent.

"Hey, I'm sorry," Anna says, "I wasn't trying to be nosy."

"No!" KJ says, breaking out of her silence with energy, "No, I'm not offended." Her voice is rife with emotion. She was trying not to break down. "It's just...it's so fucking hard."

Anna feels some of KJ's pain. She wants to tell her to come with her; to never return to the hell she's been living. She cannot do that right now. KJ has to come to that decision on her own. Besides, there are others who would be at risk should KJ flee the Campbell House, and they would need to know everything about the situation.

"You're not alone, KJ," Anna says, "Honest-to-God, you're not."

Anna stops at a red light and looks over at KJ. The streetlight illuminates her in a soft glow. Anna looks at KJ's gloves and her *Cruel Hand* hoodie.

"It must seem like you are, but you're not," Anna says.

KJ nods.

"Hold on to my number, KJ," Anna says, "Make sure you don't lose it since I can't get a hold of you any other way."

"I will," KJ says.

She already has the number memorized, in case the little paper joins her library in oblivion.

"Let me know if you need something, OK?" Anna asks, "Not just a ride, OK?"

"I will," KJ whispers.

She's nervous and hurt and trying not to cry.

Anna turns on her iPod. It's hooked up through an auxiliary jack to the truck's stereo.

"I have some *Chironex* songs on this," Anna says, "They're going to play some new stuff tonight. I've already heard one of the new songs."

"How?" KJ asks.

"My friend knows David Hill, remember?" Anna says and smiles.

"Oh yeah," KJ says, "Can you get their songs on iTunes?"

"No," Anna says, "But I can get mp3's for you if you want. You could borrow my flash drive."

"I wish I could," KJ says, "My parents won't let me use the computer."

I can't imagine what you go through, Anna thinks.

"I'll work something out," Anna says.

"You've done enough," KJ says.

"I'll see what I can do," Anna says.

"Rainelle" begins to play over the speakers.

KJ is amazed to hear a dozen or so *Chironex* songs during the course of the trip to Diamond Crossing. There are six she's never heard before. It soothes her troubled mind, which is the exact effect Anna hoped for. Anna glances over and sees KJ close her eyes and take a deep breath, and then she looks over at Anna. Anna's sure that poor KJ doesn't quite know what to make of all this.

During a pause in the music Anna continues their conversation.

"My father taught me the truth about race," Anna says, "He taught me everything he could and then he let me see for myself. He was right. He was my gift, you know? I've been blessed to have such a good man for a

father. He's been a light for me, so I never fell into darkness. Our men are shamed and degraded and I don't think I need to tell you it's a preparation for genocide. You want to think it can't be true, and then you see that everything is about mixing us out of existence and flooding white countries with non-whites. It's been going on for a while, actually."

"Yeah," KJ says, "I see it, too. It's hard to live and take shit like that. We don't do a fucking thing about it. We don't even talk about what's happening to our race."

Anna wants to tell her that she has no intention of being quiet. Prudence keeps her from doing so.

"We need to stand with our men," Anna says, "The real men, I mean. Trust me, I know you haven't seen too many, but they're out there. If we stand beside them rather than tear them down, more will stand up. Thank God for the ones who stand up anyway. If we knew how much that means, we'd join them right now."

"I would," KJ says.

Anna is silent for a moment.

"I thought so, KJ," Anna says, "We haven't talked much, but I don't doubt you." She continues when KJ doesn't respond. "You ought to hook up with us. Really."

She glances at KJ and then back at the road.

"Anna," KJ says, "I don't doubt the truth and I don't doubt who I am, or that my white skin helps make me who I am. I just...It hurts so fucking bad, and when I get out of this truck tonight it's back to loneliness and that goddamned asshole who writes on my locker, and the niggers at school who are trying to get me into a fight. Then there are the whites who just watch. They'd let them hurt me. Once there was a guy who had courage, but just like everything good in my fucking life, he went away. I wish..." KJ sighs and looks down. "I'd leave tonight if I could. I'd go somewhere, anywhere, but they'd send the police after me and whoever helped me would end up in big fucking trouble. I'd end up hurting the people who tried to help me."

KJ is full of emotion, though she does not weep.

Anna would love to tell her to flee. She knows KJ is right. This will have to come in stages, if KJ is to escape. She hopes KJ can hold out that long.

"I'm not exaggerating or being premature," Anna says, "but you mean a lot, you know? Maybe more than you realize. God, I want to tell you to hold on, but how can I say that? I can't imagine what it must be like."

KJ does not speak. The hum of the tires is the only sound. She figures Anna's done some research on her, trying to find out if she's legitimate or an antifa posing as a white rebel in order to bring Anna and her friends to ruin. She hopes that Anna has been vigilant.

"I'll pray for you, KJ," Anna says.

"Thank you," KJ says.

She does not weep, though tears have begun to flow down her face.

The lights of Mount Pleasant pass by. Snow shrouds the yards and woods in frozen beauty. Tonight is cold; the stars are clear in the heavens.

"I don't know how the crowd's gonna react to the new songs, one of them in particular," Anna says, "I've only heard it once."

KJ wipes her face. In spite of the recent tears, she is stunning to behold. She's just become a woman and is already a spectacular beauty. The blend of femininity and strength is perfection, and her "tom-boy" exterior compliments her soft features and thick, long hair. KJ does not wear makeup and has not for years. Its lack serves to emphasize rather than degrade her extreme natural beauty. It is a haunting beauty, to be sure.

"I'll show them how much I appreciate the new songs," KJ says.

Anna smiles and nods. She watches the road. She's already seen two deer coming up to the highway.

Try to hold on, KJ, Anna thinks, You'll be free someday. I know you aren't one of the sheep. OK, Anna, let her in peace for a while.

The usual fans are at Diamond Crossing. Crowds for the hardcore performances are often smaller but include some of the most dedicated and knowledgeable of music aficionados. As the two young women walk to the entrance, KJ asks if the guy with glasses who's been at each previous performance will be there tonight.

"No," Anna says, "He couldn't make it. His name's Rian. I imagine you'll get a chance to meet him soon."

KJ wonders if he's Anna's boyfriend. He looks to be in his late teens or early twenty's. The thought makes her long for someone to confide in, someone of the opposite sex; someone who will embrace her when the oppression takes its toll and despair begins to rear its ugly head. She longs for some worthy man to share his strength and body with her, and her with him.

A sight at the entrance of the club makes both ladies stop in their tracks. In addition to the usual security personnel at the door, there is a metal detector. Someone must have threatened the brave young men of the band. The folks at Diamond Crossing must judge the threat serious enough for such measures.

KJ thinks of the knife in her boot. She feels a pang of anxiety.

"Anna," she says, "Anna, wait!"

"What's wrong?" Anna asks.

"I have a knife in my boot," KJ says, "It's for self-defense."

KJ does not want her new acquaintance or any of the staff at Diamond to think she's the one who threatened the band, or that she's come to the concert to cause trouble.

"It's cool," Anna says.

Unbeknownst to KJ, Anna has a .45 caliber automatic pistol under her shirt. "Just come with me."

The two approach one of the men at the metal detector.

"Hi, Anna," says the younger of the two.

He's wiry and athletic and his face is handsome.

"Hi, Mason," Anna says, "Hey, could we use the side entrance?"

Mason looks at KJ. He smiles and nods. KJ guesses that a guy like him would have destroyed Duane Carter had such a man been present on the day of the assault.

"Thanks, Mason," Anna says. She thinks for a moment. "I owe you one."

"Don't mention it, babe," Mason says.

Anna looks at KJ and smiles. KJ feels like weeping again, though this time it's not from sadness or despair. Anna leads KJ to the side entrance, followed by Mason. He unlocks the vault-like doors and the two go inside.

"Have fun, kids," Mason says.

"Hey, you're only nineteen, you know!" Anna says.

Mason shuts the door.

Anna guides KJ through a storage room full of equipment and instruments. They proceed through a hallway and into the open area nearest the stage. Tonight there are two extra security guards near the exits. The threat must be very real. KJ is glad she could keep the knife. It's not much, but she's willing to use it should the enemy make his presence known.

"It's fucking bullshit that these guys can't play without some cock-sucker threatening them," KJ says to Anna.

"You realize that, huh?" Anna says, "Good. It's how shit is. We're not allowed to be proud of who we are. Shit, we can't even love ourselves for being white."

"If some asshole tries..." KJ says.

Anna touches her lips to shush KJ, and the wounded rebel falls silent.

"They won't," Anna says, "Not here, and not tonight."

KJ sighs. A door to the right opens and David Hill climbs up on the stage. He approaches the microphone.

"Some motherfuckers don't like what we have to say," David says, "They think their threats and dumb-ass words will shut us up. Guess what?"

The band jumps into the first song. "Rules of Engagement" is the title. It is the essence of brutality and rage personified in one of the most impressive hardcore songs KJ has ever heard. Hill tells the story of a man whose fiancée has been rape by a black thug. The media won't describe the perpetrator's race; neither will the police. The police manage to capture the rapist, only after an altercation in which he swings a knife at them. They do not shoot him even when he tries to escape. While he's out on bail, the raped girl's lover finds and kills the rapist. The police arrive and kill the white avenger when he reaches inside his jacket. There, instead of a weapon, is a picture of his beloved.

There is silence when the song ends. A portion of the crowd erupts into cheers and applause. KJ is among the first to cheer. The exhilaration is too great for the applause to be normal. The appreciative members of the audience, silenced by fear and threats of reprisal should they dare take up for their race, applauds like none ever have at Diamond Crossing. Hill approaches the microphone and thanks those who voiced their approval. He looks into their eyes. His tone is humble and emotional. It does nothing to minimize the raw courage he personifies.

The next song, "The Truth in Your Lie", is familiar to KJ. Always one of *Chironex*'s main themes, race takes center stage tonight. One thing is very clear; the members of the band will not apologize or retreat in the face of threats. It is a dangerous path. Others have paid the price for daring to challenge the anti-white American religion. Hill knows this. He and his mates may suffer the same fate. The alternative to rising and resisting is acceptance. The young men of *Chironex* are resisting tonight, in the best way they can.

They are not alone. KJ is floundering in a sea of pain and despair, and her life certainly hangs in the balance, but one thing she has already resolved: Kaylee Jane Campbell will not betray her kin to an enemy that would silence her voice and condemn her children to misery and eventual extinction. The establishment's praise and false promises are nothing but lies, and the monies they offer are the silver coins of Judas.

KJ knows that she needs to be strong. She doesn't know what the next test will be, but she will try to endure. She does not know what to do, but she knows that she must do something, anything, rather than remain-

ing silent like the majority of her white brothers and sisters. The end of the first intermission brings *Chironex* back to the stage and the music eases KJ's troubled mind. She does not fear punishment or the loss of popularity that comes with honesty and courage. She fears that she might fail when she must make a stand.

The show ends late in the night. There is not a word shared among those who hear the lyrics and feel the music in their souls. There is no need. The songs have spoken for them. As much as KJ would love to converse with Anna, and Anna with KJ, neither utters a sound except for several rounds of boisterous cheering. Anna feels the lifting of an oppressive burden as Hill cries out against the forces that weigh against them, and especially against their future children. For KJ, who bears an even greater burden, the feeling is extraordinary.

KJ dons her knitted hat as does Anna, who puts on a pair of gloves before facing the night air. KJ has worn hers the entire time, as usual. The two young women exit through the main doors. The metal detector beeps for both, but Mason waves them through. The sky is clear and the night is frigid. It is a beautiful starry sky that compliments their exhilaration.

"I wish I could hold on to this vibe," KJ says as the two pull out of the parking lot.

"So do I," Anna says.

KJ is surprised at first. Then she realizes it's foolish to be surprised. Being conscious of reality and the truths that they face as whites must weigh heavily on Anna, and harsh reality will fall just as hard on her and her family. She may not be alone, but Anna, too, is vulnerable to the attacks of cowards and fanatical anti-whites.

The two ladies enjoy a moment of blissful silence. It cannot last for long. Both yearn to do more than shake their heads and retreat into an iPod when they hear of the latest outrage or menace. They long to do more for their children, whose plight will be all the more perilous should neither woman dare to lift a finger in their defense.

"Where do we go from here?" KJ asks. "I can't just be a teenager anymore. They killed that option when they started punishing anyone who disagrees with them, and their anti-white religion."

KJ looks at Anna and sees her nodding.

"If you want to be a normal teenager you have to approve of your own denigration," KJ says, "You approve of our death, really. Isn't that what it's all about? Our fucking death?"

Anna is quiet for a little while. KJ sighs hard. She thinks about what she's just said.

Maybe she was enjoying the feeling, and I just harshed it for her. Good job, dumbass.

In truth, Anna was thinking about what KJ had said. It brings her joy to know that KJ thinks about these forbidden subjects, though the joy is bittersweet.

"I don't know what to do, KJ," Anna says, "I wish I could tell you."

Anna glances at KJ for as long as she feels it safe to do so. The long, deserted highway gives her a chance and she slows down for the moment.

"I can't promise anything," Anna says, "but I was thinking. Do you want a job?"

"Yes!" KJ says, "Fuck yes!"

The thought almost brings her to tears - tears of hard-won and rarely-felt happiness.

"Settle down, KJ!" Anna says, "I can't promise anything. I wish I could, honest-to-God I wish I could. I'll try, OK? There's a place near Le-mont Furnace. I'll see if they're interested, OK?"

"I'd love to," KJ says, "I won't blow it off, I promise, but I don't have a fucking car! My parents never helped me obtain a license. Shit."

KJ runs her hand over her mane of hair. Her frustration is audible.

Anna wants to tell her that her friends will take care of that. She wants to tell KJ about the job. She cannot; for one, she doesn't want to get KJ's hopes up in case Bill Donnelly or the others refuse. Such a major disappointment could hurt KJ just enough to destroy her.

"Don't worry about it right now," Anna says, "First, let's see if they're interested."

"Do you need anything," KJ asks, "Like, a resume or something?"

"No," Anna says, "I'll tell them a little about you. Like you're strong and willing to work. You know. If they're interested they'll set up a meeting."

"That would be so fucking awesome," KJ says.

She dares to dream.

You don't know how awesome, Anna thinks.

Anna prays to herself that Bill will agree to the offer. She hopes KJ can resist in the meantime. She hopes she hasn't hurt KJ more in the long run by enticing her. Anna believes it's better to give her a little hope. She doesn't plan on deceiving Bill. Before she speaks to Bill, Anna will talk to her dad first, and then Johnny Bowen. She could use some good advice before she presents the scenario to Bill Donnelly.

Anna changes the subject.

"Are you from around here, KJ?" Anna asks, "Originally, I mean?"

"Actually, I was born in Kirkland, Washington," KJ says, "My dad taught at a school in Seattle, and we moved here when I was ten years old."

Anna is silent. KJ looks at her and Anna glances quickly into KJ's eyes. Earlier, during the intermission when the lights came on in the concert venue, she could see that KJ's eyes matched her own in their blue color and light hue.

"I like it there," KJ says, "A part of me wishes we'd never moved. It still does. But I wouldn't exchange my life for someone else's. I probably wouldn't know all this shit, and it would have been really easy to give in to the lies. I'd probably be a happy little traitor right now."

Anna wants to tell her it wouldn't be that way. She knows the deceit and propaganda that targets white females is even fiercer than that arrayed against white males. It's not as brutal, or as condescending, but it's more evil. It's meant to turn them against their natural lovers and partners, and to lead them into barren lives of anger and anguish. She knows that KJ is probably right. Anna feels a little despair over this revelation; she can't imagine the weight of KJ's cross on her soul.

"Are you from around here?" KJ asks.

"Me? Yeah," Anna says, "Lifetime PA girl, lifetime Pens fan."

"I like the highlands and forests," KJ says, "My parents considered moving to California before my mother's boss came to Pennsylvania. I don't think I would have liked SoCal. Now I know I would have hated it."

"So would I," Anna says, "Too much sun for me, anyway. I'd be a big fucking freckle."

"Yeah, me too," KJ says. She gets a wicked little smile. It's the first time that's happened in a while. "White is much more beautiful," KJ says, "Who the fuck wants wrinkles and burned-up skin?"

"Or cancer," Anna says.

Anna is silent for a moment. KJ perceives the pause to be significant and leaves her in peace.

"You know, I like the hills, too," Anna says, breaking her own silence, "There's a guy I know who you really ought to talk to."

She wants to tell KJ about Johnny Bowen. He loves the woods and mountains and would be the perfect companion for KJ. His temperament and resilience are an ideal match for her. She doesn't elaborate, not before she talks to Bill.

"Would it be alright if I ask you a personal question?" KJ says, "I was wondering about that guy who was with you at Diamond." She reaches

over and touches Anna's arm. "I know it's none of my business. I'm not trying..."

"Go on, KJ," Anna says, "It's cool. There's nothing wrong with asking."

"Rian's his name," KJ says, "if I'm not mistaken. Is he your boyfriend or something?"

"No," Anna says, "He's a good friend, but no, he's spoken for anyway. I imagine you'll get to know him. I don't have a boyfriend right now."

"Neither do I," KJ says, "It doesn't look good for the future, either."

KJ laughs. It's a morbid laugh, and full of pain.

Anna doesn't laugh.

"KJ, I know you're alone when you go back home," Anna says, "But you don't have to stay lonely. Hold on to who you are. Don't give up. I promise you, if you resist all the shit they throw at you, you will not die alone."

"Even if I do," KJ says, "I'll still be 'Rebel Jane.'" She manages a very brief smile. "I hope you're right, though. I never meant to imply it's easy for you. I hope I didn't give that impression. I can imagine that you to face the same shit that I do."

"You go through a lot worse," Anna says, "I have arms to hold me when I'm fucked up by the world. Those arms are my little heaven."

Anna glances at KJ again.

"I'm totally impressed that you've come this far, KJ," Anna says, "We've really just met and I'm already awed by your strength. I can't imagine what other gifts you have."

KJ is thunderstruck.

"What I have?" she says.

Anna replies before KJ's intense despair can rise and entice her to belittle herself.

Though shy, it's an unnatural thing for KJ Campbell to be self-deprecating. Her nature is honest and kind, and she is neither a braggart nor a self-deprecating fool, but despair can wreak havoc on one's better judgment. Anna doesn't risk that happening.

"Yeah, what you have to offer," Anna says, "Maybe you'll be the most surprised to see how valuable you are."

KJ is silent. She does love herself, in spite of those anti-white traitors who constantly attack her with degrading names and disparaging comments. Her beauty fuels their hateful fire. They desire her body and many of them lust for her. Because she is inaccessible to such weaklings, they savage her all the more. If she does not love *what* she is, if she does not accept that her white skin is not an anomaly of pigmentation but rather an

integral part of her total being, how can she truly love *who* she is? How could she love herself if she refuses to love the white men and white women and white babies that are her living race and who compliment and complete one another? How can she love herself if she denies her whiteness?

KJ desires to love a man with the same passion that she loves life and herself; more, in fact. Her enemy is not content to simply genocide her race; he must torment them and destroy any chance they might have for true happiness. He creates hatred between white men and white women, whose natural, biological and spiritual urge is to love one another more than life itself. He seeks to kill not only their bodies, but their love as well. The anti-white wants her and her brothers to disappear from the Earth, but not before they hate life and each other. How can a passionate rebel not fight such repulsive evil?

"I came close to beating the shit out of a white girl last week," KJ says.

"How come?" Anna asks, "What did she do?"

"She made some comment about white guys' dicks being small," KJ says, "She said it to piss me off, but I know a few guys heard it. She knows they won't do a fucking thing to her."

"What did you do?" Anna asks.

"I shoved her against the wall," KJ says, "and I got into her face, just to scare the fuck out of her and her slutty friends."

"Good!" Anna says.

Her smile turns into a boisterous laugh.

"You know something, KJ?" Anna says, "Right now I'm suspended from school. Two more days, in fact. I got into a fight with a girl who said us 'gingers' are going extinct. She made fun of us, and said the sooner the better, so I tore her up."

KJ looks at Anna's arms. In her tight long-sleeve t-shirt, her arms are obviously impressive. She has a swimmer's strength and beautiful build. Her power must be very close to KJ's.

"Your father let you go to the concert?" KJ asks.

Anna nods.

"He knows the score," Anna says, "He won't punish me for doing what's right."

"My parents would have sent me to boot camp," KJ says, "or worse. They've already threatened to send me to that fucking George School. Otherwise, I'd have fucked up Kim Garrison for her anti-white fucking comment."

"You did what you could," Anna says, "And that's enough for now. You know what you can do right now, and hey, you did something. I bet that bitch was terrified!"

KJ smiles and nods. The smile doesn't last.

"I imagine they'll send me to boarding school if one of them will accept me," KJ says, "They might even send me to a goddamned boot camp. My mom threatens me with that every once in a while."

Anna shakes her head once and frowns. She doesn't quite know what to say.

"It's been getting worse at school," KJ says, "One of the niggers fucked with me today, and I couldn't do anything about it. If I had, at the very least I wouldn't be able to stay out on Fridays, probably not until I'm eighteen or I run away. I'd imagine they'd have sent me away if I fought her."

"Keep my number, OK?" Anna says, "Wherever you go, we're just a phone call away. I'd give you an email or messenger address, but I know you can't use it, so call me if you think they're going to send you where you don't want to go." Anna pauses for a moment. "And if you need help, please call me. Please...Don't let them hurt you, OK?"

"Alright, Anna," KJ says.

KJ rubs her right bicep with her gloved left hand. She could have used those muscles today, but oppression denied her.

"What is our future?" KJ asks, "Will other white people keep sleeping while we try to find a lover or a friend, and end up dying alone because we won't sell out? Do we make a stand and get killed, or do we just die alone in despair? Is that it? Is that how our revolution ends?"

"I don't know," Anna says, "I won't lie to you. At some point we have to stop being afraid of the lies and hate. I'm not going to live in despair. We might as well make a stand before that happens, you know?"

KJ looks out the side window. Then she looks down. Her body is strong and beautiful. She is in perfect health. She could be very useful to a white resistance movement, should such a thing ever exist.

"I don't know what's going to happen," Anna says, "But I do know that I'm not one of them. When you wake up, you see all the lies and the bad shit around you, and I know it's really, really hard. But you have to remember, they can't poison you anymore unless you allow it."

"I'm so glad I met you," KJ says, "I swear to God, I'm not going to fucking quit caring about the future. What's the point of living if nothing matters or lasts forever? It does matter. It fucking matters more than anything. Everything is getting worse and worse, and we can't even talk about

it without going through fucking hell. I can't even say I'm worried about the future of white children without being called racist and living in fear of violence. We can't even demand peace for our children. What mother wouldn't want peace for her baby? For fuck's sake, who the fuck wouldn't want that?"

Anna can feel KJ's despair. She also feels her defiance.

"I'm so happy I met you, too, KJ," Anna says, "You're so right. It does matter, and it is getting worse. We're gonna have to believe it won't be like this forever. At least we don't have to accept that it'll be like this. We don't have to die like sheep." She glances at KJ. "We can be wolves, you know."

"I'd fight if I knew how," KJ says.

KJ has suffered, and it feels so good to confide in someone. She's taking an enormous risk talking like this and she knows it. But, honestly, KJ accepts the risk. She feels like she has nothing left to lose anyway. She knows there's a chance Anna is an antifa posing as an ally, and that she would betray KJ if that were the case. But if there is truly no one left who sympathizes with the plight of her race, KJ would rather be betrayed and face the enemy alone than live a long, artificial life and die in silence.

"I see little white kids," KJ says, "and it scares the fuck out of me when I realize what they'll go through. Their children may not even be born. I'll fight for them. I threw off the anesthesia that school and the American elites give to us white girls. They build cages for us, so that we can live comfortably and peacefully as long as we're content to live in a fucking cage and accept the eventual extinction of our race. When businesses saw that they could make money betraying white workers and white families, they joined up with the motherfuckers who hate us and want us to die. We can have money and be popular, fuck, even famous, as long as we're willing to follow the rules of the anti-white religion. But just let one beautiful white girl become a real fucking rebel, and love her race and her brothers, then they're going to fucking tear into her." KJ sighs. "I want a family someday, I really fucking do. It hurts so fucking bad to think that I won't. I just want my white baby to be happy, and laugh, and love his mommy and daddy. And I want him to love who he is. I don't want him to hate his skin or his brothers. Fuck this. Fuck this goddamned world that wants my baby to die."

It's Anna's turn to feel like crying. Here is a girl, just like Anna, who faces the darkness of an establishment that would attempt to destroy any young, beautiful white woman who rises against their hateful lies. And yet, she is more concerned with the fate of those who shall come later, and is willing to make great sacrifices to ensure their survival.

Anna steers the painful conversation back to things practical - and necessary.

"KJ, don't fight a pack of them, OK?" Anna says, "I know you're strong. I see those arms and, shit, I'm impressed. But they won't fight you unless they're sure they can win. They'll jump you in numbers, and please, run from them, try to escape. Make pursuit costly but for God's sake don't get caught by them. You're not running from the fight, you're living to fight again when you can. Please don't let them catch you. If they try, call me, OK? Let me know as soon as you can. We will help you."

"Alright," KJ says, "Thank you Anna."

Anna reaches over and grasps KJ's left hand.

"We're not their tools anymore," Anna says, "They can't make us betray our brothers and sisters or our children."

KJ feels new tears begin to creep down her flawless white face. These tears are not born of pain and despair, but of defiance. She looks out the side window again. The lights of Uniontown glow a short distance away. Soon she'll have to part ways with Anna. Soon she'll be alone again, among those who belittle her epiphanies and despise her resistance. She scours her mind for a refuge but finds none. She'll just have to hold on to her courage and face them head-on.

KJ recovers quickly.

"Will you be heading to Diamond next Friday?" KJ asks.

"No," Anna says, "Not next week or the week after. They're closed for Christmas." Predicting KJ's inevitable disappointment, Anna adds, "If you want to hang out, let me know. I can find time, so call whenever you feel like talking or getting together, OK? If you can't get hold of me, leave a message and your Trac Phone number and I'll get back with you as soon as I possibly can. I mean that. Don't worry about being a pain in the ass. It doesn't have to be a matter of life or death. Call me if you just want to talk, OK?"

"Thank you, Anna," KJ says.

Anna pulls up to the Campbell House.

"Take care of yourself, KJ," Anna says, "Keep in touch."

"I will," KJ says, "Thank you so much."

"Hold on to who you are," Anna says, "I can tell you're really strong."

She can't think of anything else to say at the moment.

KJ exits the truck. She closes the door and then waves goodbye, forcing a little smile so that Anna doesn't feel any pity for her. Anna sees through it, but smiles back and waves. The lights of the white pickup disappear down Kimberly Drive.

On Sunday evening, Anna Murphy sits in the kitchen of the Murphy Home. She's made some tea and is reading her algebra book. Snowmen adorn the tablecloth and a little bowl of oranges sits in the center of the kitchen table. Anna's hair is back in a thick ponytail. Soon it will come down and she'll change from jeans and a blouse to her nightclothes. For now, she looks at equations, though she cannot concentrate on them. She'll try again tomorrow. Laurel Highlands will allow her to return to school on Tuesday. At least the tea is good.

Gary Murphy enters the kitchen. He looks at the counter.

"Make sure you get bread tomorrow," he says. He opens the refrigerator. "Eggs, too. Try to get some that are dated better."

"OK, dad," she says. She looks up at him. "Dad, sit down, OK?"

Gary pours some tea and takes a seat.

"What's on your mind?" he asks.

"When I was driving home from Diamond last night," Anna says, "I asked KJ if she could use a job." Anna shakes her head and laughs. "You should have seen her, dad. She was so excited!"

"Do you know somebody who'd hire her?" he asks.

He knows who she's thinking about.

"Bill?" she says, her eyebrows raised and a nervous smile on her face.

Gary crosses his arms.

"Tell me you didn't promise her," he says.

"No," she says, "I didn't promise. I wouldn't do that to her. I told her that I couldn't promise." "Anna," he says, "Do you remember what I told you about saving someone?"

"You cannot save someone," Anna repeats his old lecture, "You can only help them save themselves."

"You can only help someone save themselves, honey," Gary says.

Anna looks a little dejected.

"So let's help KJ save herself," he says.

When Anna looks up in surprise Gary winks at her.

"Thank you so much, dad!" Anna says.

She jumps up and hugs him.

"Remember, Anna," he says, "It's gonna be Bill's decision whether he hires her or not. And if KJ doesn't want to save herself, we can't help her. I don't want to see you get too depressed if she gives up."

"I know, dad," Anna says as she returns to her seat.

"I'll call Bill tomorrow," Gary says, "Tell me everything you know about her. Bill's gonna need to know so he can make the right decision."

Anna smiles. Gary takes her hand on the tabletop.

"I'm proud of you, Red," he says, "You know when to fight and when to be kind. You have a good heart like your mother, and you always make me proud."

Anna rises and walks over to him. She waits for him to sip his tea before hugging him again.

"Don't forget the bread tomorrow," he says as she kisses his head.

Her right arm is over his eye, and he starts to laugh.

Monday is cold and the sky is bereft of cloud or snowflake. KJ's locker is glued again and another hateful slogan is scrawled on the door. Mr. Andrews comes by and opens the locker. He knows the administration could change her locker location or allow her to keep her possessions in the office. There are security cameras in as many locations as possible. Weems probably knows the identity of the perpetrator. Before continuing this train of thought to its logical conclusion, Mr. Andrews thinks about the time he has left until retirement.

That afternoon KJ lifts weights in her room. Normally she uses the set downstairs, which includes a barbell and adjustable weights. Upstairs she has a few dumbbells, including 10, 20 and 25 pound pieces. She puts in her ear buds and further strengthens her biceps while the music of *Combatwoundedveteran* plays from her iPod. Her history book sits on the dresser. She has yet to open it this year.

KJ's locker is unmolested on Tuesday. The day goes no better than the last, however. Mr. Dagostino, KJ's European History teacher, has a surprise for the class. Dagostino will force the students to watch the film *Schindler's List*. It is standard procedure to humiliate white children for events that none of them had anything to do with. That's not the only reason Dagostino is showing the film. He considers KJ to be a "Nazi" - a word which he and most Americans do not understand. Before starting the film, he prepares the students for the lesson in degradation.

"Today we're going to watch a historical film about the Holocaust," he says. Dagostino glances at each white face, pausing at the beautiful face of KJ Campbell. "There will be a great deal of images that you'll find disturbing. Remember, these atrocities are real." He looks back at KJ. "Keep that in mind when you see a group being scapegoated because of their race or creed. It's a few short steps to genocide and gas chambers."

Most of the students know why he stares at KJ. His facial expression is obvious enough for the less astute among them. She loves her race, and accepts it as part of her identity. She believes that her people should be left in peace. She believes that they are not the same as other races.

She is rebelling against those in power who would force her to betray her kin; to betray the men who would fight for her and the beautiful family she wishes to have someday. For that she's being scapegoated; blamed for crimes - real and imaginary - that she and her people never committed. Those doing the blaming have already begun moving her race a "few short steps."

The film runs its long, grueling course. When the masterpiece of propaganda comes to its emotional end, more than a few white students are in tears. KJ is not one of them. She sits with the same emotionless look on her face that she normally carries in the halls and classrooms of Uniontown High. Leon Dagostino manages to suppress his anger; less so his tongue. He rises to his feet from the first row of chairs. He's barely taller than KJ and has long suffered an inferiority complex from his severe lack of height. He's not an ugly man, but neither is he comely. His hair is thick and black and its style resembles a "bowl cut." If the thought wouldn't drive him to suicide, he could play the central role in a History Channel documentary about Adolf Hitler. He is furious that KJ's blue eyes are not wet with tears of shame. He'll try to make them wet with tears of embarrassment.

"Tell me, Miss Campbell," Dagostino says, "did you get anything from this film?"

KJ is quiet for a moment. She wants to antagonize him. There is little reason left to resist the temptation. Why resist conflict when your enemies won't rest until you and your race disappears from the Earth? Anna won't be going to Diamond this Friday anyway. KJ decides to risk Erica's wrath.

"Yeah, I did," she says.

Mr. Dagostino is afraid to ask. His arrogance gets the best of him and he starts to believe he's intimidated her into towing the official line.

"Tell us, then," he says.

"I've learned that Spielberg wants me to hate my people because a few hundred thousand Jews died of typhus and starvation," she says.

There's no emotion in her voice.

"Six million Jews, Kaylee," he says, "And they were gassed, in case you didn't notice."

"How many years in prison?" KJ asks.

"What's that supposed to mean?" he asks.

His face is a little flush.

"Apparently I made a mistake with the number," KJ says, "How many years of prison should I receive?"

"You don't get prison for being ignorant," Dagostino says.

"You get rewarded, I know," KJ says, "Anyway, you can do time in Europe for questioning the official story. Claim there weren't six million; claim there were five, or four, or two. You'll go to prison regardless of your evidence. But the last time I checked, they still rewarded ignorance."

"Uh-huh," he says, his arms folded, "Fascinating. Unfortunately, we in the United States are more lenient toward hate speech. But that's changing. Have you looked into that, Frau Campbell?"

"I don't care what you call me," she says.

"It's always a pleasure talking to you, Miss Campbell," he says.

"Have you ever noticed how Jews are 100% innocent, and we're always 100% guilty?" she asks, "Strange, isn't it? I'd say they suffer from a lack of introspection, wouldn't you?"

"Moving on," Dagostino says.

"You said it's a pleasure to talk to me," she says.

"My mistake," he says.

Under the desk her gloved right hand makes a fist. Between her legs, unseen by Dagostino, she gives him the finger.

The bell rings for the change to the fourth and final class of the day. It's one of KJ's favorites, Guitar, but today she is not in the mood to spend another second in the building.

That evening, Leon Dagostino calls Gene Campbell at home. Before KJ goes to bed that night, she finds out she'll not be allowed to stay out late for at least two weeks. She figures they'll double their efforts to ship her off to a school for troubled teens. She's resolved to run away if they do.

The locker saboteur must have heard about KJ's exchange with Dagostino. Perhaps he or she is in the class. On Wednesday morning, KJ's locker dial is glued. This time the locker door is battered and the vents pressed inward. There is cola dumped through the vents. Across the front of the door are the words "Nazi whore," huge and black. On this occasion Mr. Andrews doesn't joke with her. He sighs and gets to work. His lined face is serious and he opens his mouth like he wishes to tell her something. He does not speak. When he's done with the locker he leaves. He turns back once to look at her. She's not watching. He walks away. Just a few more years and he can try to forget the shit he has to swallow.

KJ tries to push the incident out of her mind. She finds it impossible. Perhaps sheer boredom will make it easier for KJ to tolerate the intolerable. She verifies that she put her ear buds and iPod in her backpack before heading to Dagostino's class. Just one of the advantages of hav-

ing long, thick hair is the ease with which she can hide them when they're in use.

When she arrives at Dagostino's classroom, KJ finds a note sitting on her seat. The handwriting is the same as the last note she found. This one is much worse. In addition to the usual request for oral sex, this one threatens her with rape. She folds it and puts it in her jeans pocket. It will be fuel for her net battle. Right now, it's another reminder that she's alone. There's Anna and her friends, but the distance to them is too great. At UHS there are the sheep, the traitors, the non-whites and KJ, the lone she-wolf.

Megan Donnelly brings a cold Guinness for each of the guests. She has one for her beloved husband as well. She knows that this will be an important meeting. Though she won't make the final decision - Bill alone will bear that responsibility - she will be present and will have a voice in the discussion. Among the inner members of the "Old Core" group, there are no secrets.

The six friends sit at a wooden table in the Donnelly's dining room. First to arrive was Johnny Bowen. He came in the white work truck and parked furthest from the door, though the lot was empty at the time. He arrived early enough to help Bill clean the rifles that Gary and Anna used this morning.

Cristian O'Toole sits to Bowen's left. Cristian has always been in excellent shape, as has his best friend Johnny Bowen, and recently he's been improving his strength. He is also expanding his knowledge. Once he was an excellent refrigeration and air conditioning repair man. Now he is learning metal fabrication and is honing his skills at arc welding.

John Boyle sits at the table opposite Bill Donnelly. Boyle has been living on a patch of property that Garret Fogarty and the others purchased in Clay County, West Virginia. Boyle's body is rock-hard and wiry, the result of life among the trees and stony hills. His resilience is as high as anyone's and his strength is much greater than his lean body might indicate.

To Boyle's left is Garret Fogarty. He looks upon Bill Donnelly as a son looks upon a father. This son is an inheritor rather than a star-struck child. He respects and loves the father, and is ready to assume his role as leader when the older man moves on to other tasks.

Megan Donnelly is next. She sits to the right of Bill. She is a member of this circle as much as any of them, and she has much to lose - perhaps more than anyone save Bill. She's already lost her son David. She knows what this is all about, though Bill's decision is a mystery to her.

The meeting begins with a discussion of plans and acquisitions, such as a new Jeep trailer purchased by Garret Fogarty. It proceeds to news

from Bill's homeland and the hope of renewed contacts and alliances back in Ireland. There is also a little small talk, and mention of another monetary contribution by Bill's son Michael. Finally, the reason Bill called the meeting becomes evident. The last topic for the day is the fate of the courageous KJ Campbell.

"I talked to Gary on Monday," Bill says, "Kaylee Jane Campbell has been coming to Diamond Crossing and she's made quite the impression on young Anna. Now, we can expect Anna to be excited about finding another young lady like herself. God bless her for it. Gary knows Anna better than anyone and he thinks we should get to know Miss Campbell. I've done some checking and there's no Facebook, no MySpace, nothing about Miss Campbell, nothing overt at least. Yesterday I called Gary and he told me the girl's parents took away all her internet access and a whole lot more. Sounds like she's in a hell of a bind. My gut instinct is to be cautious, considering the pressure she's under. My brain doesn't agree with my gut. Anna says that KJ is looking for a job. The question on my mind: Do I hire this girl to work on the homestead so we can get to know her and see if she is indeed awake, or if her racial awakening is just a rebellious phase?"

Those present know that Bill will be able to tell rather quickly. One of his duties in the IRA was recruitment. Bill looks at each of their faces. Cristian is first to speak.

"I don't think she's a mole," Cristian says, "That doesn't mean I think you should hire her. What if she's just reacting to her anti-white parents, just trying to piss them off? What if she overhears one of us, or worse yet, spies on us out of curiosity? If she's just being rebellious she'll freak and inform the police. Even if it's not likely, how can we risk all we've put together for one girl? If we could be sure she's legitimate, then I'd say let's bring her in. But how can we?"

John Boyle is the next to speak.

"None of us go around bragging or singin' songs in pubs," he says, "So what's the harm in invitin' her? I can see worrying about her seeing or hearing something, but Bill doesn't need to have her over when we meet or go shootin'. I think that's an advantage, since he'll be able to talk to her alone. She might open up more if it's just the two of them."

Bill looks at Garret, who is silent. John Bowen speaks next. He looks into Bill's eyes.

"Hire her, Bill," he says, "I know it's not a question of money, but I'll pay if you want. If she's anything like we think she is, or hope she is, I say it's worth the risk. I'll let her use my Chevy so she doesn't miss work. You

know I'll honor your decision, Bill, but if you don't hire her, I'm going to let Anna use the truck so she can keep meeting with Kaylee. That way we can intervene if she's in trouble. Anyway, Bill, either hire her, or let me know the details so that I can get in touch with her. She needs a refuge from the shit she's going through. I imagine she didn't tell everything to Anna, so we can imagine how bad it's been for her. I can imagine she's pretty lonely, and it would be good for her to know that there are others like her."

Bill looks at Garret Fogarty. They can hear the clock ticking in the other room.

"A fool is a fool whether he's sixteen or sixty," Garret says, "Anna Murphy is no fool. Emotional, yes, and hopeful beyond our wildest dreams, but she's no fool. Neither is Gary. Kaylee Campbell is alone but she is waking up to the most important truths she'll ever know. She deserves a chance to live as a young white woman, away from those who are punishing her for her courage. We cannot turn our backs on her. I say we bring her in."

"Thank you all for coming," Bill says and bids them good day, all except Garret Fogarty who he asks to stay.

The others rise from the table. Most have finished their beers, though Garret still holds his. The others embrace Bill and Megan before they leave. She kisses their cheeks and they kiss her hand. Bill waits until only he, his wife and Garret remain.

"Tell me, Garret," Bill says, "Is there anything on your mind? Something you'd like to tell me away from the others?"

"I think you already made your decision before we came," Garret says.

Bill smiles and shakes his head. Megan laughs as she collects the empty bottles.

"So why'd I call you, then?" Bill says, grossly exaggerating his Irish accent.

"To see if you're right about us," Garret says.

Bill smiles and touches Garret's cheek. Bill is proud of these young men. They will be ready soon.

At the Campbell Home, KJ has a rare opportunity to spend time alone with her father. She knows it's setting herself up for heartache, yet the yearning for him to be a man is impossible to resist. She watches him in the den, and then comes in and sits. Without speaking, KJ removes the vile note from her jeans pocket and holds it in her hands. Gene looks at her with either dismay or fear on his face. She can't tell which emotion

predominates. He goes back to watching the white ESPN announcer who just praised the Pittsburgh Steelers for their diversity. The roster is ninety-three percent black.

"Someone left a note on my desk in Dagostino's class," KJ says, "Would you like to read it?"

It's up to KJ to begin every conversation with him. Such conversations are usually one-sided. Gene doesn't avert his gaze from the television. He snorts before he speaks.

"No," he says, "Go ahead and read it to me."

KJ begins reading. Soon Gene finds that he cannot drown out the abhorrent words with the sounds of the sports program. KJ reads in a steady, monotone voice. The content of the letter is depraved and full of hate.

Gene is horrified. He lashes out. She's the only target he's still unafraid to engage.

"If you didn't act like a little Nazi," he says, "maybe you wouldn't get shit like that."

He feels hot. Why can't she leave him alone? No one does, it seems.

"Dagostino asked me about that fucking movie," she says, "I didn't offer my opinion until he asked me for it. He singled me out, dad, and he set me up for this kind of shit."

"You didn't have to answer like you did!" he says.

"He didn't have to shove that shit down our throats!" she says.

KJ could mention a number of things - the Armenian genocide, Dresden, the USS Liberty and other inconvenient facts that they never talk about in school. Gene wouldn't listen. Instead, he'd run to Erica and KJ would face more punishment. Right now she doesn't need to convince him she's right. She needs him to be a father.

"Watch your mouth!" Gene says.

He never cared before. In fact, for most of their lives the two of them have been very liberal with their cursing.

"Or what?" she asks, "What else will you take away from me?"

"Enough!" he says, "Get out of my sight!"

He's still in his chair. KJ doesn't leave.

"Didn't you listen to me?" she says, "They said they're going to rape me! Fucking rape me! Why, dad? Because I love my race? That gives them an excuse to do something evil to me? I mean, what the fuck?"

She sees that he's about to speak and cuts him off.

"Rape, dad!" she says, "They threatened to rape me!"

"What do you want me to do about it?" he asks.

"Don't allow it!" KJ says, "Talk to fucking Weems! Tell him you won't tolerate this kind of shit." She shakes the letter close to his face. "I don't care if they call me a 'Nazi cunt' or a fucking dyke. This...This is a written threat. I'll defend myself, dad. I won't let them rape me. You know I will. I'll fucking die first."

Gene looks at her again. There is pain on her face but it does not seem to move him.

"OK, so I talk to Weems," he says, "What the fuck do you want me to tell him? Punish people for hating my racist daughter?"

"Tell him to do his job!" she says.

KJ knows that Weems will do nothing to protect her. She knows the administration couldn't care less what happens to a racist white girl, as long as they don't take any heat from it. In fact, they'd be relieved if she ceased to exist. She also knows, in her heart of hearts, that Gene will not demand protection for her. He won't even talk to Weems. She hopes somehow he'll prove her wrong.

Gene says nothing.

"Tell him that if anyone hurts me, he'll answer for it," she says.

Gene looks at her but his mouth remains closed.

"Tell me you'll protect me!" she says, the emotion creeping into her powerful voice, "Lie to me! Just be a fucking father and do something!"

Gene looks away from her.

"I can't do what you want," he says, "You should have thought about that..." He stops. "Go...Just go upstairs."

KJ stuffs the letter in her pocket. She heads to her room. There's no Bible to contemplate, no wildflowers to look upon. Up there, away from everyone's eyes, she can stop resisting her emotions.

Gary Murphy gets a call at 4:30 AM on Thursday. He's having his French roast coffee before heading to the mines. Anna is still in bed. It's Bill Donnelly on the line. He knows Gary will be leaving in half an hour. The discussion won't take long. After asking about Anna and Gary's health, Bill informs Gary of his decision.

"Gary," Bill says, "I talked with the men about young KJ. Tell Anna if the girl asks again, go ahead and make the offer. We can meet at KJ's convenience."

Gary gets a big smile.

"Sure, Bill," Gary says, "I'll be glad to. Anna's gonna be real happy."

"I know you're a praying man, Gary," Bill says, "So am I. Let's pray for this girl."

"We will," Gary says.

The somber end of the conversation does not diminish Gary's happiness. He paces a little and then goes to wake up Anna.

Thursday morning begins as a typical school day for KJ Campbell. It gets worse from there. The coward must be at a loss for words, since there is no message on her locker. The dial is frozen, however. The cad not only glued the edges of the dial, he splattered so much glue that it flowed down her locker until it became too stiff to continue. Mr. Andrews is reticent again, though he curses when the heavy glue coating gives him difficulty. KJ notices him looking back at her once he leaves. His face shows pity and sympathy rather than anger or annoyance. KJ also notices a note jammed through the bent vents. It's nothing new. There's no threat, just the usual insults and sexual references. KJ grabs her notebook and pen and heads to her first class.

The next escalation of violence occurs as KJ walks to one of the few classes that she enjoys - her computer repair course. A black female, one of the sophomores known to KJ by her face rather than her name, approaches on the right. She does not telescope an attack or give any indication of impending hostilities. Still, KJ is wary. Any crowded situation puts her on guard. KJ doesn't stare at the girl. She tracks the black female while keeping aware of a possible set-up for an ambush. KJ tries to keep out of range of any attack on the part of the black female.

KJ's vigilance does much to protect her. The black girl, seeing she'll get no decent chance for a sucker punch, takes a desperate swing at KJ. Her right arm flies toward KJ in a huge arc. KJ easily dodges the blow. She backpedals away, lest she face another attack, and kneels quickly to remove the push knife from her left boot, all the while keeping her eyes on her would-be assailant. KJ holds the little blade in her gloved right hand, concealing it within her fist. The other students realize that a confrontation is occurring and several of them move quickly out of the way, though they stay to watch. Now that KJ is prepared for a fight, the black girl loses heart and does not press her attack. The would-be assailant turns and hurries away, leaving KJ standing there, ready for a fight that never materializes. KJ keeps the knife in her palm as she, too, hurries to class. She puts it into her jeans pocket before entering the classroom.

There is no use telling a teacher or Principal Weems. They will either do nothing or accuse her of antagonizing the black student. This is the same as saying she deserves to be attacked; for using a word, for resisting the hatred and malice toward her brothers and sisters in race.

For the rest of the day, KJ is on edge. She is thankful for the painstaking efforts she's made to hone her observational skills. For once

there is real relief when she sees Gene arrive after school. She imagines him in a combat situation. Despite his size - especially his biceps, which are actually quite large - he'd be utterly useless. The car is her protection. During the drive home, both KJ and Gene are tense and silent. KJ arrives home to find Erica walking inside the foyer. Her arms are crossed and her lips are tight. Gene probably told her about the note. It was a mistake to hope he'd help her.

KJ removes her boots but Erica does not let her pass.

"Stephanie's coming tomorrow," Erica says, "She'll be by herself and I want to be sure she has a restful stay. Do you know what that means?"

KJ can't help herself. She's too nervous and full of adrenaline.

"You want me to curl up and die," KJ asks.

Erica shakes her head.

"You're a real piece of work," she says, "If you'd grow up, I wouldn't have to treat you like a baby. Since you refuse, you can at least learn to keep your mouth shut. Which better happen tomorrow and Saturday. Oh, and wear something nicer. You look like a bum."

"Fine," KJ says.

KJ doesn't want to talk to Stephanie anyway.

Erica lets her pass. KJ washes and then makes her supper. Someone must have drunk the apple juice she bought for today. Alone, it's annoying but insignificant. On top of everything else, it's another blow.

Anna Murphy has to stay two extra hours at school. It's part of her punishment for thrashing the girl who mocked pale-skinned redheads and hoped for their extinction. As soon as she is allowed to leave, Anna tries the number she saved when KJ called from the TracPhone. She can hardly wait to tell KJ that Bill Donnelly is interested in meeting her. There is no answer. Anna tries again. Again, there is no answer. Later that evening Anna calls once more. No one responds. Anna's joy is tempered by the silence.

KJ's cell phone is hidden in her clothes drawer. It is turned off. If her parents find the phone or hear the ringtone, they will confiscate it and KJ will lose her best method of contacting Anna. She is resolved to call Anna on Saturday, after Kelly leaves. All she has to do is get through another Friday.

Friday continues with Thursday's warming trend. KJ wakes to the sound of her alarm clock. She lies in bed for a while and stares at the ceiling. During breakfast KJ watches her parents. It's obvious that Erica doesn't love her. Odds are, she never did, not in the true sense of the word. The moment KJ began to awaken, Erica became colder and finally drop-

ped the façade of giving a damn. Gene doesn't love her either. He's softer on her than Erica, because he's weak. His weakness and obliviousness hurt her more than Erica's abuse. She wonders what it might be like to have a father like Anna's; or a lover like one of the strong men she met at Diamond Crossing. The thought takes her away for a few precious minutes.

"Quit staring and get ready for school!" Erica yells from just across the table, "Your father's waiting."

KJ wonders why the sudden tongue-lashing doesn't upset her. She feels an aching numbness. KJ sighs and gets up without a word.

Her locker is glued again. Crude swastikas adorn the door. Mr. Andrews comes by and opens it for her.

"Fuck it," she says, "Don't worry about it. I'm tired of this shit."

"Hold on," Mr. Andrews says, "It'll only take a minute."

He opens the locker. He does not stay. It's getting harder to watch as beautiful young Kaylee suffers for her loyalty.

Just a couple more years, he thinks.

There's another note shoved inside. Against her better judgment, KJ reads it. There are the usual profanities. There is a threat about shaving her head. The coward says she deserves this for being a "Nazi whore." The only swastikas in her life are the ones he put on her locker. She won't apologize for her love, however. This is how the enemies of her people react to a white girl who has pride in her race. Whether or not she's a Nazi, does not matter. They want her subservience. They want a guarantee she'll aid the genocide of her own race; her own children.

Try as she might, KJ cannot accept the glued locker or the hateful note as an inevitable consequence of her being courageous and strong. Today she's in too much pain, and the despair that fled when she was with Anna has come back with a vengeance. KJ closes the locker, which squeaks and requires effort to properly close. Two spaces down is the locker of the president of the Democrat Club. She is a well-known feminist. Four down is the locker of the black cheerleader captain. Next to KJ's locker is that of Dustin Demuth, son of a Republican delegate and an outspoken proponent of his father's party. KJ sees that none of the other lockers have the slightest dent or defacement.

Going from lunch to Dagostino's "history" class, KJ ends up in a situation she tries very hard to avoid. Poor luck puts her on a stairwell as a glut of other students jams the narrow space. The mass of humanity forces KJ into a group of bodies too close for adequate observation and self-defense. She keeps her right side toward the wall. It's the best she can

do, but her rear is open and vulnerable. KJ isn't the only one to notice this. Those who pass her within the time space of the attack include one non-white Mexican; the rest are white. There are no blacks, no Jews and no Arabs in the crowd. The single Latino is not close enough to be the culprit. Whoever launches the gutless strike is no doubt a member of KJ's own race.

KJ feels a strong blow to the back of her head, just at the level of the hard rear of her skull. It's powerful enough that the force together with her forward momentum causes her to run into another girl. The blow was meant to be a rabbit punch, but the attacker does not manage such a devastating strike. Still it hurts, quite a lot actually, though the attacker's hand must be suffering at least as bad. KJ whirls around to face her attacker, only to see the backs of those who are passing and the stony stares of those immediately behind her. She cannot tell who hit her, not with certainty, and aside from the insults and cursing of the girl she bumped, there is no indication that an attack just occurred. The sheep hide the traitor, and the lone wolf rubs her head in pain.

KJ stops at the bathroom before continuing to history class. Her hands are shaking. If she could figure out who hit her, she would fight the coward, thereby incurring the wrath of the school administration as well as her parents. Those who wish her harm, from anti-white fanatics to those jealous of her intense beauty are escalating their violence against her. They see that no one will help her.

Gene is late. KJ waits for him, aware that yesterday's failed attack could be a prelude to something even worse. It's warm outside for December. KJ waits inside. After a half hour that seems much longer, Gene pulls up in the minivan. The fact that he's so late on a Friday points to one thing: Stephanie must be in for the weekend. Gene and KJ do not share a word on the trip home. KJ watches the bare trees and cloudy sky. It wants to rain, but for some reason not a drop will fall. The melting snow along the road is dirty and the spots where it's disappeared are nothing but mud.

Stephanie Campbell is more attractive than the last time she visited the Campbell House. Her light brown hair is long again and thick like KJ's. In contrast to her younger sister, Stephanie gets most of her good looks from Erica, who she resembles more and more. Unfortunately, her demeanor also mirrors her mother's. While KJ is clearly Gene's daughter, despite the rumors, there is a possibility that Stephanie is not, and that Gene did not father the child that compelled him to marry Erica Chapman. He never requested a paternity test and Erica sure as hell would have refused. There is no doubt that Stephanie is hers. Most of Stephanie's

features come from her mother and although they are striking and visually attractive, her beauty is uninspiring. Her younger sister is not only more beautiful, KJ's comeliness is unique and therefore much more powerful. It's another reason Stephanie does not like KJ. Truth be known, it's probably the main reason.

On some level, Stephanie has rejected a little of the feminist and anti-white propaganda she's heard from her parents and from professors at the University of Pennsylvania. She still parrots their words for recognition and advancement. It's doubtful she'll ever forsake the advantages of being obedient to the system. Stephanie feels a strong need to belong; to compensate for some of the loneliness she felt as an adolescent. Should she challenge the worldview of her Marxist and politically correct professors, the same ones who enforce speech codes and make lists of forbidden words, she would face severe ostracism and might end up a pariah like her younger sister. Like the vast majority of American and European universities, Penn is full of anti-white zealots who would shun and attempt to destroy even the mildest pro-white heretic. Although she is not one of the anti-white true believers, Stephanie Campbell is willing to betray her moral and natural impulses in order to profit from their anti-white system. The number of true-believers is actually rather small; the number of enablers like Stephanie is enormous.

When KJ enters behind Gene, she hears Erica and Stephanie talking in the kitchen. Gene removes his loafers and joins his wife and eldest daughter. KJ all but runs upstairs. She showers and then dresses in attire typical for her. She will not alter her dress for Stephanie. KJ is wounded and shaking from nervousness. She wants to defy them, but for tonight her clothes and her silence will be the extent of her resistance. There is still something worthwhile for her to lose and she will not risk it.

KJ descends the stairs and finds that her parents and sister have moved into the dining room. KJ smells the aroma of one of Erica's sumptuous meals. She walks to the kitchen. KJ plans on making her supper and then taking a long walk. Later, she'll lift weights. It's a good plan. Stephanie will be leaving tomorrow afternoon. Then KJ will call Anna. All she has to do is get through this Friday afternoon and evening.

KJ puts her hand on the kitchen door.

"Kaylee!" Gene yells from the dining room, "Come in here!"

KJ feels the weight of anxiety. There's no use resisting this. She touches the door again and pulls back her gloved hand.

Erica is the first to see KJ when she enters the dining room. She rises and puts her hands on her hips.

"I thought I told you to get dressed!" Erica yells.

KJ hoped her *Bleeding Through* t-shirt would irritate her mother.

"It's OK, mom," Stephanie says, "It's just me."

She knows this will make Erica angrier with KJ.

KJ takes her seat opposite Stephanie. Her older sister is dressed in a simple top and jeans, certainly no better than KJ. Though KJ is quite hungry she'd rather just leave. One look on Stephanie's face tells KJ that she's in for a long evening.

Gene rises and prepares a plate for Erica and one for Stephanie. Parents and older sister engage in a conversation about life at Penn and how proud the parents are of the daughter. The nature of the conversation gives KJ hope that they'll leave her in peace. It is a false hope. The meal comes to an end but Stephanie does not rise from her seat. Instead she looks at KJ and begins her inquisition.

"Stand up," Stephanie says. KJ looks at her. "Come on, I want to check you out."

KJ glances at Erica. Her mother is looking at her with a piercing stare. She hates to obey, but in order to escape the unpleasant meeting unscathed KJ rises from her chair.

"You're so cute for a little Nazi," Stephanie says, "You even got the army boots and the gloves. Wow. I never could have dreamt that we'd have someone like you in the family."

KJ sits down. She shakes her head but does not speak. Instead she looks away. She cannot stand the sight of her smirking sister right now. Too much of that, and she might react.

"Do you want coffee?" Gene asks Stephanie.

She nods and Gene departs for the kitchen.

"All kidding aside, Kaylee," Stephanie says, "I wanted to ask you just what the fuck do you think you're doing?"

KJ looks into her eyes. The fight is beginning. She tells herself not to speak. To hell with Stephanie; she's lost. KJ bounces her leg from nervousness. She feels like exploding in fury.

"Don't you realize that you're jeopardizing mom and dad's careers?" Stephanie asks, "Not to mention my future at Penn, and I will not tolerate that kind of a threat, certainly not from some little brat who wants to be the center of attention."

"This has nothing to do with you," KJ says.

"This has everything to do with me!" Stephanie responds, "How do you think my friends and professors will react when they find out my sister Kaylee is a fucking racist?"

"KJ," KJ says, "Call me KJ, if you're going to call me anything."

"I'll call you a stupid bitch," Stephanie says.

"Nice," KJ says.

"Mom said that you're a Holocaust denier now," Stephanie says, "First the n-word, then you make excuses for genocide."

"No," KJ says, "That's your colleagues' specialty, making excuses for white genocide."

"Kaylee!" Erica yells, "That's enough!"

"Shut up, mom!" Stephanie yells, "Get out. Go make coffee. I'm having this conversation whether you like it or not. If you don't I can always leave tonight."

Erica rises. She steps to the door, and then glares at KJ, who looks over just in time to see her mother's angry stare. Erica closes the door on her way out.

"How the fuck does a punk from Seattle end up becoming a white fucking supremacist?" Stephanie asks.

"I'm not a supremacist," KJ says, "I want our fucking race to survive. Do you have a fucking problem with that?"

Erica will now punish her, whatever she says. Why hold back?

"You know that race doesn't exist," Stephanie says, "Did some boy convince you of this shit? Did you get all wet for some hillbilly redneck? Is that what this is?"

"Fuck you, Stephanie," KJ says.

"Well?" Stephanie insists.

"You say race doesn't exist," KJ says, "Then why the fuck do you insist that white nations take in massive non-white immigration? Or assimilate non-whites? Why the fuck is it us and only us who have to disappear in a sea of brown?"

"You throw the genocide word around when you don't know shit about what it means," Stephanie says, "Genocide is mass murder. Where are the bombs and guns, Kaylee? Oh that's right, KJ, your redneck name."

"Yeah, fuck you," KJ says.

"No answer?" Stephanie asks.

"I have an answer but you don't give a fuck to hear it," KJ says, "You just keep calling me shit, and I'm fucking tired of it."

"Please, tell me, KJ," Stephanie says.

"I'll tell you the official fucking definition," KJ says, "Look it up if you think I'm fucking lying." KJ stares right into Stephanie's eyes. "Deliberately inflicting conditions that bring about the physical destruction of a group, in whole or in part, is the official fucking definition of genocide. So guess

what? Forced non-white immigration into white nations, along with integration and assimilation will physically destroy a white population. White genetic traits will cease to exist if we assimilate and miscegenate. Just look at a fucking mulatto sometime. By forcing white nations and only white nations to accept and assimilate massive numbers of non-whites, governments and companies are physically destroying us as a race. That's genocide. One, two, fucking three. How fucking simple do I have to make it for you?"

"Where do you get this shit?" Stephanie asks.

"Look it up" KJ says, "It's the international fucking definition. Remember, your own fucking allies say that it's a crime to plan or incite genocide even before the killing starts. That is exactly what your colleagues are doing, except no one holds them accountable for what's happening."

Stephanie shakes her head.

"Very nice, KJ," Stephanie says, "I see you've allowed the Stormfronters to penetrate that thick skull of yours."

"Why do you hate our race?" KJ asks, "Why do you support our genocide? You, personally?"

"Why do you hate black people?" Stephanie asks.

"You didn't answer," KJ says.

"I answered you," Stephanie says, "Race doesn't exist. People are people, some of us more enlightened than others."

"You did not answer," KJ says, "Why do you support white genocide? Why do you demand non-white immigration into each and every white nation? Why not Japan and China, or Africa?"

"You really are hopeless," Stephanie says, "You've become so full of hate. Look at you. Are you trying to be a man?"

"You still won't answer, will you?" KJ says, "That's because you know what all that shit means. You know that your professors support our genocide. You don't care about the future, as long as you have your fucking degree and your fucking career. You profit from the status quo, which means our eventual extinction. You won't fucking answer because you can't!"

"I don't have to answer to a racist bitch like you!" Stephanie says, "And how dare you impugn me! You're the one who got suspended for calling a black man the n-word."

"Nigger," KJ says to goad Stephanie. It works. "I called him a nigger."

Stephanie rises from her seat. KJ does so as well.

"That nigger sexually assaulted me," KJ says, "Is that fine with you? Is it worse for me to use a goddamned word than for some motherfucker to grab my breasts?"

Stephanie snorts and begins walking around the table. KJ waits for her to approach.

"You don't frighten me with those man-arms and your Nazi punk bullshit," Stephanie says, "You are not going to jeopardize my future. You're in my world now, and I am not going to tolerate your shit any longer!"

KJ looks into her eyes. Stephanie is a little taller than KJ but physically she is absolutely no match for her younger sister.

Gene begins to open the door. He's carrying a tray with coffee. Stephanie's back is toward him.

KJ notices. While looking into Stephanie's eyes she mouths the words "fuck you."

Stephanie tries to slap KJ, who knocks her arm aside and then steps into and pushes her before her sister can recover. Off-balance from the powerful shove, Stephanie crashes into Gene, who drops the tray and sends cups and coffee all over the floor. Stephanie jumps to her feet. She looks at KJ, who stands several steps away from her, her arms at her side. Once, Stephanie would have attempted to fight her younger sister. Now she realizes that would be pure folly. KJ will demolish her.

Stephanie reacts in the way she knows best. She charges into the foyer. Gene follows, asking repeatedly if she's alright. The dining room door closes, leaving KJ alone inside. KJ hears Erica address Stephanie, who screams at her mother. The older sister storms upstairs and then returns a few minutes later. KJ hears her parents pleading with Stephanie to stay, but to no avail. The drama queen has suffered a sharp rebuke and will now make her grand exit.

The sound of the front door slamming shut is not the end of the episode. It is the beginning.

The Campbell House falls silent. KJ remains standing in the dining room, staring at the closed door. There is no other way out of the room. KJ decides to face her parents now rather than wait for their inevitable wrath. She steps to the door, avoiding the cups on the floor. She closes her eyes and pushes the door open with both palms.

On the other side Erica waits for her. Gene must be in the kitchen or in the den.

"Are you proud of yourself?" Erica asks, "Was this your plan, to ruin our weekend, and send your sister away in tears?"

KJ looks at her. Is there any use in arguing?

"If so, you've done a marvelous job," Erica says. "It wasn't enough for you to insult her, and make an ass out of yourself as usual. No, you had to get physical. Kaylee the bad-ass just had to push her sister."

"She tried to slap me," KJ says, "Ask dad."

"Gene!" Erica yells, "Get in here!"

Gene comes in from the kitchen. He won't look either of them in the eye.

"Gene," Erica says, "Kaylee tells me that Stephanie tried to slap her. Is that true?"

Gene glances at KJ. She knows that he witnessed the entire episode. He was looking right at her.

"No," he says, in a low voice.

"You fucking liar!" KJ yells, the anger and pain lurking beneath the surface erupting at last, "How could you lie like that?"

"Silence!" Erica yells.

"No!" KJ responds, "He's lying!"

Erica steps toward her youngest daughter. Emotions are beginning to show on KJ's face.

"You've caused me nothing but pain, every day of your life," Erica says, "Pain and disappointment. You have no idea how much I've sacrificed for you. You've squandered every opportunity we've given you, and the cost in money and time and hard work has been enormous. You've wasted every sacrifice we made for you."

KJ looks at Gene. For a moment he thinks that she will weep.

"How can you betray me?" she asks.

"I said that's enough!" Erica yells.

Facing an act of intimate betrayal from her own father, KJ loses her ability to resist her emotions.

"He's a fucking liar!" KJ yells, "He just lied to my face. He knows what happened but he won't tell you because he's a fucking coward!"

"Kaylee," Gene starts to say.

"Shut the fuck up!" KJ screams.

Erica's anger rises beyond the point of control. Aside from her daughter, the obvious target of her wrath, she feels revulsion at her husband for being weak.

"Silence, you filthy little pig!" Erica shouts at KJ, "You worthless...If I'd have known you'd turn out like this I would have kept him and had my tubes tied, you foul-mouthed little bitch!"

Erica will soon regret what she's said to her daughter. She will not sleep well tonight.

KJ looks at her mother. At first KJ is surprised. Her face begins to show anguish and then severe pain as her imagination fills in the blanks of Erica's cryptic statement.

"Kept who, mom?" KJ asks, "My brother?"

Gene turns and walks away. He has neither the stomach nor the fortitude to witness this exchange.

"He died, mom," KJ says, "How could you keep him? He died!"

Erica is silent for a short while. Then she erupts.

"I am not ashamed of my past!" she roars. "You, of all people, have no right to judge me! I had no choice but to do what I did. We didn't have the money for a second baby, not without giving up our jobs and our lives and leaving the city, and look what the hell happened to you when we did leave! You became this...monster in front of me!" KJ stares at her mother. Erica erupts again. "You have no right to judge me!" Erica says, "Look at you! Look at what you've become! Look at yourself before you judge me!"

"What did you do, mom?" KJ asks, her voice almost a whisper, "What did you do to him?"

Erica does not respond. KJ looks away. She can no longer suppress her tears. Her brother, the brother that she imagined would have helped her when she needed him most, did not die in infancy. He died at the hands of a stranger who their mother allowed to kill him inside of her body. KJ looks back at Erica. The intense pain is lined with rage. But it is too late to do or to say anything. Her own mother took her brother away from her. Her own mother spread her legs so that the killer could reach inside her and kill her child. Her mother's body is her brother's cemetery, and the womb where KJ grew is his grave.

KJ cannot hide her emotions or her pain any longer, and she begins to weep. She runs past Erica, who does nothing to stop her. Upstairs, she throws on a hoodie and grabs her toboggan as well as the Trac Phone. Then she runs downstairs. The foyer is empty when she arrives. KJ charges out of the house and into the night.

Once KJ arrives at the intersection with Township Drive, she slows down to a walk. It's not very cold outside, though she can see her breath. The snow is almost gone now. KJ reaches into her pocket and removes her Trac Phone. She reaches back into her jeans pocket and removes a piece of paper with a phone number. She looks at the number. KJ makes excuses not to call Anna. The odds are high that she will not reach her new friend. The redhead must be busy or out of town. In her mind KJ admits the truth. She does not want to call Anna. She's afraid she's going to fall apart. It's already happening. She doesn't want Anna and her friends to see her like this, trembling and wounded. How else could she be? For years there were little indications -interrupted conversations, nervous stuttering by Gene, innocent questions misinterpreted and cut off by Erica. KJ

long suspected the existence of a dark secret in her parents' past. Her mind had been merciful. It never allowed her to contemplate the possibility that her mother had killed her brother. Now that she knows, she feels despair and pain stronger than she's ever felt. Anna can't give her what she needs right now. She looks at the number again and turns on the phone. After four rings, Justin Harris responds.

"Hello," he says.

KJ does not speak.

"Talk to me," he says.

"Hey, Justin, it's KJ," KJ says, "KJ Campbell."

She tries not to sound hurt. There's no way she can succeed.

There is silence. KJ can hear that he is in a moving vehicle.

"Hey, KJ," he says, "What's up?"

"I...Hey, are you busy?" she asks, "You mentioned hooking up sometime, maybe hanging out at Diamond?"

"Yeah, sure," Justin says, "You wanna go to Blue?"

KJ knows of the place. It's a club in Mt. Lebanon. Aside from hosting an occasional alternative or ska band, Blue is known as a jazz-fusion venue. KJ read about the place while searching for metal and punk clubs. The search eventually led her to Diamond Crossing. She has never wanted to visit Blue and couldn't have imagined any reason that would compel her to do so. Tonight she finds a reason.

"Sure," KJ says. A sudden rush of emotion almost forces her to lose her composure. "That'd be cool," she says.

Justin hears emotion in her voice. He knows she doesn't care for the music at Blue. He'd have known something was wrong based on her acceptance. For a moment he's not sure what to do. Then he answers.

"OK, cool," he says, "I'll be there in about an hour, OK?" he says.

"Can you meet me over on 40?" she asks, "I'll be at the laundry. There's one over there; do you know what I mean?"

"Yeah," he says, "No problem. OK, bye."

Justin pulls off at the Foodland in Baldwin and turns around. He's about five minutes from Blue, but an hour away from KJ.

KJ manages not to break down while she waits. She does not know how to keep her composure the rest of the night. That seems insignificant now. She thinks about Justin. This is wrong. It's wrong for her and it's unfair to him. She brushes the hair from her face with her gloved hand. This is a mistake. She can't act this way. It's wrong to mislead him. That's what this is. KJ knows he will never stand by her. He won't defend her honor if she gives herself to him. What honor will be left to defend? He'll never

stand up and tell the sheep that KJ has been right all along. If she needs to fight, he will not stand and fight beside her. He will flee. He will not express his anger. He'll suck on a joint and anesthetize his righteous feelings of anger and rage. KJ wants to get on the Trac Phone. She wants to call Justin and apologize; to beg forgiveness for misleading him. She's lonely and hurt and does not know what to do. Maybe, somehow, it'll turn out alright. She sees lights approaching up Highway 40. It's probably him. It'd be nice to feel his arms around her. Maybe that's all he'll want. Maybe that's all she'll want.

Justin recognizes her in an instant. The gentle wind plays with the hair that spills out from under her toboggan. It is luxurious even in the pale glow of the laundromat. Justin has never had a girl half as beautiful as her. There is a great deal about this that troubles him. He almost called back and cancelled. He thought about her on the way to Uniontown. It did cross his mind that she needs to be close to someone who will not hurt her. The chance to have her, to add her to his list of sexual triumphs, silenced his conscience and made it easy to close his cell phone. He pulls up to her and opens the passenger side door. He sees her face. Her distant and sorrowful beauty once more makes it difficult to think of sexual conquest.

"Hi, KJ," Justin says, "What's goin' on?"

KJ does not look at him as she enters his car. He knew from the sound of her voice that something is wrong. He saw her face before she jumped inside. She's hurting bad and he feels guilty for his lust. Justin starts to drive up the highway toward the road to Mt. Lebanon. This is a role he's played before. It was trivial then, and before the night was over the girl didn't think twice about her silly problem. Tonight it's different. He knows some of what she's faced. The pressure put upon her would destroy or intimidate most others, both male and female. If he'd been in her shoes he would have apologized. She refused to betray her principles and now she suffers. He's heard that she's been attacked more than once. He feels a strange fear, like he shouldn't be near her.

"Thanks for coming," KJ says.

She looks out the passenger side window for a moment but then speaks to him again.

"Can I ask you something?" she asks.

"Sure, KJ," he says, "Go for it."

His fear grows despite his easygoing demeanor.

"You never quit talking to me at school," she says, "Don't you know I'm a Nazi? You're supposed to hate me. No one else talks to me anymore."

He doesn't know how to respond. Truth be known, he's not certain why he hasn't shunned her, aside from his desire to have sex with her. It's not like he was crushing on her or head-over-heels infatuated. He never expected her to call. True, she's the most beautiful girl he's ever known. Considering her natural and unaltered beauty, he's unlikely to see more than a few like her in his entire lifetime. Still, it's not enough to explain why he hasn't turned away from her; not nearly enough. He doesn't want to tell her he's hoping to score. At the same time, he feels it will be difficult to lie to her.

"Why should I hate you?" Justin says, dodging the question.

"Because I give a fuck about our race," KJ says.

Justin is silent. In his mind, the "human race" is his people. Though he's far from an anti-white zealot - if he were, he'd have ceased speaking to KJ a long time ago - an accusation of racism would hurt him. He would try his best to persuade the accuser that he is no racist. It's far from courage, but at least he would not genuflect and grovel like most whites when faced with such an accusation. Still, he would not object to miscegenation, no matter what visceral and natural reaction his soul might have. He's fought natural reactions before and he has always won.

"Forget about it," KJ says as she wipes her eyes.

Justin wants to tell her no, it's OK, go ahead and say what you need to say. But he'd really like to change the subject. Small talk always used to be so easy for him. Tonight he doesn't know what to say. Another thought crosses his mind. If KJ's worldview was the same as most girls', Justin would want other guys to see them together. If she were like most other girls, however, he wouldn't have a chance with her. Her untamed mystique and melancholy demeanor make her utterly fascinating but, unfortunately, she is radioactive. Any racial transgression by a white, particularly a white female, relegates the accused to an untouchable and unprotected status. In spite of KJ's unparalleled beauty, Justin begins to hope that no one from the high school sees them together.

During the rest of the trip KJ is reticent. Justin tries some small talk and she engages in a few brief conversations. He can tell she's trying but something is smothering any attempt to escape the pain. He regrets picking her up. Not because he's bored or disappointed, but rather because it's creating conflict within his mind. He will never sympathize with her beliefs, yet it troubles him that she suffers so much. She hasn't hurt anyone. Since she's a very attractive girl who refuses to play by the rules, she is paying a heavy price. It is a terrible injustice in a nation that encourages insults and degradation against her race. In spite of his frivolous nature

and heavy use of marijuana, Justin does understand her feelings and considers her suffering to be undeserved, though he would never say these things to another soul, not even KJ.

Justin and his unlikely companion arrive at Blue and find an empty booth in the corner. The band is a sub-par indie rock band from Erie. The best that can be said about them is that some of their songs are "listenable."

For a half hour or so, KJ sits with Justin. She's lost in her own world. When he suggests they stand he's surprised to see her follow his lead. Another half hour or so and she's still withdrawn. He does notice that she's moved closer to him. Suddenly she's very close. He puts his arm around her. She's still looking down. It's hard for him to swallow. He knows she must hate this music and the atmosphere of the club, with its oppressive and cacophonous. At Diamond Crossing the sound is superb. Here, it's mediocre, and boisterous conversations add a din that makes the music sound worse than it actually is. He's starting to wish he'd taken her somewhere else.

KJ's next move breaks his trance. She leans into him and puts her right arm around his body. KJ buries her head in his chest and in that dubious refuge she surrenders to her emotions.

Justin is stunned. He does what is natural for men and most males of his race. He holds her tight and kisses her head. Her hair has a very gentle smell. It is clean and sweet. It's nothing like the smell of the other girls' he's had, all of which were smokers. He's starting to doubt she's a stoner. Her hair is soft and so thick it amazes him. He kisses her again and keeps his face there, submerged in her beautiful mane, while she squeezes him so tight it hurts a little.

It's been a little over an hour since they arrived at Blue. Justin knows what to do. He doesn't think about what might follow. There's a strange distaste for some of the possibilities. He suppresses it.

"You wanna get out of here?" he asks.

KJ lets go. She looks down and wipes her eyes, and then nods. The two walk to his car, his arm around her waist. She hides her face toward him. While she's in his arms the outside world, the one that mocks her and threatens her and took away her brother and every young man who ever mattered, seems to fade away into the dark of night. She knows that she may be stepping into a trap of her own creation. In anger and sadness she wonders if it matters.

At his car, Justin sees her black toboggan stuffed in the pocket of her hoodie. He pulls it out and puts it on her head. This causes her to smile,

if just for a second. He opens the door for her. Her father quit doing that after she began to rebel against their oppression.

KJ is first to speak after they pull out of the club.

"Don't take me home," she says, "Please."

It is an innocent statement that is easily misinterpreted.

Justin drives away from Mt. Lebanon. His route will take them to California, Pennsylvania, where his brother Jay has a two-bedroom apartment. Jay, who works midnight shift in McKeesport, lets Justin use the apartment during the night. The list of what he cannot take inside includes marijuana but not girls.

"OK, KJ," he says, "You wanna stop somewhere? We could talk if you'd like, or just hang out 'till you feel better."

He glances in time to see her brief but sincere smile. He also sees her nod. In his mind, the possibilities narrow a bit. He doesn't feel the distaste anymore. A little of it comes back soon enough.

"Justin," she says, "Maybe it was wrong to call you. I'm sorry if it was. I just...I have so much pain right now I just want to freeze it out of me."

Justin pulls into an abandoned lot not far from the entrance to Jay's apartment complex. The lot is dark and surrounded by trees. He's been here before. He reaches over and opens the glove box. Some would consider it foolhardy to keep marijuana in such an obvious location, but he's never given the police a reason to search his car. Most of the powers-that-be have no problem with young whites suppressing their anger and rage over the very real injustices that plague their lives. Justin lights one and takes a draw on the handmade cigarette. KJ looks at him; the disgust on her face is subtle but inside it is very real. He'll never stand up, not for him or her and certainly not for some higher principle. The moment he suffers he'll retreat into his chemical euphoria.

Her visceral reaction make her think of everything she's losing in life, of all that she lost even before she was born and of everything that is dying because none of her people give enough of a fuck to rise up and fight. When no one will stand beside you after you're risked everything and pay the price for doing what is right, what is the point of keeping sharp all the time? Why stay sharp when all it does is cut you?

"You sure you won't give it a try?" he asks, "It'll help with all the shit you're going through."

KJ looks down at the bag, which he put between them on the seat. He reaches over and hands her one from the six or seven that remain. He lights it and she draws deep, the first time she's smoked a cigarette, tobacco or weed or otherwise. She coughs hard and almost drops the joint.

"Easy!" Justin says.

Her reaction confirms his suspicion that she's no stoner.

KJ settles down after a little while. Everything feels easier; less oppressive. The burden lifts just a bit. She doesn't need to fight so hard not to cry. It makes it easier to push away her cares and worries. It makes the anger and the pain and the fury bleed a little, and the flames of her rage go from bright yellow to dull red.

Such ease drowns resistance. She's lucid enough to know this. The fallen world took away the brother she will never know. It took away Donny Patrick, the only boy at school who would make a stand. Who knows? If he hadn't gone, perhaps he'd be here instead of Justin. He wouldn't have the joint that she's putting to her lips. He might beat Justin for offering it to her.

KJ pulls the cigarette away from her face when the thought enters her mind. It's an abrupt sobering. Would Donny or the men who know Anna want a girl who does this? Would straight-edge David Hill, who risks his life to sing a goddamn song, want a girl who smothers her spiritual flame in smoke? Did they fall when they faced the pain? Certainly they've faced it. KJ begins to rise from the chemical quagmire. She has to stop. She has to tell Justin to take her home, as terrible as it will be to see that place again. She has to apologize to him, and to ask him to understand. She tries to think of how to tell him. No matter what, she has to go home. She has to tell him to take her. She thinks about what she'll go through when she returns. She hesitates to act. Erica and Gene will be waiting. Her agony knocks her down again. She finds it increasingly difficult to reject the cigarette that dulls her pain. She begins to weep. Despair will not be denied. She yearns for a feeling of peace, if only for one night. She tries to fight but her resolve lies in pieces. What does it matter now? What has all her fighting and rebellion gotten her, but a place in this car and a bit of weed in her hand?

KJ begins to relax and take a few leisurely drags off of the cigarette. A flash of rage and pain makes her hesitate, so she takes a very deep draw out of spite. She chokes again.

"Jesus!" Justin says, "Take it easy, Kaylee!" He laughs and shakes his head. Then he notices the fresh tears. "You can't kill it like that."

His statement is wiser than he realizes.

KJ starts to feel the peace she thinks she desires. Everything dulls except the calm. She breathes deep and clears her mind. It's working. Maybe everything will be fine. Maybe this is where she should be. For a moment she's back home in Kirkland, years ago, before she woke up and

the façade of peace fell off. It was sweet then. Her only worries were school marks and juvenile ambitions. Maybe it could be that way again. It could be. Why fight? What would come of it? She looks at Justin. She feels so weak right now. She feels so alone. She tells herself she's not, but the others are so far away. How could they help her escape her prison? The police would track her down and destroy her real friends. She would end up betraying them, the very people she loves, when it's the last thing she'd ever do on purpose. No, they're better off without her. Everyone is better off without KJ, even Kaylee Campbell.

She thinks back to her old home and the family that lived there. There's mom and weak dad and obnoxious Stephanie, and her dead brother, and, worst of all, KJ, the one who tore the film off of her eyes and then fogged them again with sweet poison. She can't go back to being a sheep. She can't forget the truth she already knows. No, she'd have to ignore the oppression and the degradation of her race. She'd have to ignore the genocide. It can't be like it was. But then it wouldn't be. There will still be Erica, weak Gene, the brother who mom killed, and obnoxious Stephanie. But there will also be Kaylee the traitor, who sold out her kin and her tormented soul for the approval of those who would condemn her white children to suffering and extermination.

KJ snuffs out the joint on the bottom of her right boot. Justin is about to ask her why when she leans over toward him, her hand over her eyes. He puts his right arm around her. Her body shakes as she weeps. Justin pulls off her toboggan and kisses her head. He wanted to ask her to come inside the apartment with him. He's unsure now.

Fuck it, he thinks.

"You wanna go to my brother's apartment?" he asks, "It's going to get cold out here."

The temperature is rising as a front arrives. It will broach 40 degrees within an hour.

KJ wipes her face and looks at Justin. She knows where this is headed. It doesn't mean anything to either of them. There is no depth, no love or intensity outside of her pain and loneliness. She knows that sex should be powerful and beautiful. There's no power or beauty tonight. It would be a waste of her great gift if she were to give her body to him. Her mind isn't deluded enough to lose sight of these truths. Perhaps she's one token shy of falling over the edge. Perhaps she's not quite submerged in the sea of chemical euphoria that is in truth a hateful lie; it is nothing but a thief of righteous anger and rage. The effects of her folly are still strong. While she thinks about the consequences of joining him, her loneliness returns

in full force. Her inhibition blinded by the chemical fog, KJ considers leaving with the only boy who will touch her in spite of her reputation as a racist. The pain she feels over the murder of her brother, and the false euphoria ebbing and flowing in her poisoned mind, make it too hard to refuse. KJ opens the passenger door.

Justin shoves the bag of weed and cigarettes under the driver's seat. It's one of the few things he's not allowed to take into Jay's pad. Justin and KJ climb the concrete steps to the two-bedroom apartment. He opens the door for her. KJ starts to take off her boots at the entrance. He tells her she doesn't have to remove them. The lights reveal a tidy if austere living room. Justin leads her to the couch and then disappears into the smallish kitchen. He returns before her mind can contemplate what's happening. It's like headphones only half plugged in, the music coming and going. KJ looks at the objects in his hands. There are two glasses and a bottle.

Justin pours a shot of vodka in each glass.

"Don't take it if you don't want any," Justin says.

He figures she will refuse.

KJ looks down and then into his eyes.

God, her eyes are so nice, he thinks. He can't resist saying it.

"You have beautiful eyes, you know," he says.

"Thank you," she says and flashes the briefest little smile.

He is not the one, she thinks.

Justin is nice to her but he is not a man. He is dulling his natural urge to rage against evil. He is killing his rage with weed and drink. KJ saw him play his guitar. He has talent. It's a shame he'll never push it to its absolute limit. The habit of killing anger with chemicals is not the way of the hero or the heroine. Her people swallow the poison because of pain and disorientation; because of lies and cowardice. He'll never be a man. He'll never be a fighter. But where is a man? Where is a fighter? They're shadows in her dreams. Justin is real. She pounds the drink. It feels good as it burns.

Justin puts his arm around her. She leans into him. She doesn't fall apart, though she does shed tears. He kisses her head again. It feels so damn good.

"You're different, KJ," he says, "I've never known a girl like you. I'm sorry, I can't agree with you, but you have guts, really, more than I do. I'm not ashamed to admit it."

He puts his left hand on her leg.

KJ moves a little. She slides her head back some, away from him. He moves his hand. She knows there's no beauty or power in the act if there is no love or promise of forever. There is frailty and hurt. That's not

how it should be. That's not why she wants to give her gift to a worthy man. But who else will want her? If she finds a real man, will he want her? Would he want her if she gives herself away so easily? Who gives a fuck, he's just a dream, anyway.

Justin pours himself another drink.

"Do you..." he begins to ask.

"One more," KJ says.

He pours it. It's not what he meant, but he pours it nonetheless.

One more becomes four. Justin touches her immaculate white face. She does not wince.

There is a rumor that she's a dyke. It no doubt originated among jealous females, and grew to be used by her enemies, the same ones who promote homosexuality and other self-destructive behaviors for young whites. Justin never believed the rumor. He puts his arm around her again, but does not touch her leg. She leans back into him. They call her a whore. He doesn't believe she's ever had relations with a boy. He smells her hair again. None of the four girls he's had were ever like this. Two were conventional beauties without personalities or unique charm. Neither had the raw and potent beauty of KJ Campbell. All four were smokers - a destructive fault all too common in deluded young white girls. KJ's scent doesn't have a trace of tobacco. She smells so clean and sweet. Other than the foolish inhalations she's made tonight, it's clear she's never engaged in the filthy habit. Justin feels some regret over providing her first joint. He tells himself he did her a favor - that he made her feel better. He'd hate himself if she took up the habit and destroyed her soft, enticing smell.

KJ looks up at him. He takes her by the head and kisses her, then retreats. She opens her eyes and looks at him again. A big tear rolls down her face as she swallows hard. She does not flee. He feels emotions stirring through the chemical fog. Most of these impulses are not lust, though the desire to take her is immense. He kisses her again, longer this time, and she kisses him back. He feels her warm tears against his face. He's never hesitated to take a girl before. They're never been like this, however. His first four were aggressive, none more so than Kacey Hawkins. On one occasion he found himself going along with acts that he did not want to experience. It's never been like this before. KJ isn't aggressive and harsh. She is nervous and wounded. She is vulnerable. The others were nothing like her, at least not as far as he could tell. Whether or not they hid their personal demons behind crude sexual aggression he does not know.

KJ is not hiding. He can see that she is trying to escape some tragedy, but there is no deception on her part. Her soul is open before him.

She needs to be close to someone right now. She needs someone to hold her and help her get through this darkness. In the depths of his soul, the soul he doesn't believe in, he knows that she does not want or need what he would like to give. He ceases moving her in that direction.

Justin looks at KJ. Her white face with its splash of freckles across her nose and its gorgeous proportioned features is more compelling than any he's ever seen. Her eyes are closed now. He remembers their color. His hand is still on her body. It is beautiful and enticing. She is a young woman of tremendous beauty and sexual magnetism. She opens her eyes and then closes them again. The force of the vodka is dissolving whatever lucidity the weed left behind.

She is in his hands now. She did not offer the gift of her virginal body, but it is his for the taking.

It'll be alright, he tells himself. His first time was far from perfect. *She'll be OK*, he tells himself. He puts his right hand on her thigh slides the other across her breasts. None of the others were as warm as KJ, or in nearly as good shape.

Her eyes open.

They're so blue, he thinks.

Another flow of tears emerges from those eyes. The warmth and peace of being close to him now pales in light of a sudden desire to stop. She wants to pull away but no longer has the strength. The effort is so feeble that he hardly notices the movement. Due to his own intoxicated state, he fails to interpret her desperation.

The ceiling fan is turned off yet it spins round and round, as does the kitchen light and the table to her left. Their dance is one of mockery. KJ is terrified. She tells him to please stop; or did she? She can't be certain of anything.

Please stop, she thinks.

KJ feels like throwing up. The sick feeling gets stronger. She closes her eyes. His hands go across her body. She feels so foolish. She surrendered tonight. She fell. And now she is open to conquest and there is nothing she can do to stop it. She put herself in this position, one she recognized and yet she charged forward. She feels like crying. She thinks of her brother, whose face she'll never see. How does her weakness honor his memory? He would be wounded by her recklessness and meaningless surrender. All her life she's convinced herself that she would only give her body to the man who she loves. She does not love Justin. The pressure and degradation and despair that her antagonists have inflicted upon her have led her to the threshold of ruin. She alone has taken the final step.

He will take her. This she knows. She will lose her great gift, the gift of her first love, the gift of purity that she can give only once. She told herself that the enemy will not have her. It is no consolation that Justin is not one of them.

She has lost the battle with despair and desperation and now those who hate her have won. She has placed her only chance to emerge intact in the hands of another; a confused boy, poisoned by intoxicants and heavy with lust. If she could summon the energy, she'd pull back. She'd tell him to please stop. The darkness grows. She's helpless. Her mind is numb. She needs to sleep. A thought cuts through the fog. Will she die? Will she throw up and drown in her own vomit? Is this how the white rebel Kaylee Jane dies? On a couch, her body defiled, her lungs clogged with vomit? Is this how her revolution ends?

She feels him unbutton her jeans.

Please, no, please stop, screams a voice in her head.

Then there is nothing. KJ passes out on the couch.

Of the four that Justin has had, he did not rape any of them. True, two were legally intoxicated. So was he. In each case he was an equal party to the initiation of sexual activity. KJ is not even an equal party to the act. If he takes her he will not have the excuse that she made the decision. In four cases it was valid; tonight it is not. He stops for a moment. His mind is afloat in a sea of confusion and desire. He wonders why he shouldn't go further. He wonders why it bothers him at all. This will be his only chance to have her, or a girl like her. She will rise from her pain or she will succumb to it. Either way, she will no longer be accessible. He looks at her. He's never been this close to a girl half as beautiful as her. At first glance she is indeed beautiful; each time a man sees her, that beauty grows and grows until she is above all others. By now that is exactly how he feels. He is sure she's never had relations. None of the four he's had were virgins, not even his first.

Justin Harris must be one toke and one shot shy of going over the edge. He pulls his hands from her body. The urge is undeniable. It is fierce; greater than it's ever been. Once he had reservations. Once the urge was half as strong and he kept going. Once, his partner made it easy. Once his partner threw up on him but she still kept going, and so did he. Tonight it's all up to him. He stops. There must be a shadow or a phantom of a man still haunting his soul. If he takes her body, it will hurt her far worse than words or even fists could ever hurt her. It may destroy her. The wound will be permanent. She has enough wounds upon her soul. He staggers to his feet and steps back. He will never have her. That disagree-

able realization is overcome by one that more than makes up for it. Justin Harris, stoner and slacker, is no defiler.

"Please, no," KJ whispers, "Please, stop."

It is soft, almost a breath, but the urgency and pain that flashes on her face is undeniable. Justin's desire to take her has not waned. He tears his stare away from her, and stumbles toward the guest bedroom. He'd like to kiss her head one more time and turn her on her side in case she vomits. He dare not touch her again, not right now, not in the presence of such potent temptation. He dare not even smell her. It is a very rare surge of strength, perhaps the greatest of his life, but he summons it and in spite of the alcohol and the marijuana he leaves her in peace.

Justin may never realize, but his choice saves them both. If he'd raped her, the hollow pain she would feel, in addition to the agony she already bears, would certainly have destroyed her. If he'd raped her, he would forever be unclean and irredeemable.

KJ's head hurts. She's afraid to open her eyes. Will she be next to him? Where is she? It's not cold, wherever she is. Her arm is numb from sleeping in an awkward position. Reality comes to her in waves. She opens her eyes. She's still on the couch. She sits up so fast she almost passes out. Her head throbs. She slides her hands down her sides. She feels the soft fabric of the t-shirt. It's still for the most part tucked into her jeans. The button is undone, but the zipper is still raised. Her jeans have not come off. Through the headache and numbness that fades when she rubs her arm, KJ begins to sense her body. She senses each bit of her clothes. She senses what is under them. She gasps and covers her mouth. Tears erupt from her eyes. She does nothing to prevent them from flowing. There is no pain, nor is there despair. There is no loss or lament or tragedy; he did not take the gift of her virginity. It is still hers to give.

Justin begins stirring in the guest bedroom, just down the short hall from the kitchen. Finally KJ wipes her eyes. She cannot help but laugh a couple of times from the sheer joy. He's not right for her. He's on a path that may lead him to ruin. But it may not; there is a flame in his soul, a spark that may grow. Today it still lives. It is obscure to be sure, but last night it overcame her foolishness and his raw desire. It is a flame that their people have always held dear. It is the flame that leads men to stand against hopeless odds so that dear ones might escape. It is the flame that loves without condition and desires without shame or depravity. Once this flame burned and seethed, saved and destroyed when darkness threatened the beauty and grace of their race. Today it still lives in his soul; though smothered and in great jeopardy, it cannot be denied.

KJ is sitting on the couch when Justin walks into the living room. She doesn't want to be staring at him. He hesitates at the edge of the hallway. KJ turns and looks into his eyes. She's even more beautiful than he realized. He's even more relieved that he walked away. He has difficulty believing the feeling, but there's no denying it.

"You had way too much last night," Justin says.

It's all he can think to say. He looks down and gets a half-smile on his face.

"Thank you, Justin" KJ says.

The sound of her voice stirs a man's soul. Right now it affects him like no other ever has.

Justin nods, still looking down.

"I'll take you home," he says.

He knows they'll never be close again. They'll speak at school. She'll greet him in the hallways and classrooms and he promises himself he'll never ignore her, even if his reputation suffers. The feeling is bittersweet but he cannot help but feel relieved that he walked away last night.

KJ doesn't move.

"I'm so sorry, Justin," she says, "Everything," she stops when emotion enters her voice. She clears her throat and continues. "Everything's so fucked up right now. I used you and I am so sorry. I wish I could go back and not drag you into this."

He interrupts her with a wave of his hand.

"It's OK, KJ," he says. They look at each other for a moment. "You know, I think you needed someone last night. I don't know what's wrong, but you couldn't be alone. I get that." He looks down again and rubs the back of his head. "You needed someone, just not like you thought."

KJ nods.

"Thank you so much," she says.

He smiles. This time the smile stays for a while.

"That was your first joint, wasn't it?" he asks.

"Yeah," she says.

"You weren't missing much," he says.

"No," she says, "I wasn't."

She looks down and smiles. It stays longer than most of her smiles.

"I don't think you need that shit," he says, "It's not your thing."

He remembers the smell of her hair.

She shakes her head and mouths "no."

He rubs his head again.

"Is your head hurting as much as mine?" he asks.

He looks at her again. She nods, an exaggerated grimace on her face.

Justin walks to the chair where he laid his jacket last night. KJ follows his lead and gets up. Her hoodie is on the rack by the door. He opens the front door for her. The air from outside is warm and wet. They walk to his car. Before they arrive, she makes an abrupt stop.

"You OK?" Justin asks.

KJ looks up at the sky and smiles. She takes a deep breath and looks at him, and then she nods. The morning is simply gorgeous, one of the most beautiful of her short life. Drizzle falls from the dark gray sky.

Chapter V

The Long Hall

KJ asks Justin to drop her off at the end of Kimberly Drive and she walks the short distance to the Campbell House. She does not know what to expect. In her mind there is a strange peace. She approaches the back porch. Last night she gave in, and gave up, but in the end she beat the odds and emerged unscathed. She is resolved not to waste her second chance.

They will not have power over me, not again, not while I still breathe.

KJ climbs the rear steps. The door is unlocked. It's nearly 10 AM, if Justin's car clock is accurate. She enters, expecting to find Erica and another battle. She knows and feels the evil and the pain. There's no ambush that either of her parents could spring upon her that could match the one from last night. If they insult her they're only wasting their breath. If they ground her she'll ignore it. If they send her to boot camp or boarding school, she'll run away.

Gene is in the kitchen. He glances at KJ and then returns to his MacBook. He had one final chance to be her father. He pissed it away. He can never recover that opportunity. KJ passes by without a word. At the threshold of the foyer-kitchen door, she removes her boots and enters. She expects to find Erica there but her mother is nowhere to be seen. Relieved, KJ walks the stairs to her room. She checks the bathroom on the way: no Erica. KJ grabs clean clothes from her room and hurries to the shower. She locks the door after making sure her Trac Phone is in the pocket of her hoodie.

The shower is magnificent. Though she's burning to call Anna, she doesn't rush. The water feels so good. It wets her thick hair and she runs a comb through the long, straight strands. She lets the water run over her body for a long while. A steady stream flows from her hair to the drain in the tub. After a while she exits and dries off. When she's dressed, she pockets the Trac Phone. She goes to her room, takes a deep breath, and

readies herself for the inevitable disappointment that comes when she checks her money. What's left is pitiful. She takes what she can and goes downstairs. After leaving the money on the big table in the den, she goes back into the kitchen. Gene is still there. He's still playing with his MacBook. KJ makes a quick breakfast, wolfs it down, and then flies out the back door. Gene looks up for an instant but says nothing.

Anna's number is saved on the phone. KJ has the slip of paper in her pocket but dials the number from memory. As she does, a thought crosses her mind. It would be a good idea to destroy the paper with Anna's number. If her parents found it, they might cause all manner of trouble. KJ stops dialing. As she continues her leisurely walk she destroys the paper. Once the job is complete, she dials Anna's number a second time. This time she hits the call button. An unknown and unexpected voice answers.

"Hello," a male voice says.

KJ can tell he's not a teen. She hesitates for a moment and then responds.

"Good morning," KJ says, "My name is KJ Campbell. Would it be possible to speak to Anna, please?"

"Sure," the man says, "She'll be with you in a minute." KJ hears him call to Anna. "Anna! Telephone call!"

KJ figures this is Anna's father. She hears him say something as he walks away from the phone. Anna must have been busy. She enters the audible space around the phone after a minute or two. KJ hears the two Murphy's talk, but can only make out the end of the conversation.

"Maybe next Friday," Anna says loud enough for KJ to hear. Then she picks up the phone. "Hello?" Anna says.

"Hey, Anna," KJ says, "This is KJ. I hope I'm not interrupting anything."

"No!" Anna says, "How are you, KJ?"

"I'm alright," KJ says, "Thanks for asking. I don't say that enough. How are you, Anna?"

"Good," Anna says, "By the way, that was my dad on the phone. Hey, I have news for you."

KJ is quiet. She knows what Anna is referring to. In the upheaval of the past two days, the possibility of working for one of Anna's acquaintances vanished from KJ's mind. She tries not to get her hopes up.

"You do?" she asks.

"Dad talked to Bill Donnelly," Anna says, "and Bill said - get ready - he'd like to meet you, and maybe hire you to work on his place. Let me know when you can start and I'll tell Bill."

Anna smiles and glances at her father.

The news is a ray of light. KJ does not yet know how strong that ray actually is. Still, KJ can't help herself.

"Thank you, Anna," she says, "Thank you so much!"

KJ closes her eyes and beats back the rush of emotions. Anna feels KJ's joy and relief.

"Do you know when you can start?" Anna asks.

A nasty thought darkens KJ's mood in an instant. She becomes frantic, like her source of air is in jeopardy.

"Goddamn it!" she says, "My dad won't take me! You said Lemont Furnace, right? Old Braddock Road? I know he won't do it. I can't make it, Anna. Goddamn it, I can't make it."

She feels the emotions rise again and closes her eyes. All this, so that her future can again fall into the unwilling hands of her father.

"Hey, KJ, don't sweat it," Anna says, "I'll pick you up at first, or maybe Johnny will. We'll take you home, too. You remember the white truck?"

"The one you drove to Diamond?" KJ asks.

"Yeah," Anna says, "That one. Either me or Johnny will come and get you. So, when can you meet Bill Donnelly?"

"Is Monday fine?" KJ asks without a moment's hesitation.

Anna pulls the phone away for a second. She looks at her father and laughs, covering her mouth so KJ doesn't hear her and misinterpret the reason.

"Sure," Anna says, "One of us will get you at 4PM or so. It'll be your first day, so he might not keep you too long. I'm sure he'll let you know the work schedule."

KJ would stay all day, every day if she could.

"I'm so looking forward to meeting Mr. Donnelly," KJ says, "How can I ever thank you and your father?"

"There's no need, KJ," Anna says, "It's not like that."

The two young women converse for a short while longer. They talk about visiting Diamond Crossing and Anna mentions the coming of Christmas. She is highly enthusiastic for her favorite holiday. KJ doesn't mention that her parents won't be celebrating. She holds on to the happiness she's feeling. It's so rare in her life. After they end the phone conversation, KJ starts to mosey back toward the Campbell House. It's a strange feeling, one she's nearly forgotten. Last time she's felt this good she had half the reason to be happy. There's an unusual peace inside her as well. Erica's terrible revelation is still very much on her mind, but once Anna told her that Bill Donnelly wants to meet her, some of the darkness and

despair began to fade. There is a hope of escape, and with that hope she can see a stronger and wilder possibility. If she can escape the Campbell House, she can begin to fight.

Erica arrives on Saturday evening. She's dressed like she went to work. KJ doesn't care if she did. By happenstance, KJ is making her supper in the kitchen when Erica enters. She doesn't know that KJ heard her step up to the kitchen door. From the long pause and the silence that followed, KJ knows that Erica hesitated to enter. It's what KJ used to do when Erica was in the kitchen.

"I see you finally drug yourself home," Erica says. She'll attack KJ. It's one way she'll try to bury the remorse over what she said on Friday. "I hope for your sake you didn't do anything stupid."

Her words do not affect KJ in the slightest. Erica is dead to her. She really feels it now. Punitive and unfair, and powerful enough to damage KJ, Erica is still dead to her as a mother. And although she can punish and harm KJ she cannot terrorize her into submission. There are events taking place that are much bigger and much more intimidating than a petty tyrant.

"I expect you to apologize to your sister," Erica says, "That is, if she'll accept an apology. You better hope that she does."

KJ is silent. What use is it to reason with someone who is dead to you? She continues making her supper. She makes enough to save some for Monday, when she won't have the time.

Erica does not press the issue. She takes the last apple juice from the refrigerator and leaves. KJ does not look away from her spinach and smoked Gouda casserole. She shakes her head and finishes making supper.

KJ waits until Monday morning to tell Gene and Erica that she has a job interview. She tells them she knew on Friday, but forgot to mention it. Gene expresses his dislike at driving her around Uniontown. KJ expected this, and tells them she'll get a ride from her new employers for the interview. One of the workers lives nearby and should KJ get the job, she'll have a ride to and from work. Erica is silent. KJ suppresses any sign of joy. It's wise and it works. Neither of her parents forbids her from going.

"Give me their contact information when you return," Erica says.

KJ agrees without hesitation.

At school, the cowardly vandal glues and defaces her locker, but KJ is not dismayed. It is Monday and she's too happy at the prospect of going to the Donnelly Place to feel any angst or annoyance. Mr. Andrews notices that she's a little less moody today.

"Are you OK?" Andrews asks her as he opens the locker.

"Yeah," KJ says, "pretty great, actually."

"Good!" he says, "I still hope you catch the prick."

She laughs.

"So do I," she says.

Gene arrives a little late. There's time to spare. KJ is outside the Campbell House ready and waiting well in advance of Anna's arrival. She expects to see the beautiful redhead pull up in the white Chevrolet work truck. When the moment arrives she recognizes the truck. As she does her excellent eyesight focuses on the driver. It is not Anna. The driver is a man who looks to be in his early- to mid-twenties.

This must be Johnny.

KJ is dressed in a t-shirt and her shiny black coat. It's cold out today, even for warm-blooded KJ. As usual, she's wearing a tight pair of gloves. She's also wearing one of her toboggans and, of course, a pair of lace-up boots. As the truck pulls up she realizes it may be a mistake to go dressed as she is. It's too late now. When the door opens and she sees the driver also wears a t-shirt under his jacket, she is relieved by the sight.

"KJ Campbell?" he asks.

KJ looks at him. His short brown hair is thick and dark, and his face is clean and very handsome. She looks into his bright green eyes and fancies a great depth and complexity. Physically, he is in tremendous shape. In spite of his somewhat loose jacket, she can see that his arms are very large and muscular. KJ returns her attention to the here and now and nods in response to his question.

"I'm Johnny Bowen," he says, "Come on in."

KJ climbs into the cab. She sets her backpack on the floor and puts her feet around it.

"Put that up on the seat," Johnny says, "The floor needs cleaned."

It doesn't look too dirty, but she appreciates his offer and lays the backpack on the front seat between them. She buckles her seatbelt and once she does, Johnny offers his hand to her. Their eyes meet, and she shakes his hand.

KJ looks out the passenger side window as Johnny pulls out from the curb. She's more nervous than she hoped she'd be, and she expected to be at least a little nervous. She's afraid to make a bad impression. She's afraid that being afraid will cause her to make a bad impression.

Johnny removes an iPod from the glove box. She sees the pistol beneath the iPod. He does nothing to hide it, and says nothing about its presence. Though her parents revile firearms and tried to teach her to be

the same, KJ has never felt that way. To her, they are a tool; in fact she finds them very interesting.

Johnny begins scrolling the iPod within view of KJ. Out of innocent interest she begins reading the list of bands as he scrolls. She catches herself.

"I'm sorry!" KJ says, whether he saw or not.

"What for?" Johnny asks.

"I was reading your playlist," she says.

"So?" he says.

"That's personal," she says, "I didn't mean to violate your space."

Johnny unplugs the iPod and hands it to her.

"It's cool, KJ," he says, "Check it out. I'd be flattered."

KJ looks relieved. She scrolls the bands, noticing such greats as *Black Flag*, *7 Seconds*, and *Minor Threat*. These are bands that she, too, enjoys. She sees *Celtic Frost* and *Parkway Drive*, two of her favorites, as well as *Norma Jean* and *Type O Negative*. There are many more and she recognizes each of them. She smiles when she hands the iPod back to Johnny.

"That is awesome," she says, "You have, like, all the bands that I love on your iPod."

He looks at her.

"I'm glad to hear that," he says, "Hey, do you like *Theatre of Tragedy*?"

"Yeah," she says, "I'm into that kind of music."

"Cool," he says.

Johnny connects the iPod.

"I usually listen to the harder shit," he says, "But I have pretty broad horizons when it comes to music."

She smiles, though it's so brief he would have to be looking right at her in order to catch it. Instead he's watching the road. The song *Angelique* begins to play.

"I like that song," she says.

This time he's the one who smiles.

There is no snow outside, but the rapidly falling temperatures have left icicles clinging to roofs and rock faces. Some homes are draped from gutter to ground. It's nice in the white pickup, though. Johnny doesn't have the heat on too high. KJ has always been warm; her circulation is excellent. She hoped it wouldn't be a hot, unpleasant ride. She'll sweat enough from her nerves.

"Have you lived here all your life?" he asks.

The small talk helps with her nervousness. Johnny sees she's wound tight. He understands why she would be.

"No," KJ says, "I was born in Kirkland, near Seattle. We moved here when I was ten." She looks at him. "Are you from here, Mr. Bowen?"

"Call me Johnny," he says, "By the way, do you have a preference? Anna mentioned 'KJ.' Is that what you like to be called?"

"Yeah," she says, "I like 'KJ.'"

She likes that he asked her. Few bother to ask.

"KJ it is," he says.

Her little smile escapes again.

Ever since he learned of her existence, Johnny Bowen has been curious to see Kaylee Jane Campbell. Now that he does he is utterly mazed. When a young lady's beauty is of the same caliber as Anna Murphy, who is among the most radiant and unique beauties that Johnny Bowen or any other man has ever seen, the decision as to who is the most beautiful from among the elite group depends solely upon personal preference. Sadly, Anna is a great rarity and must be called an exotic beauty. With the rapid decline of the pale redhead and the increasing rarity of pure blue eyes, she possesses a unique beauty that is impossible to deny. For those men who adore red hair and pale skin, men such as Garret Fogarty, she is one of if not the most beautiful young woman such men have ever seen. As Anna approaches 20 years of age her beauty will become even more powerful.

For Johnny Bowen, Kaylee Jane surpasses all others. She, too, is a unique beauty. Her skin is every bit as pale and white as Anna's, and her eyes are the same pure shade of blue. Her body is likewise athletic yet feminine and her arms are strong and developed. Though not a swimmer or diver like Anna, KJ could easily be mistaken for one. While she is not a redhead - her hair is a lovely dark chestnut - her perfect white skin includes a splash of freckles across the bridge of her nose, a feature that Johnny Bowen noticed when she climbed into the cab and sat close to him. It is a feature that he instantly loves. Anna's beauty is striking; KJ's is soul-stirring. Some might consider KJ just a hair lower on the list when compared to Anna or the classic beauty of Jessica Hanratty. Many of those persons would change their minds after seeing KJ a few more times. The potency of her beauty, typified in her unique and stunning face, touches the soul of the white man and its effect is magnified over time. Few who see her twice would put anyone above her.

KJ's voice has a similar effect. It is not the voice of an opera singer. It is earthy and though possessing a decent range, in casual conversation

her voice does not hint as to its potential. It is the purity and passion behind the sound that gives it an enormous effect over anyone who hears it. Johnny feels its power in the first few words that she says. For the types of music she loves, her voice is ideal. As a driving force for her brothers-in-race, it is without peer. Should John Ashley Bowen ever go to war, he would rather hear her voice than any other. The sound of her voice, urging and pleading, would drive him to herculean feats and superhuman sacrifices.

Johnny brings the white Chevy to a halt at the stop sign near the entrance to tiny Lemont Furnace. He glances at KJ. She's removed her toboggan. Anna's red hair is lush and very thick, especially for a true redhead, but KJ's is even thicker. It's the thickest he's ever seen. As far as physical beauty goes, to Johnny Bowen there is nothing that KJ Campbell lacks. Even her hair is simply the most amazing he has ever seen in person. KJ notices his glance and looks at him, and then down. A shy little smile forms on her face.

"We're almost there," Johnny says.

She nods, still looking down, still with a tiny smile on her face.

Near the entrance to Old Braddock Road and the thick forest that surrounds the Donnelly Homestead, Johnny Bowen finds a wide spot and pulls off the road.

"Before we get to Bill's," he says, "I need to mention a couple of things. And please, KJ, take this very seriously." She looks into his eyes and nods. "When Bill asks you to do something," he says, "Don't blow it off. Don't wander off or...Do you smoke?"

He's actually a little worried about the answer. He hopes with all his heart that she does not.

"No," she says, "I tried it once, and I'll never do that again."

"Good!" he says, his relief obvious, "Good. Anyway, if he tells you something, don't blow it off. I'll pick you up, or Anna or maybe Garret - I think you met him - they'll pick you up and take you home if I can't. Oh, if you get sick, try and call Anna in advance, OK? If possible, though, try to make it. It's important for you to be here."

"OK," she says, "I will if at all possible. I don't get sick very often."

"Good," he says.

Johnny shifts the truck into first gear.

"Johnny," she says, "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course," he says.

He waits to enter the highway.

"Are you from around here?" she asks, "You didn't say earlier."

"No," Johnny says, "I'm from Maryland. Near Deep Creek, if you've ever been."

"I've been there a few times," KJ says, "It looks beautiful."

"You should go swimming there sometime," he says as he looks into the mirror. The road clear, Johnny drives on to the two-lane highway.

KJ shrugs. She's a little too ashamed to tell him that she cannot swim.

The cold December sun shines through the clouds as Johnny drives up the lane to Bill Donnelly's place. On the way they pass a small lot with several vehicles in various states of repair and cannibalization. Johnny mentions that they'll be moving the vehicles, to where he does not say. Just beyond are several rows of berry bushes, opposite a Jeep track that goes to a small building and a long field encircled by the woods. On the right are a house and a garage, while a parking lot and larger structure is up ahead at the end of the road. At the parking lot, Bowen pulls into the spot on the far right, beside a large 2-axle Chevrolet dump truck. Before he opens the driver's side door he looks into KJ's eyes. His expression is deadly serious.

"One last thing," he says, "No matter what he tells you to do, no matter how silly or insignificant it seems, try to do it. Some things are more important than they seem."

She nods. She thinks she knows why he's telling her this. She's seventeen. Most seventeen-year-olds are conditioned to be rash and irresponsible. It appeals to their sense of rebellion yet it sets them up for a lifetime of subservience to the anti-white powers-that-be. Any real sign of rebellion is ruthlessly punished. The establishment, which enriches itself and its loyal members at the expense of the great majority of KJ's kin, will allow no dissent when it comes to race. As KJ found out, there are acceptable targets of ridicule and vitriol, such as her white brothers, and there are those who must never be offended, even if they commit sexual assault.

KJ understands why Johnny might worry if she's dedicated or not. He must be concerned about her turning her back on them and betraying him and his friends to the authorities. She wants to tell him that she'd never do such a thing, but talk is cheap. Actually, she is wrong about the reason for his concern. He doesn't want her to fail. Any awakened soul is precious beyond measure. A young white woman who loves her race and defends her brothers and sisters is the most precious of all. If she does fail at her tasks, through no wavering of resolve, Johnny Bowen worries that out of despair she might begin to question her worth. He'll make sure that doesn't happen whether or not she impresses Bill with her abilities.

The two exit the Chevy pickup. There are no other cars in the lot aside from the big white dump truck. Bowen leads her to the front door of what looks to be some kind of large hall. He presses the doorbell. Surely there is a bell or buzzer inside, though KJ hears nothing. After a few moments she hears the locking mechanism of the door as it turns and disengages. She swallows hard as the door opens. Inside is a man in his early - to mid-fifties. He's neither tall nor short. The man looks strong and even a little hardened, perhaps by work, possibly by other struggles, though his eyes are kind and his rounded face is welcoming. The man looks at Johnny and then at KJ. His blue eyes are piercing. For a moment, KJ is so tense and nervous it's hard to breathe. Then a smile grows on the man's face.

"Hello, Johnny," the man says, "This must be Miss Campbell. It's a pleasure to meet you." He shakes her hand. She notices his Irish accent. "My name is Bill Donnelly."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Donnelly," she says.

"Come inside, dear," Bill says as he steps to the left of the door.

The air is very nice inside the Long Hall. The décor, though very simple, is likewise nice and clean. The floor is wooden and there are throw rugs at each threshold, of which there are four counting the entrance. There are four chairs as well, and a table in the center of the room, as well as two bookshelves opposite the entrance that flank one of the interior doorways. Bill Donnelly goes to the table and pulls out a chair.

"Have a seat, Miss Campbell," he says.

Johnny stays at the door. KJ removes her coat, glances at Johnny Bowen and then walks to the table. She stops partway and looks down at her boots.

"I'm sorry," she says, "I should have..."

She steps back toward the entrance.

"No, don't take them off," Bill says, "This isn't the house. Come and have a seat."

She looks at Bowen once more and then walks to the table. Johnny stays at the door. Bill looks at him and then speaks.

"Johnny, once we're finished with her first day," Bill says, "Could you take the young lady home?"

"Sure," both Johnny and KJ say at the same time.

She looks back at Johnny and laughs, more than a little embarrassed that she spoke out loud. He smiles when their eyes meet.

"I'll let you two get down to business," Johnny says, "I think you'll like it here, KJ."

"Thank you, Johnny," KJ says.

He waves and departs from the hall. She watches him for a moment.

"Johnny's a good man," Bill says, "I'm pleased that you two seem to have hit it off rather well. Am I right, Miss Campbell?"

She nods and looks down. She's back to her old bashful self. The pain and despair that nearly brought her to ruin are further away than they've been in years.

"You might want to write this down," Bill says. He opens the drawer in the table and pulls out a pad and a pen. "This week I'll be expecting you on Wednesday after school hours. Next week, I'll expect to see you on Wednesday and on Friday. Your standard work schedule will commence the following week, that is, two weeks from now: Tuesday through Friday, Saturdays and Sundays. If you cannot make any of those appointments I ask that you inform me as quickly as possible. Don't worry about rides for now. We'll take care of that. What do you say, still interested?"

"Yes!" she says a little too loud.

Her voice can be mighty as well as soft, and her emotions got the better of her. Bill laughs.

"I like your enthusiasm," he says, "Let's take a tour."

Bill stands and walks to the door, taking a coat and hat from a rack on the left. Outside, Bill opens the passenger side door on the big Chevy dump truck and KJ climbs inside the cab. Bill backs out of the parking lot and drives up to the Jeep trail. He parks beside the structure at the end of the trail, which is longer than it looked from the main driveway.

"This is the shooting range," he says, "One of my closest friends has a sportsman's club and they come here to sight their guns and keep their skills sharp. Every so often I'll ask you to collect spent shells and tidy up the place."

He turns the truck around. They drive out to the blackberry bushes.

"Come summer these brambles will be full of berries," he says, "You could help my wife pick them when they're ripe." He glances at her. "If you're still with us then."

The first shadow of doubt creeps into her mind. It feels like ice water. It is not that she doubts her resolve. She is worried that she may fail to impress this man. At this point she thinks impressing him will depend on her ability to accomplish whatever task he asks of her. Again, it's a logical guess, but it is inaccurate. Impressing him will depend on her resolve, not her skill. KJ wants to tell him she'll be here this summer. Most of all she's worried that it will not depend on her vigilance or abilities, but on some variable that she cannot control.

Bill turns around and drives back to the lot outside the Long Hall. The white Chevy pickup is still there, although Johnny Bowen is nowhere in sight. Bill parks in the same spot where the truck was when KJ arrived.

"We'll do the rest on foot," he says.

The two exit the cab. KJ dons her knit cap.

Bill takes KJ around the properties. The journey takes about an hour and an half. He shows her the field and hills where the cattle graze. They're lithe and healthy; not like the bloated, toxic beasts at the huge corporate farms. The females still have their horns. Nearby are thick woods. He tells her she'll soon become familiar with the woods around the Donnelly Homestead. Within view of the Long Hall, nestled in the woods, is another building, this one small and square. It is locked. He says it's a small workshop. She may use it someday, depending on her aptitudes. This encourages her and she feels proud of the work she performed at Kaminski's and in her computer repair course.

Bill takes her down an ATV trail that snakes around the Donnelly property. KJ sees several trails that spur off at irregular intervals, though they do not follow any of them. The main trail leads back to the opposite side of the "Long Hall." KJ enjoys the peaceful walk in the cold winter woods. The clean air and solace of the forest are a balm.

When the two arrive back at the Long Hall, Johnny Bowen is standing by the front entrance. He opens the door for KJ and she and Bill pass through. She stops to thank him. On the table inside are two glasses and a pitcher of water.

"Help yourself, Miss Campbell," Bill says, "Do you have a preference as to what I should call you?"

"KJ," she says.

Today is a new beginning. She picks up a glass and takes a drink. It's well water and it is pure and refreshing.

"Before we end for today," Bill says, "I have something for you to do. You'll be back on Wednesday at 4 PM." Bill takes a piece of paper out of his pocket. "I want you to memorize the items on this list in the order that you see them."

KJ takes the paper. She sets the empty glass on the table and reads the list.

"You're probably wondering what the hell this is all about," he says. KJ doesn't look up. She's already working on it. "No matter; on Wednesday I'll have you write it out without being allowed to look at the list. That's all for today, KJ."

Bill looks up at Johnny and nods.

KJ pulls her eyes away from the paper. She looks up at Bill, and then stands. She extends her gloved right hand. Bill rises and shakes it. Then he takes her by the shoulders and kisses both cheeks.

"It's been very nice meeting you, KJ," Bill says.

"You, too, Mr. Donnelly," she says.

KJ turns to walk to the door.

"Hold on," Bill says, "There's something I almost forgot. I would have never forgiven myself."

He reaches into his back pocket and pulls out his wallet. He removes a \$20 bill and hands it to KJ, who stares at the money. This time she can't hide her surprise.

"You showed up ready to work," he says, "I kept you 2 hours. \$10 an hour is \$20 total. You earned it. Just don't spend it all in one place."

He winks. She recovers and puts the bill in her pocket.

"Thank you, sir," she says.

"You're welcome," he says, "Now get on home, but don't forget about the list."

"I won't," she says.

KJ turns to leave. Bowen is standing by the door. She looks at him. He must guess that she's dying to know if the meeting went well. His smile and little nod give her so much relief she could hug him.

The trip home is serene. The pain of losing her brother, who might have stood up with her, is still lurking around the corner, but for now she feels better than she's felt in recent memory. Bowen sees she's at peace and he leaves her alone until the shortening distance forces him to ask a question.

"KJ?" he says, "Do you have a license?"

She looks at him.

"No," she says. It's embarrassing.

"We'll take care of that right away," he says.

"Johnny," she says, "My parents will object. I want to get one so bad, but you know..."

She almost pleads, hoping he won't think that she agrees with them.

"I'll teach you to drive," he says "Stick and all. We'll use this truck. After you learn, we'll see if your parents resist. I have a feeling it'll turn out alright."

"Thank you, Johnny," she says.

She doesn't avert her gaze from him.

Johnny glances at her once the road straightens and he's sure it's safe.

"It went well today," Johnny says.

KJ smiles and sighs. It feels so good to hear him say those words. The feeling lasts all night, even after Bowen drops her off at the Campbell House, and even after Erica berates her for dressing like a "druggie" for her interview.

Erica is at a brief loss for words when she hears that KJ got the job.

To KJ's surprise, her locker is not glued the next morning. She's still in a good mood. Mr. Andrews, who comes by out of habit, asks if the locker is functioning.

"I'm gonna have to change locks again," he says, "You'll have to memorize a new combination. This one's been through hell."

"OK," she says, "Thank you."

Though her façade is the same, KJ is in a much better mood and Mr. Andrews is perceptive enough to see it.

"Hang in there, OK?" he says. He steps closer. "I'd give you a key, but we'd both catch hell for it."

"It's alright," she says and smiles.

The old janitor smiles and walks away.

KJ spends most of the school day memorizing the list that Bill Donnelly gave to her. It's no easy task. There are groups of numbers and letters, and a few words that she recognizes as Greek letters spelled out. The order and purpose seem nonsensical. It may be a code or it may be gibberish. Either way, she practices to the best of her ability.

She's carrying the list in one hand when she encounters Justin Harris in the hallway. His sudden appearance is an admonition that she needs to be more attentive. By locking her attention on the list, she lowered her guard. Fortunately it's not one of the many blacks and white anti-whites who wish her harm. Justin smiles and speaks. She returns his pleasant words.

The two part ways. None of the other students know what happened Friday night, or what it means to the both of them.

After she finishes supper and loads the dishwasher, KJ goes to her room. She spends the entire evening there. In the light of her bedside lamp, she studies the list of nonsensical ciphers. It's not difficult for her, yet she fears failure. What if she fucks it up? What if she freezes when he asks her to copy the list, or if her mind is wiped by the shock? Will he dismiss her? Will he send her back to the Campbell House? Will her chance, her only chance to associate with like-minded people, die so soon and so easily? KJ puts down the paper. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. A door may close, but there will be others. Anna and Johnny will

not forsake her for a failed test of memorization. To think that they would is to belittle them. She looks at the paper again and goes back to practicing.

On Wednesday, KJ's locker is glued. She takes her jacket with her to class. She has all she needs on her person: a pen, the list and the little knife hidden in her left boot. She is quiet in face of the propaganda. It is not a sign of acceptance or acquiescence. She has a far more important mission to accomplish. There is one very important difference, however. She is more attentive when she is around others and is wary of attack. Nothing happens, and the day goes as well as can be expected; even Gene arrives on time.

Johnny Bowen picks her up at 4PM. She brings her backpack again, expecting a full four hours of work.

"Hi, KJ," he says, "How are you today?"

"I'm good," she says, "How are you, Johnny?"

"Good," he says.

He's wearing jeans and a long-sleeve button down shirt under his jacket. It's cold outside but he must resist it very well.

KJ is the same. She's also in jeans, with a long-sleeve t-shirt under the Caterpillar jacket that Kaminski gave to her over the summer. He saw her looking in one of his shop catalogues and noticed that she lingered when she came to the section with apparel, especially jackets and hoodies. He took a stab at it and picked one that she really did like.

Johnny puts the truck into first gear. KJ catches herself staring at his face. He is very, very handsome.

"Damn, how time flew," he says, "Christmas is coming fast."

KJ nods. She doesn't tell him that her family will not be celebrating Christmas. Even when she was foolish enough to act proud of their "cutting edge" attitude, she felt that she was missing something special.

As Johnny drives down the National Pike on the route to Lemont Furnace, a rabbit darts across the highway right in front of the white pickup. Johnny hits the break in a fraction of a second. Both he and KJ wear seatbelts, though the truck's reaction is not so violent that they need them. Instead, he tries to straddle the creature. As they pass by, he is not sure that he's succeeded.

"Fuck!" he says, "Did I hit it?"

"I don't think so," she says. She looks back and sees the rabbit run across the road. "There he goes!"

"Good," Johnny says. He shakes his head. "You'll have to forgive my language."

"It's alright, Johnny," KJ says. She smiles and shrugs. "You'll probably have to forgive mine."

Things settle down and Johnny brings up Christmas again.

"I imagine you'll be celebrating with your family," he says.

"No," KJ says, "They don't do Christmas."

She turns to look at him. His eyes are on the road but she sees him frown.

"Why not?" he asks.

"They don't believe in it," she says, "They believe the Hollywood bullshit about race, but they don't believe in Christmas."

"Do you do Christmas?" he asks.

She looks at him again. He glances at her. She's holding her toboggan in her gloved hands and she looks so beautiful.

"I don't know," she says, "No, I guess. I'm not sure yet."

"Well, if you're interested," he says, "you could spend Christmas at one of our places, or visit Anna or something like that. I could drive you home that night. You can spend Christmas Eve and then I could take you home." He's working it out as he speaks. "Or if your parents leave you alone, you could stay for Christmas dinner. Shit, I could even rent a room for you at Summit or the Hampton Inn; I don't want you to get the wrong impression. It's up to you, of course, but nobody would mind."

She's surprised this came up and stunned at where it's led.

"I'd love to!" she says, "I don't want to cause any trouble for you, Johnny. I could pay for a room." She raises her eyebrows and gets a cute pleading look on her face that would make him smile if he could see it. "I don't think I could afford a room at the Hampton, maybe Blue Mountain? Do you know what it costs?"

"Don't ever worry about that," she says, "If you need something, tell me or Bill and we'll see what we can do."

"I don't know what to say," she says.

"Enjoy it, that's enough," he says, "Christmas is a good time to think about other shit, like everyone who means something to you, and to feel a little peace while you're at it. God knows it's the only time I ever get to."

"I will enjoy it," she says, "Thank you."

"So you'll come?" he asks.

She's worried about being a third wheel should his offer come to fruition, but there's no doubt that spending Christmas Eve with him and Anna would be much better than remaining at the Campbell House.

KJ smiles for a second or two and nods.

"Yeah," she says, "I'll come."

As they drive through Lemont Furnace, another doubt creeps into KJ's mind. What about the list?

"Johnny," she says, "What if I can't do something that Bill asks me to do?"

"It's not the end of the world, KJ," he says, "Try as hard as you can, but if it doesn't work out he'll find something else that you can do. Bill doesn't know you, right? Not yet, at least. So he needs to see what you can do. We're not all born the same, you know."

He glances at her and winks. She looks down and smiles. He has just lifted a tremendous weight off of her shoulders.

Today there are several vehicles at the Long Hall. The dump truck is to the right. A Wrangler Sport is next, followed by another Jeep, this one yellow with big tires. Beyond the yellow Jeep are a beige Jeep Liberty and then a red Ford van. KJ does not try to guess what's happening. Whatever business Bill and his guests have, she'll find out if they ever choose to tell her. It's better to be blind than a liability. She's resolved in that belief. Johnny pulls in between the van and the Jeep Liberty. Before they exit the pickup, she asks him something she's been troubling her for the first time in her life.

"Johnny," she says, "Do you think that I should dress differently?"

He shakes his head.

"You're fine," he says.

Bill Donnelly greets them at the door. In spite of the vehicles, there doesn't appear to be anyone else inside the hall. She expects his European-style greeting and he does not disappoint her. Bill is dressed in work clothes, and has several items on his largish belt.

"How are you today, KJ?" he asks.

"Fine, thank you," she says.

"Good," Bill says, "Have a seat." He takes a piece of paper out of his shirt pocket and holds it so that KJ cannot read its content. "Start reciting the second line, if you will."

It's a surprise. She hesitates a moment, and then she calms down. Johnny's prior reassurances enable her to do so. She sees the lines in her mind. She speaks them as if she's reading from the paper. At the end, she is so relieved and confident it's difficult not to smile. She doesn't want to seem arrogant, however, and resists the feeling.

Bill reads off the entire list. She goes over it in her mind as he reads the numbers and letters.

"Excellent," he says once he's finished, "I see you took this seriously and I'm very glad you did."

Bill shows her the paper. It's blank. He smiles. She has a surprised look on her face.

"It was quite some time ago that I faced that same task," he says, "You've done very well, KJ."

KJ feels pride in the accomplishment, all the more since he, too, mastered this test of memorization.

It's nice to have something in common.

"There's not a whole lot this week," Bill says, "With Christmas coming and all, but I need you to do something today and Sunday. Until Johnny or Anna comes to get you, I need you to watch the pasture. There's a dog that's been running around causing mischief. When you see him, you'll contact me on the radio. I'll get you a walkie-talkie and show you where you'll be watching for him. Now KJ, don't daydream or wander off. I need to know the exact moment when he shows up so I can catch him or at least see whose dog it is. Keep an eye out."

She nods.

"Are you a smoker?" he asks.

"No," she says.

"Good," he says, "Less chance you'll be distracted taking a smoke break. Dirty, destructive habit anyway. Now, I need your eyes on the pasture and your mind on any movement thereabouts." He speaks as serious as he did with the list. "Don't call if you see a wild animal, but if you see a dog or a cat then get a hold of me."

Bill Donnelly walks her to the far end of the smallish pasture. It's studded with rose bushes and brambles. It will not be easy to see a dog if the canine chooses to approach with stealth. Bill takes a hand-held two-way radio off of his belt and gives it to KJ.

"Are you going to be warm enough with that jacket?" he asks.

"Yeah," she says, "I'm warm blooded."

She is a little surprised that he did not give her binoculars.

"I'll send Johnny or Anna at quitting time," he says before he leaves.

It will be dark by the time she's scheduled to go home. For the remaining hours of the day - all two of them - KJ watches the pasture. Noting moves. After nightfall, she continues her vigil. Still there is nothing. Like her vision in the light of day, her night vision is also excellent. By the time Bill radios her, KJ is confident that neither a dog nor a cat has set foot in the little field.

"Anna will be up in a few minutes," he says, "Did you see anything?"

"No, nothing," she says.

"Good," he says, "I'll see you Saturday morning."

KJ rises from her crouching position in anticipation of Anna's arrival. On the one hand she will be happy to see Anna again. On the other, she wanted to talk to Johnny a little more.

All in due time, she thinks.

KJ keeps her eyes on the dark pasture even after her acute vision picks up the movement that turns out to be Anna Murphy. The dog could still appear. As Anna approaches, quiet as a hover fly, KJ observes that she is carrying a mug in one hand and a bag in the other. Over her lovely red mane she's wearing a dark toboggan with a mushroom design on the front.

Anna arrives and the two embrace, with Anna holding the mug out so that it does not spill. They exchange pleasantries.

"So, do you like it here?" Anna asks.

"Yeah," KJ says, "It feels so much better to be here, and I've only been here, like, twice."

"It's different, huh?" Anna says, "Here, I brought you some cider. Johnny Bowen made it. It's really good."

KJ believes her. She takes a sip. It's warm and tastes as good as any she's had.

"Shit, that is good," she says.

"I have something else for you," Anna says, "Here."

She hands KJ the bag. KJ takes it but does not look inside.

"Thank you, Anna," she says, "Really, you don't..."

"I told you," Anna says, "It's not like that. We take care of each other here."

KJ smiles and nods.

I will be a part of this, and I will do whatever I can, no matter how hard I have to work.

The two walk back to the parking lot and Anna unlocks the white pickup, beginning with KJ's door. KJ finishes her cider and lays the bag that Anna gave her on the seat. She tosses her backpack on the floor; it was in the grass while she watched for the dog. Before Anna walks to the driver's side, KJ speaks.

"Anna," she says, "If you see Johnny, tell him I said thanks for making things easier on me. I was, like, really nervous all day and I don't know how things would have went if he hadn't been there."

"I'll tell him," Anna says.

KJ climbs into the truck and unlocks Anna's door.

Anna stops the truck at the end of the long driveway just before it enters Old Braddock Road. She looks at KJ.

"Our men would die for us, KJ," Anna says, "You have to know that. They're wired that way. I thank God for it, every night."

Her milky white skin shines through the darkness of evening.

KJ looks at her. She knows Anna means these men; their men. She knows it's true. She knows that many men still would, in spite of the degradation and alienation, in spite of the hate and the pressure to be weak and suicidal. KJ came to these conclusions a few years ago.

Anna looks both ways and drives onto the lonely highway.

"Truth is," Anna says, "We're very powerful. You and I are way up there in power. You're very, very beautiful, KJ. Yeah, that attracts animals but it also attracts real men. We can't ever abuse that power. I don't know what's coming, but it really doesn't change anything. They'll make it harder and harder for women like us to love our race, and it's gonna be easy to give in. But that's all bullshit. It's a lie, an easy life bought with the blood of our babies. I don't know how you feel, KJ, but I want to have a family someday, and I'm not going to sell out my baby's future, or my husband's."

KJ doesn't say a word. She believes that Anna isn't finished. She also believes that Anna is right. For some time, KJ has thought about the future. The helplessness she's felt has deepened her spiritual darkness and dissuaded her from spending too much time thinking about what lies ahead. Still, she could not resist considering what might happen, and what she might do alter her race's relentless course toward oblivion. KJ believes she has an obligation to do something for her brothers and sisters in race, and for all of their future children. Like Anna Murphy, KJ also wants to have a family someday. She imagines the joy of creating a life, and of holding that life in her arms. She knows that very few whites are fighting for the future of their children. And among those who fight, very few of them seem willing to move beyond words, even though the writing on the wall is very clear. As the number of whites dwindles, and the number of hostile non-whites grows, future white generations will face an ever-increasing threat of violence and annihilation. KJ is beginning to believe that words alone will not stem the tide. She promises not to condemn her children to a life of misery and fear; a life even worse than the one she faces. Once her despair nearly drove her to ruin; now a growing fury is driving her to action.

As KJ guessed, Anna is not finished.

"Sure, some guys just want us for sex," she says, "and a lot of them are cowards who won't ever stand up. A lot of them won't even stand up to a whiny bitch, let alone a pack of niggers or an army. But there are others, you know? Like our guys. They're real men. They'll fight for our chil-

dren whether we stand with them or not, even if we betray and degrade them. You can see this, I believe you do. You have to."

KJ nods and looks at her redheaded sister. She feels an almost insurmountable urge to promise Anna that that she will never belittle or betray their brothers-in-race. KJ waits to speak. Anna is still speaking and KJ wants to hear her. The fact that the conversation is taking place is nothing short of amazing to the beautiful young rebel, who was once utterly alone.

"Can you see the power that we have?" Anna says, "Do you see the damage we do when we mock our men, in front of other girls and in front of niggers and spics?" Do you know how much damage we do when we fuck non-whites, or act like dykes? Truth is, KJ, outside of a few exceptions, I didn't believe there was anyone else like us, you know, the few women I've known who give a damn and refuse to be sheep or sluts. Honestly, when I met you at Diamond I didn't think there was else anyone like you."

KJ feels her emotions rise. These are thoughts she's had before. These are thoughts that are dear to her, to which she clings. They remind her she's not one of the suicidal sheep and never shall be. She feels terrible emotional pain when she sees the cruelty and antipathy that her own brethren show toward one another, while flat-out degrading themselves in order to accommodate the unreasonable demands of other races. She knows the hate between white men and white women is artificial. All her awakened life she has wanted to fight, but what could she do? How could she turn a tide that deliberately drowns girls like her? Her locker is the only one that is defaced. She's the only girl at UHS who was assaulted and attacked for standing up. The sheep that surround her march forward to the abattoir, their sheer mass pushing KJ along with them to ultimate extinction. KJ wants to fight. She realized that by standing beside Donny Patrick, there could be a synergy; an echo effect. By standing with him, she sent the message to other white males that a beautiful white woman still appreciates them for who they are. Circumstance tore Donny away from her, and years of degradation and encouragement for cowardice have neutered the other white males who otherwise would have helped her when she faced the pack. There was a time when it would have been easy to stand beside a strong, conscious young man. Now, it will take extraordinary efforts on her part to find and encourage such a warrior.

Despair told her that such warriors are already extinct. Despair told her to give in, to fall into the arms of one who would anesthetize her rage. A voice from within speaks over the despair, telling her that the heroes

have not disappeared, not as long as she refuses to betray those that remain. It is becoming clear that knowing such a man is irrelevant. She must stand and defy the traitors and the other bloodthirsty enemies of her race, even if she is alone, so great are the consequences should her race lose this war. But there is now a glimmer of hope. Just maybe, KJ will be among other warriors when the fight becomes inevitable. She has long known that men and women, boys and girls must play an essential role if her race is to survive. She has come to recognize the great power that a beautiful white woman could wield in this upcoming war. It could make all the difference.

"You might not think there are any men left at your school," Anna says, "Truth is, I don't think there are many left anywhere. We really fucked that up. I mean, who encourages a boy to be a man? That's why you go through so much, you know? The enemy isn't afraid of us or our men. It's worse at your high school, I know. At least I don't have to constantly worry about being attacked, or worse, being raped by those monsters. The traitors know that if white guys see girls like us, girls who won't betray a good man, those white guys will fight like hell to protect us and our children. That's one reason why we have to be strong. Not that Hollywood, 'you go girl' bullshit. I don't mean that shit, I'm talking about real strength. It's easy to make fun of white guys or to smoke weed and act all slutty, but just show real courage and real love for your race, and watch what happens then. They'll hate on you like you wouldn't fucking believe. Well, you would believe it, huh?" Anna smiles and sighs. "But that's real strength, KJ, standing in solidarity with your white brothers no matter what the enemy does. That's what it means to be strong, to do what's right."

Anna glances at KJ as she slows the pickup near Craig Lane. An old Mack mixer truck pulls out, its driver ignoring the stop sign.

"Asshole," KJ says.

Anna uses the time to continue.

"I think you have that kind of strength," Anna says. KJ looks at her. "Really, I do. You seem really strong to me. I hope you have it, because we have to be strong no matter what happens. I know there was a time when we stood by our men, but it was from the rear, you know, behind the lines. There's no safe place anymore. Fuck, there aren't even homelands for white people. They're all filling up with non-whites. But you and I already know that, and that's why we can't use our power for selfish or destructive reasons like most white girls do. We're losing our future, and the future of our children, and we can't be selfish anymore. They need us.

They need us to fight for them. We can't afford to stay out of harm's way anymore. Those days are over; we have to stand beside our men now. We always should have, anyway."

Anna pulls on to Township Drive. She stops near the Campbell House, just far enough away so that KJ's parents won't notice the white pickup. The sky is cloudy as it has been most of the day, and a few flakes begin to fall.

"I know you have to leave now," Anna says, "and I know you have to face all this shit alone. I wish we could help you more, KJ, God knows I do and I'm not the only one. You've proven you'll fight, but, please be careful."

KJ has told herself that she will fight for her race's survival, and for her own children's future. She was convinced that she would. It was a child's certainty, an abstract feeling that she'd be willing to fight even if she didn't face immediate attack. If she were wealthy beyond measure, loved by millions of fools and isolated from the physical ramifications of treason, she would still reject the lies that gave her such shallow comforts. She would forsake the safety of her sheltered life. She would still fight. It feels like drawing breath. It feels natural. Now her conviction is no longer abstract. She has fought and she will continue to fight, someday, somehow, alone or not. She looks at Anna. Anna's face hasn't changed. She's even more beautiful with a look of defiance; so, too, is KJ.

"I'll be careful," KJ says, "I'll also keep fighting."

"I believe you," Anna says.

Anna laughs once and looks down, and then wipes her eyes. When she looks up, she hands the bag from the seat to KJ.

"Thank you, Anna," KJ says.

"A little Christmas gift," Anna says, "I know it's early, but we couldn't wait." She knows that KJ will buy them something in return, probably at great personal cost. She tries to convince KJ otherwise. "The only gift we want in return is for you to be safe, OK? Don't give up, KJ."

"I won't," KJ says, "I promise you. I'm not going to lose my second chance."

Anna smiles.

"I hope you enjoy that," the redhead says as she motions toward the bag.

KJ thanks her again. She closes the door. Anna watches her new sister wave goodbye, and then she drives off into the night. KJ puts the little plastic bag in her backpack, lest her parents ask questions about the nature of the gift, or accuse her of wasting money. She does not look inside

until she runs the gauntlet of Erica and Gene and escapes upstairs to her room. There, the door locked, KJ peers inside the bag. She sees an iPod Shuffle, two pairs of ear buds and a dock for charging the little iPod. KJ checks out the music on the Shuffle. Among the numerous metal, punk and hardcore songs is the complete discography of *Chironex*. After a quick shower, KJ returns to her room. There, she closes her eyes and listens to the music. She hears the strength and courage in Hill's lyrics and voice.

I will never abandon this fight, KJ thinks, I will never betray you; any of you. Not ever.

Anna pulls into the driveway of the Murphy Home.

Please be real, Anna thinks.

There's no school on Friday due to conferences, some of which came up at the last minute. Christmas is just four days away and there won't be school on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week, either. It's called "Winter Break" by high schools across America, so as not to offend the few students who would be offended, or their massive Jewish support network. KJ takes long walks on Thursday and Friday, both of which are cloudy and cold. She listens to the iPod and feels the joy of getting to know like-minded men and women. She also reads quite a bit, lifts weights, does aerobics and makes her meals. She prepares a breakfast and a lunch for Saturday. With the last of her saved money, she pays for groceries and bottled water. It pains her that she cannot buy anything of value for Anna and her family, or for Johnny and Bill. She promises to do so as soon as she can.

KJ is an hour early on Saturday morning. The skies are a solid overcast, and the air, although a little warmer, is still quite cold. Anna arrives around forty minutes early. She notices that KJ is listening to the iPod. KJ's mass of hair, which at present is not under a toboggan, prevents Anna from seeing the ear buds. She can, however, see the wires emerging from the bottom of KJ's hair and disappearing into her gloved hand. What Anna does not notice is that KJ was watching her approach. She'd seen the white truck some time ago, but was not staring at it in anticipation of its arrival. KJ has learned not to rivet her attention to a single object, not when she might be in peril of a lurking ambush or a surprise attack.

"So, what do you think?" Anna asks when KJ climbs into the cab.

KJ glances at the iPod and then looks at Anna with a smile.

"It's fucking awesome!" KJ says, "Thank you so much!"

Anna laughs.

"You're welcome," Anna says.

KJ throws her handbag on the floor of the pickup. She turns off the iPod and opens the glove box. She intends to store it inside, and opens the box without thinking. There is an automatic pistol in the box.

"Oh shit!" KJ says, "I'm so sorry! Fuck!"

She looks at Anna. She hopes she hasn't violated their trust.

"Settle down, KJ!" Anna says, "Johnny wants us to be safe. He won't ever leave us vulnerable if he can help it." Anna smiles again. "Trust me, you're iPod will be safe in there."

KJ chuckles, mostly from relief. She puts the iPod behind the gun. She thinks about Johnny for a moment and then closes the glove box.

"Where is Johnny?" she asks, "Wait, may I ask that? You don't have to answer."

"He's at work," Anna says, "and yes, you can ask that. You don't have to walk on thin ice!"

"That's good," KJ says. She looks at Anna. "Because I can't swim!" KJ says.

Anna is happy for the levity. She doesn't realize that while KJ may be joking, she's also telling the truth. Anna the springboard diver, who has enough talent to make the U.S. Diving team, doesn't think twice about her assumption. When she looks at KJ and the extremely well-built body of her new sister, she assumes that swimming is one of KJ's most common exercises.

"How much did you get to listen to?" Anna asks after she enters Township Drive.

"Some," KJ says, "There's a lot on it. I did listen to all of the *Chironex* stuff. I was stunned that they have that many songs."

"Some of those they haven't debuted yet," Anna says, "You'll get a chance to hear a few of them live at Diamond. I think next time most of the songs are going to be new. Hey, do you remember 'Never Trending?' It's brand new on their website. I just downloaded it last week. Pretty intense, huh?"

"Yeah," KJ says, "I played it four or five times before going to bed. It's a great fucking song."

The song goes a lot further than the vengeance theme. The protagonist of "Never Trending" hasn't lost a loved one or suffered brutality. Instead he rages over the losses suffered by members of his race, who he doesn't even know in person. It is furious and the lyrics are violent and graphic. The arrangement is impeccable; it is *Chironex* at their finest, and is a major step forward in unabashed racial awareness.

"Some stupid bitch once told me that our music is just noise, or that it's infantile," KJ says, "She didn't know a fucking thing about it. Our music speaks to my soul. Actually, it echoes the voice of my soul."

"I like that, KJ," Anna says, "That's nice."

KJ looks at her.

"Thank you," KJ says with a little smile on her face, "It means a lot that you bought this for me."

Today only the big white Chevy is parked at the Long Hall. The place looks deserted. Snow fell last night in the Laurel Highlands and a thin mantle of white covers the ground. Anna and KJ exit the pickup and go to the door of the hall. Anna knocks and rings the bell.

"I have to take off for a while," Anna says, "There's still a lot to do for Christmas. Oh yeah, Johnny said he'll pick you up tomorrow at three, so be ready, OK?"

"I will," KJ says.

"Hey, I heard you're coming for Christmas Eve," Anna says, "I'm really glad you can make it."

"So am I," KJ says, "Thank you. It's really nice to be invited."

KJ does not tell Anna that she has yet to mention Christmas Eve to her parents. Anna gets into the truck as Bill Donnelly opens the front door of the hall.

"Good morning, KJ," Bill says, "It's nice to see a young lady show up early for work."

He embraces her and she smiles. Her natural shyness shows again.

"Come in," he says, "It's cold as hell out there."

KJ looks at the room. There are several objects on the little table. As usual the other doors are closed. It's nice inside; not too warm, though the cold of winter remains outside the threshold. KJ hangs her coat but does not remove her unbuttoned flannel shirt. She then takes off her tall black boots before Bill can tell her not to. He sees this and refrains from scolding her.

"Have a seat," he says, "I've got a bit of work to do, I'm afraid you might have to stay here for a little while. I'll be back as soon as I can. 'Till then, stay put."

Bill charges through the left-hand door. He closes it as soon as he's on the other side. KJ looks down. She looks at the table. She looks at the items found there. The building gets quiet. Then someone pounds a hammer. The sound comes from the left. It's probably Bill.

The items on the table are an interesting assortment. There's a pocket knife, a yellow plastic box - could be a tackle box - a compass and a

pocket watch. The compass looks a lot like the watch but she sees that it has letters instead of numbers, and the single "hand" points north. There's a box wrench with a piece of black electrical tape on the handle. There are two walkie-talkies, both with "Cobra" on them. They look brand new. There are also three spent shells. These are long and necked. KJ returns her stare to the box. There's a very small crack on the left corner. It's been glued there. She sees the remnant of something written with a sharpie. Only a tiny, faded stroke remains. The pocket knife is closed. It's old but from what she can see it's rust-free. The compass case has eyeholes for a string, but the string is missing. One - only one - of the shells is deformed. Someone may have stepped on the neck. There's something in the box. It's very faint, but the outline of a dark object is just visible through the yellow plastic.

Bill comes through the left door. The pocked watch on the table reads 8:12 AM. It seems like more than twenty-five minutes have passed since he left.

"Good," he says, "Now, KJ, you're on dog watch 'till break time. It's cold out, but I think your coat will suffice. I'm glad you're wearing gloves, but if you ever forget them let me know, I have extra pairs. They'll fit Anna, so I imagine they'll fit you. Do you have a hat?"

"Yeah," she says.

She pulls the toboggan from her coat pocket.

"Good," he says, "Off you go then. Here's a radio. These are brand new." He hands her one of the Cobra radios from the table. "I'll call you when it's break time." He looks at her for a few seconds. "Do you want something for your ears?"

"No, thank you," she says, "My hair's good for that, and I'll just pull this down if I have to." She gets a shy little smile. She hasn't felt this way in a long time. "Thanks for asking, Mr. Donnelly," she says.

He returns her smile and begins collecting the items on the table.

"Bill," he says, "Call me Bill."

KJ goes out the front door, putting on her coat and boots before exiting. Outside, the lot is bare save the big Chevy. Anna is gone. KJ walks to the field. There is a small herd of cows there. They are trim and healthy and must be used to the cold of winter. KJ threads her way through the field, avoiding both mud and droppings. It's hard to see either through the thin snow cover, but her impressive powers of observation seem to grow with each passing day. KJ takes her spot just inside the wood's edge. It's on a small rise that gives her an excellent view of the field. The brush that surrounds her provides a windbreak. It also hides her from view.

Though warm-blooded, KJ is glad for the snug turtleneck shirt she chose to wear.

The dog doesn't show up by the time Bill calls. He tells KJ to come inside. He's waiting there when she enters and stops her from removing her boots.

"KJ, you'll take your break over at the house," he says, "There's a computer there that you can use. Feel free to check out whatever websites you like. My lovely wife Megan has made you lunch. I hope you're not into starving yourself, she'd be terribly upset if you refuse to eat."

"Oh, no sir," she says.

KJ does not look like she's on a starvation diet. In fact, she is the perfect example of health and fitness, strength and femininity. Though small, her body is powerful and beautiful. She is very glad for Bill's offer. For one, she was so excited about Christmas Eve that she forgot to pack a lunch. Dearest to her is the offer of hospitality and the welcoming it represents.

"Thank you so much, Bill," she says, "That's so nice of you."

"It's our pleasure, KJ," Bill says and smiles, "Now get along. My wife's expecting you."

KJ exits the hall and crosses the parking lot. When she arrives at the house, she sees that there is a rear entrance near the road. She deems it more polite to go around to the driveway and try what she assumes to be the front entrance. Parked in front of the house are a black Ford 150 and an older green Jeep Cherokee. The house itself is beautiful. It may not be as expensive as the Campbell House, but it is better designed, and its whites and tans are bright and beckoning.

KJ removes her gloves and presses the doorbell. She's nervous and hopes that she's not intruding. Bill urged her to go, but his wife may not share his enthusiasm.

A woman in her mid- to late-forties answers the door. Her light brown hair is lined with gray though her face does not show years of toil or pain. Her eyes are bright blue and her skin is porcelain white. She is taller than KJ in stature. Her face is kindly and soft, and more than two score years have not diminished her Irish comeliness.

"Good morning, Mrs. Donnelly," KJ says. She's lost track of the time. "I'm KJ Campbell."

"Come in, KJ," the woman says, "I'm Bill's wife, Megan Donnelly."

Her accent is stronger than her husband's.

Mrs. Donnelly hugs her when she enters the living room. It feels nice. KJ cannot remember the last time a woman her mother's approximate age last embraced her. Mrs. Donnelly shows her inside the living room.

There's a small closet and a coat rack at the door and KJ hangs her coat and toboggan. She removes her boots and puts them under the rack. Then she glances at the pictures on the wall, pictures of green places and ancient stones.

It must be Ireland. I wonder if they took the photographs.

There's also a painting of the Cliffs of Moher.

"It's nice meeting you," KJ says.

"My pleasure, KJ," Mrs. Donnelly says.

Mrs. Donnelly's simple floral dress is elegant and lovely.

"Mrs. Donnelly," KJ says, "I better ask. I don't remember Mr. Donnelly mentioning what time he wants me to return."

"Please, dear," Megan says, "Call me Megan. And he can have you back one hour after you begin lunch. No earlier."

Megan smiles.

"Come with me, KJ," she says.

Megan opens a door to the left and enters a hallway, with KJ close behind. On the floor is a long red rug with green holly leaves and snowmen embroidered on its surface. Mrs. Donnelly takes KJ to the door at the far end of the hallway. Beyond is a larger room, where there are two comfortable-looking chairs, a large table and two smaller ones. There is a desk and a computer opposite the hallway entrance. Mrs. Donnelly seats KJ on one of the comfortable chairs.

"I'll be back in just a moment," Megan says.

KJ looks up at her and smiles.

Mrs. Donnelly returns to the hallway, closing the door behind her. KJ looks around the room. There is a large clock and a bookshelf near the computer desk. In the corner is a Christmas tree. This is the first home KJ's seen in ten years that has such a tree. The decorations that adorn its branches are sparse but beautiful.

A double door on the right opens and Mrs. Donnelly enters. She's carrying a tray with a covered plate and a full drinking glass. KJ glimpses the dining room through the swinging doors. It seems decorated for Christmas. Mrs. Donnelly sets the tray upon the table in front of KJ. KJ jumps up, embarrassed that she remained seated.

"I'm sorry," KJ says.

"Don't worry yourself," Megan says, "Now sit back down."

KJ is not a simple girl. Megan can see that. Her attire is a symbol of rebellion rather than the mark of a stoner or a slacker. Inside her wounded, bright and beautiful mind is an intense love and humanity. Both Bill and his wife can see signs of this already.

Beneath the cover of the plate is a true culinary delight: a slice of Limerick ham flanked by mashed potatoes with parsley sauce and a small selection of pickled vegetables. The smell is superb as is the appearance of the little meal.

"Enjoy," Megan says, "And let me know what you think. If it's good I'll make a bigger one for tomorrow."

KJ tries the ham. It is every bit as nuanced and delicious as it smells. Megan sees the delight on KJ's face and is much pleased.

"Do you cook?" Megan asks.

"This is excellent!" KJ says, "Oh, yeah, I try."

She doesn't tell Megan that she's been cooking for herself for three years now. Her shy and humble demeanor prevents her from boasting about how good she's become. She would love to know how to make this meal, however.

"I'll talk to Bill," Megan says, "Maybe you could help me now and again, when he doesn't have anything important for you to do."

"I'd really like that," KJ says.

"I'll let you know when the hour's up," Megan says, "When you're finished eating, feel free to use the computer or just sit and rest."

She leaves KJ in peace to finish her lunch.

The beverage is blackberry tea. It, too, is of superior quality. KJ savors the meal and takes her time finishing. Her curiosity eventually draws her to the computer. It's already running and Mozilla Firefox is up. She begins to type the web address of one of the few remaining white-friendly sites that she used to visit.

She enters a few letters and then stops. As much as she'd like to read the site, which is blocked at the library, she does not think it proper to visit such a controversial site with the Donnelly's computer without their explicit permission. She is about to hit backspace when the rest of the address fills in automatically. Whoever uses this computer visits or has visited the site. KJ checks the settings; it's set to erase the browser history after three days. KJ's loneliness fades just a little.

When KJ finishes perusing that and other sites - most of them artistic or botanical in nature - she checks the radio on her belt. It is still functioning. She considers heading back to the hall to be sure she isn't late. She looks at the computer clock. Forty minutes have elapsed. She heads to the chair and takes a seat. About that time, Mrs. Donnelly comes in to remove the tray. KJ jumps to her feet.

"I'm glad you liked it," Megan says.

"I did," KJ says, "Thank you."

"You're welcome," Megan says, "Bill and I were wondering, if your family doesn't have plans for Christmas Eve, we'd love to have you. Do you think you might like to join us?"

"I'd love to," KJ says.

"Wonderful," Megan says.

She takes the tray and exits through the dining room doors.

KJ sighs. Today has been a very good day. It feels so good in this place. She sits down on the chair and closes her eyes. She tries to remember everything in the room. It's a little observation game she's devised to sharpen her skills. She's done this each day since the assault.

About twenty minutes later, Bill calls her on the radio. KJ exits the large room and heads down the hall. At the far end she opens the living room door. She calls out to Mrs. Donnelly and waits for her reply.

"I'm back to work," KJ says.

"See you tomorrow, dear," Megan says.

KJ dresses for the cold and heads back to the Long Hall. She cuts left and walks to the field. At the far end she takes her familiar spot among the brush and the brambles. The next two hours are uneventful. Then KJ notices something; a living creature is moving just inside the forest line to the right of the parking lot. She does a quick scan of the areas around her, just to be sure nothing else has appeared, and then looks toward the creature again. She sees a splash of white and a little black. It's a border collie.

"Bill," she says into the Cobra, "There's a dog by the parking lot, in front of the hall."

"I see him," Bill says, "Good work."

KJ sees Bill exit the hall. As soon as he steps on the pavement, the dog flees into the woods. She turns to watch Bill. She sees him lift the radio to his mouth.

"Come on down, KJ," Bill says, "I've got something for you."

KJ walks back to the building. She rings the doorbell when she arrives. From inside Bill tells her to enter. He's sitting at the table, facing the entrance. There's a pen and paper and an empty seat on her side of the table. KJ removes her boots and coat and walks to the table.

"Have a seat," Bill says, "This morning there were several items on the table. I'd like you to write down as much as you can remember about each of them. Don't leave out any detail, no matter how trivial it might seem to you."

KJ feels anxious. She didn't think she'd face a test today.

"If it's not out of line," she says, "may I ask you something?"

He looks into her eyes. She feels very nervous all of a sudden.

"Of course," Bill says, "What's on your mind?"

"What's this all about?" KJ asks.

She finds it hard to swallow.

Bill sees her anxiety and nervousness. He also notices that she didn't just follow orders. It does not displease him. He doesn't let his satisfaction show; not yet.

"It's a memory test," Bill says, "I'm still figuring out what might be best for you. And for us."

"Oh, I see," she says, "Thank you for not minding."

"You can ask anything you wish," Bill says, "I won't promise I'll answer, but you can ask." He grins.

"That's fair," she says.

KJ picks up the pen and begins to write. At first her pace is furious. After about five or so minutes, she begins to slow. She contemplates and writes. She doesn't seem to be stumped. Around the seventeen minute mark she puts down her pen and looks at Bill. He looks back at her. The two sit silent for three more minutes. KJ feels nervous again. Then Bill stands and takes the paper.

"Time's up," he says. "Go on back to the field. At 6 o'clock Anna will come around to get you." He looks at the paper. "One more thing. It being Christmas and all, I'm going to give you an advance on next Friday's pay."

He removes his wallet and pulls out several bills. He counts out two-hundred sixty dollars and lays the bills on the table.

KJ is stunned. She didn't expect to be paid so soon, and for so little. She never asked the pay scale; she was happy just to be here.

"Next week it'll be \$16 per hour," he says, "The work won't always be watching for dogs, either."

KJ wants to tell him it's too much. She feels like she hasn't earned the money.

"OK, back to the field," he says.

"Thank you, Bill," she says as she backs toward her coat and boots, "Thank you so much."

Time flies back at the field. KJ is excited about tomorrow. The sky is thickening and if it rains there won't be a white Christmas, but it's cold enough at present for snow to fall. KJ doesn't mind either way. True, it would be nice if there's a little snow, but this will be her best Christmas yet regardless - if she is allowed to come. She contemplates leaving home without permission. The joy would be worth the inevitable misery. KJ tempers her enthusiasm. She has a job to do. Tonight isn't as cold as the last

few nights, but it's still just below freezing. There's snow on the ground and if the temperature doesn't rise, there's more on the way. KJ looks at the snow. She sees the tracks of the cattle. She can see another set of tracks. They look fresh, possibly from just a few hours ago. Sometime while she was gone a deer crossed the field.

A little before six, Anna enters KJ's field of vision. She sees KJ at about the same time and waves. Anna is carrying a folder or thin book under her arm. She's wearing a black toboggan that is similar to KJ's. There is no mushroom this time.

"Hey, KJ," Anna says as she approaches, "Is it colder up here?"

"Not bad," KJ says.

Anna hands the folder to KJ.

"Bill asked me to give this to you," she says, "That's your tax forms and the other stuff your parents have to sign. Make sure they fill that out."

"Yeah," KJ says, "My mom would shit if she thought she didn't have any say in this. I'll have to act like I hate it here."

Anna laughs.

"Good luck," she says, "Let's get out of here."

The two skirt the pasture and soon arrive at the large building. Anna unlocks the white pickup and climbs inside, followed by KJ. Once they're buckled in, Anna fires up the engine and drives out to the end of the long driveway.

"Can you thank Bill for me again?" KJ says "For the advance on my salary?"

"Sure," Anna says, "I'll let him know."

Anna drives on to Old Braddock Road. The first snowflakes begin to fall. They will grow in size and number. Maybe it will be a white Christmas after all.

"This will really help me," KJ says, "If I give some of the money to mom and dad for groceries, they'll probably leave me alone for a while."

Anna chuckles.

"I hope so," she says.

"Between the money and the iPod and all the rides you've given me," KJ says, "Really, I want to thank all of you. Johnny, Bill, you; I didn't earn any of it."

"Yes you did," Anna says, "You earned it where it matters most, on the battlefield."

Both are silent for a moment before Anna continues.

"Seriously," Anna says, "It's not about earning this or that, so don't think if it that way. That's how some of the traitors want you to think. The

same ones who gave all kinds of money when that earthquake hit Haiti. It's about time we take care of our own. Niggers get more than enough from the sheep. Fuck them. Fuck all of them. You're one of ours, KJ. I'd give you everything I have before I'd give them a glass of piss."

KJ laughs from surprise. Then she looks down.

"All of you are so good to me," KJ says, "You just met me, and you've already made me feel better than I have in, like, years. Fucking years, Anna! And I do agree with what you said. They want us to think only about ourselves and not about other whites. It's just, what have I done to deserve it? Honestly, there are other whites worse off than I am."

Along the right shoulder is a turn off along the woods. Anna slows the truck and pulls on to the shoulder. She reaches over and lowers the visor in front of KJ, and then opens the mirror on the back of the visor and turns on the cabin light.

"Look in the mirror," Anna says, "Look at your eyes, your pale skin, your face, and those beautiful freckles on your nose."

Some years ago, Anna asked why she was so special, and Gary Murphy showed her these same things.

"You were born like all of us, but you didn't have anybody to help you," Anna says, "Most of our kin aren't awake and a lot of them are straight-up traitors. The beauty that you have, and what I have - and don't deny it, you know you're beautiful - that beauty comes from our race. No one else can have that kind of sublime and powerful beauty. It's enough to convince a man to spend his life making art, and trying to capture that beauty in a painting or a sculpture. He knows he can't capture it but he devotes all his life trying. That's the effect it has on our men and most of us abuse it. But we know better."

"Yeah," KJ says, "I've thought about that, too."

"You could have been very popular, you know," Anna says, "You could have been one of those girls who abuses her gifts and says fuck you to her race and fuck you to her children's future. But you didn't do that. You came through in spite of everything around you. We're all submerged in this evil, me and you and everyone else who's white. Most of us just go with the flow. You joked about not being able to swim, but at least you try and struggle against the current, which is so fucking easy to go with. You won't let them make you into a traitor and neither will I. Our men like Garrett and Johnny and the other men you'll meet at Bill's, they all mean what they say and you can bet your life on their word. My dad's the same way. They say something and they mean it. Well, I think you're like that. I get that from you. None of you are going to surrender."

Anna turns out the cabin light.

"I've learned the truth from my father," Anna says, "I thank God for him and all that he taught me. He taught me how important it is for us to hold on to each other. None of us - none of us - would turn our backs on one of our own, especially if he's awake like you. You haven't given up yet, and I don't think that you will. I can't imagine what you've already been through. You earned that money more than anyone." Anna smiles. "And you earned what's in the bag."

KJ closes the visor as Anna returns the pickup to Old Braddock Road.

"I want to believe this isn't a dream," KJ says, "What are the odds that I'd find people like you and Johnny? It had to be fucking impossible, but here you are. You're real, and Johnny's real, and it all seems like a wonderful dream but it's real. How did I find you?"

"Do you believe in God?" Anna asks.

There is silence for a little while. KJ is a little afraid to answer. She tells Anna the truth; it's what her redheaded sister deserves to hear.

"I don't know," KJ says, "My parents taught me to be atheist. They also taught me to hate my race."

Both girls are silent again. Outside the snow is a little heavier. KJ looks at her sister. Hanging from Anna's neck is a silver rosary.

At 11:30 PM, Johnny Bowen passes by the Donnelly place on his way to his Markleysburg place. He parks his jeep Rubicon beside the big Chevy dumper. The lights are on inside the hall. Bill Donnelly opens the door and greets Johnny before he can ring the doorbell. The two go inside and sit at the table, where Bill has placed the items from KJ's test.

"How'd she do?" Johnny asks.

Bill hands him the list that KJ made during her test.

"I've asked Anna about her," Bill says, "From what I've seen and heard, young KJ may soon be spending more time with you and John Boyle, should it come to that."

Johnny Bowen reads in silence. He often looks at the items on the table. When he's finished he puts down the list.

"How many hours passed before she took the test?" Johnny asks.

"Six," Bill says.

"You didn't tell her there'd be a test?" Johnny asks.

"No," Bill replies, shaking his head, "Not a word."

Bowen can't help but smile.

The morning light falls on a white mantle of snow. The outside temperature, which is quite low, will remain below freezing for the next few days. There will be a white Christmas this year.

At the Campbell House, KJ prepares for the inevitable conversation with her parents. She'll start with Gene. She knows it will progress to Erica. Faith dies hard, but her faith in her father is dead. She's hoping that Gene will commit to something and make it harder for Erica to refuse, even if it's only a small bit harder. She knows that almost never happens. KJ takes the folder and goes downstairs to the living room. Gene is sitting in his chair. He ignores her.

"Dad," KJ says, "I have some papers for you to sign. It's for my new job."

Gene takes the folder. His relief is palpable. He must have thought she wanted to talk.

"What is your job?" he asks as he flips through the forms.

"Right now," she says, "I keep an eye on his cows to make sure nothing bothers them. Eventually, I'll be picking berries and cleaning their workshop."

Gene looks at the paperwork.

"I'll show these to your mother when she gets home," he says.

He's dependable. He won't sign until Erica gives him permission.

"They asked if I can work tomorrow," KJ says, "The other workers are off for the holidays. I told them I'd ask, but that it's probably fine."

"I don't see why not," he says, "We'll ask your mother to be sure."

His response doesn't sound pathetic to him. If KJ had not lost all faith in him, his weakness would be another wound on her soul. As it is, she still feels a little depressed. He's supposed to be her father, not her mother's lackey.

KJ leaves the papers with Gene and goes back to her room. She looks through her clothes. It never crossed her mind to ask if there's a dress code at the party. It doesn't matter. This is a wonderful and meaningful evening for her. Out of respect for those who have embraced her and who have decided to help her resist, she will dress in more formal attire. She stands at the closet for several minutes. Then she reaches inside and pulls out one of the relatively few dresses that she owns. It's long and elegant and the color of night. Its curves will form-fit her magnificent body without a hint of vulgarity. She lays it on the bed. KJ always feels a little sadness when she must deceive, even if it's Erica. In order to escape this dead-end place, she must do so tonight.

About an hour later Erica arrives. KJ hears the Honda pull into the driveway and the garage door opens. She hears Erica enter and talk to Gene. The words are inaudible but the sound of annoyance is clear. KJ resolves to flee if they forbid her to go tomorrow. She doesn't have to

worry. As Erica begins her ascent to the bathroom, KJ hears her speak to Gene. She cannot hear his soft voice, but Erica's is loud and clear.

"Is that so?" Erica says, "Good. Get her out of here. I'm expecting John and Mandy tonight."

KJ rolls back on her bed in celebration, but then stops when she realizes she might accidentally roll on her dress.

Time crawls from the anticipation. KJ has to fight the urge to get dressed too early. She decides to put her hair in a ponytail. She packs her backpack with clothes for the night and with a bar of soap and a few other cosmetics. When the time comes her personal preparations are methodical. She wears a thong, which is no exception for her; though this time it's to prevent her snug dress from showing any underwear lines. She tries on a couple of jackets to see which looks best with her dress. She does not, however, put on makeup. She never did use much, and forsook the toxic powders and creams completely when she became awake. She'll wear a little lipstick, and tonight she chooses one with a slight purple nuance. She considers a touch of eye shadow, blue of course, but decides against it. She pulls a pair of her classiest shoes out of the closet. They're not heels, but she's concerned with the mud and snow, even though she'll wear her wellingtons until they arrive at the Donnelly Homestead where she'll change into the shoes. She puts the pair into her handbag.

When the time comes to go and meet Johnny, KJ takes a deep breath and descends the stairs. She hopes Erica won't see her leaving. She's not that lucky.

"Well, well!" Erica says.

KJ turns to look at her. Erica's arms are folded. The look on her face is one of contempt. KJ tells herself that if Erica condemns her to stay, she will run out the door.

"I'll be serving people at a Christmas Eve party," KJ says.

Erica eyes her for a moment. Then she waves.

"Whatever," she says, "Get out of here. You know, too bad you've ruined your reputation, you might be viewed differently if you'd dressed like that before."

Like a true feminists, Erica doesn't notice her own hypocrisy.

KJ doesn't care what she means. She accelerates as she exits. She's lived long enough around Erica to know that her mother could call her back and, seeing the disappointment on her face, ground her for the evening. Whether Erica calls out or not, the tactic works. KJ arrives at the intersection of Kimberly and Shannon just as Johnny Bowen drives up with the white pickup.

Johnny opens the passenger door. He sees her dress in spite of her jacket. He sees her hair. This night is special to her.

KJ climbs into the truck. She lays her bag on the seat and puts her backpack on the floor.

"You look wonderful this evening, Miss Campbell," Johnny says.

"Thank you, Johnny," she says and smiles, "You're quite the gentleman."

"That sounded nice," he says as he puts the truck in first gear, "It's not us, but it's nice."

"Yeah," she says, "It's not us."

"Seriously, though," he says, "You look beautiful."

"Thank you, Johnny," she says.

She looks down at the floor, too shy to look at him for a moment. It feels nice to be able to feel shy again.

When she does look at him she checks him out. He's wearing a nice collared shirt and black dress pants. He's clean-shaven and very handsome. His jacket sits beside her bag, and his arms look huge in his shirt.

"You look nice, too," she says, "Handsome, I mean. Handsome..." She gets an irresistible frantic look on her face. "Help?" she says in a pleading voice.

Before he pulls out he looks at her and laughs a little.

"I get what you mean," he says, "Thank you, KJ."

He lets off the clutch and drives on to the avenue.

"Johnny?" she says after they enter Township Drive, "I'm so happy about this. Thank you."

Even though it's barely louder than a whisper, her voice is clear and its sound stirs him deep inside. It's something he already adores about her.

Johnny doesn't speak for a moment. He thinks about the sound of her voice.

"Thank you for coming, KJ," he says when he does speak, "I can imagine you're a little nervous, and that's OK. Fuck, I would be, too. I know it won't matter too much telling you, but just so you know, you don't have to worry about a thing tonight. Tonight you get a break from all the bullshit and hard times. God knows, you fucking earned it."

The snow is deeper around Lemont Furnace. The roads are a little dicey but not perilous. Someone's plowed and salted the driveway to the Donnelly Homestead. It seems better than the roads around Lemont Furnace. The parking lot at the Donnelly House is full. At the Long Hall most of the spots are empty. Bowen pulls in beside the big Chevy.

"Looks like we'll have to walk," Johnny says, "Good thing you wore those boots."

"I brought a pair of shoes," KJ says.

"Oh, I figured," he says.

She looks down and smiles again. No matter how nervous she feels, tonight will be a very welcome respite.

When the two arrive at the rear entrance, they are greeted by Bill Donnelly. While his attire is not the utmost of formality, it is quite fitting for a social occasion and KJ is very glad that she elected to wear one of her nicest dresses.

"My, don't you look lovely, Miss Campbell!" he says, "We're so happy you could come. You, too, Johnny. Thank you for coming."

Inside, the large room bears little semblance to how it looked yesterday. There are Christmas decorations and ivy strung across the door frames.

Several persons are gathered in the room; of these, KJ recognizes two of them, one by his face alone. Eight of the persons are men. Aside from one middle-aged gentleman, they are all young, from their late teens to mid-twenties. There are two young women as well. One looks to be in her early twenties at the oldest. She is elegant and beautiful, like a model should be. The other is about KJ's age. She, too, is beautiful though her appearance is quite different than the "model" girl. The teen's face is angelic, her eyes blue and her hair thick and dark. Like Anna and KJ, her skin is pale white; unlike them, she has no freckles on her face. She's seated beside the "model" - who talks to her as well as the bespectacled young man who was with Anna at Diamond Crossing.

As KJ scans the group, a beautiful blond man notices her and his face lights up. KJ recognizes him as the man she met once at Diamond Crossing. She recalls that his name is Garret. He jumps up from his chair and approaches.

Johnny Bowen comes around in front of KJ and turns toward her.

"Let's get to know some very good people," he says.

About that time, Garret arrives.

"KJ, this is Garret," Johnny says.

"We've met," he says, "It's nice to see you again, KJ."

He must have noticed that Johnny called her KJ; that or they've spoken about her.

"You, too, Garret," she says, "How have you been?"

"Fine, thank you," he says, "And you?"

"I'm fine," she says, "Thank you."

Garret smiles and then grasps Johnny Bowen's hand. They look each other in the eye and then embrace. There must be a private celebration between them; for what reason, KJ cannot fathom a guess.

Johnny returns to KJ.

"Let's meet Bill Donnelly's son and daughter," Johnny says.

Johnny leads her to the bespectacled young man who she recognizes, the "model" and the "angelic girl."

"The lovely young lady on the right is Sinead, Bill's daughter," he says.

Sinead rises to her feet. KJ smiles and the two embrace when Sinead comes forward. As they part, KJ looks into her big, expressive eyes. There is a depth in her eyes like the ocean that she crossed several years ago. KJ notices the crucifix around her neck.

"Nice meeting you," they both say at the same time, after a pause.

KJ isn't the only one who is shy. Bowen begins the next introduction, and KJ turns toward the "model" who is now standing.

"This lovely young lady is Jessica Hanratty," he says, "Jesse, this is KJ Campbell."

Jessica's long, light brown hair and green eyes shine in the well-lit room. Her features are striking. Her unique nose, her slightly rounded jaw and soft features are gorgeous to the eye. She is taller than Sinead, and much taller than KJ. She looks European to KJ, perhaps French. Jessica shakes KJ's hand and smiles.

"Nice to meet you, KJ," she says, "Please, call me Jesse."

Her accent is as American as KJ's.

"You, too, Jesse," she says.

"This lucky young gentleman is Jesse's boyfriend," Johnny says, "I'd like you to meet Rian Donnelly, Bill's son."

Rian, while not nearly as strong as Johnny, is well-built and handsome. He winks at KJ through his plastic-rimmed glasses and shakes her hand. He has a confidence of manner that is impossible to miss.

"Nice meeting you again, KJ," he says.

He has a faint Irish accent that he can probably stifle should the need arise.

"It's nice to see you again," she says.

KJ is glad that Rian is Jesse's boyfriend. She doesn't think about the reasons why.

"We'll be back in a little bit," Johnny says to the threesome.

The next little group, six men in total, is in an irregular line in the room's center. They stop their conversation when they notice the fresh

face. The first gentleman in line is a tall, physically fit man of around thirty years of age. His hair is short and brown; his eyes are green. He sits his bottle of Guinness on the little table beside the group and then steps forward when KJ and Johnny Bowen arrive.

"This gifted fellow is Tom," Johnny says, "He's an ER surgeon and I can assure you it's not his only talent. You'll see what I mean a little later. Tom, this lovely young lady is KJ Campbell."

Tom takes KJ's hand when she offers it to him.

KJ is more than a little surprised to see the next young man. He is perhaps a year or two older than her, and has long blond hair. His skin is tanned and his body is highly athletic. Based on appearance, he strikes her as the type who invests his life in high-energy diversions, leaving little thought to the struggles and perils that face his race or his children. She knows that looks can be deceiving and doubts her impression. If he were that way, why would he be here? She feels foolish for making such a rash judgment.

"KJ, this young gentleman is well on his way to becoming a world-famous mountaineer," Johnny says, "His name is Aaron. Aaron, this beautiful young lady is KJ Campbell."

Aaron shakes her hand. His hazel eyes are bright and his smile is warm and welcoming. He looks at Johnny.

"I don't know about world-famous," he says.

"Mt. McKinley at 15," Johnny says, "K2 by age thirty."

"K2?" Aaron says, "Jesus, I thought you'd say Everest."

"Nope," Johnny says, "I think you have it in you."

"I better if I try K2," Aaron says.

"Good luck this summer," Johnny says.

Johnny steps over to the next guest.

"KJ, I'd like you to meet John," he says.

John Boyle - "Irish John" - shakes KJ's hand. She is struck by his blue eyes and lean, handsome face that looks as Irish as his accent. When she looks into his blue eyes she sees fire and ice. His hands complement his wolfish features; they are rock-hard and strong. In short sleeves, his arms look wiry and powerful. He must be no older than thirty, yet he looks like he's seen much of what life can offer; not all of it pleasant or forgettable.

"It's a pleasure," Irish John says.

"Thank you," KJ says.

"I have little doubt that you'll be working with John," Johnny Bowen says, "Maybe even the next couple of months."

"I look forward to it," Boyle says.

Six of the other guests know John Boyle's last name. The others do not ask, and neither does KJ.

The next man, the one who was having a conversation with Boyle, is blond like Aaron. The similarities end there. Unlike the mountaineer, this next man is a little older - probably in his late twenties. He wears glasses behind which he has blue-gray eyes. He is solid, though his muscular arms are a bit disproportional when compared to his thin midsection and chest. His musculature must come from heavy lifting rather than sport or training. He has a severe look and doesn't seem to smile easily. His name is James Ford.

"KJ, this is Jimmy," John Bowen says, "He can fix anything, and I mean anything. Jimmy, this is KJ."

"Nice meeting you," he says.

He shakes her hand. It is a firm grip. She appreciates his strength. He could squeeze her much harder if he wanted. Still, he does not treat her as breakable. She likes that.

"Thank you, Jimmy," she says, "Nice to meet you."

The next man is a rival to Garret in comeliness. He falls just short, though his dash is just as great. He has bright, intense chestnut-brown eyes and is tall and powerful. He's not as strong as Johnny but no doubt lifts and exercises. He looks to be in his early-to-mid-twenties.

"KJ, this is Cristian," Johnny says, "He's been a very close friend of mine since we were five years old."

Cristian kisses her cheeks.

"It's a pleasure, KJ," he says, "Please, call me Cristi."

"Thank you," she says, "It's my pleasure."

It comes out less eloquent than she'd have liked.

"Johnny, I need to talk to you later," Cristi says, "Before you two take off. Don't forget, alright?"

"OK," Johnny says, "I'll get with you later."

Johnny glances at KJ, who is looking up at him, and he smiles.

The final guest among the group is a middle-aged man with short but thick red hair and bright blue eyes. He is ursine in stature but his face is youthful and pleasant. He smiles the instant KJ looks at him.

"KJ," Johnny says, "This gentleman is Gary, Anna's father."

KJ already guessed. Of all the guests she hoped would be present, she wanted to meet him the most.

Gary embraces her. She returns his embrace.

"It's so nice to meet you, Mr. Murphy," she says.

"It's my pleasure, young lady," Gary says.

"Thank you so much," KJ says.

He's one of the reasons she's here.

"How are things, sweetheart?" he asks.

"I'm getting stronger," she says, "Right now, I'm just happy to be here."

Gary smiles. Her resilience reminds him of a girl he once knew; one with whom he shared the best years of his life.

"Anna's here," he says, "She's in the kitchen, helping Mrs. Donnelly and Sarah with the meal preparations. Bill's in there, too."

KJ looks at Johnny, and then back at Gary.

"I should be helping them," she says.

"Next time," Johnny says.

"You're a guest tonight, KJ," Gary says, "They'll be done soon, anyway."

"Thank you, Mr. Murphy," she says.

KJ looks at the dining room door one more time. She still wants to help, to do something however small. She won't challenge what Johnny and Gary said, however. To do so would be rude, especially on her first visit.

"How's school?" Gary asks.

"I wish I could say good," she says, "or at least that I'm learning something important, but I don't want to lie to you." She looks at Johnny. "I won't lie to either of you," she says.

"That's alright," Gary says, "You don't need 'Mommy Professor' telling you what to think."

KJ feels a bit euphoric. It's such a joy to be around like-minded people. She looks down and sees Gary's big hands - the hands of a miner. She has no doubt whatsoever that if anything ever happened to Anna at school, those hands would be around the throat of both the perpetrator and the principal. She has no doubt that he'd stand up for Anna if the school ever threatened his daughter with unfair punishment. Anna is blessed to have him.

About this time, KJ hears the front door close. After a few moments, three young men enter through the living room door. The first is known to KJ: it's Mason Walker, part time worker at Diamond Crossing. The next two are strangers for the moment. One is in his early twenties. He has long, dark brown hair that contrasts with his white skin and gray-blue eyes. He is the first man she's seen tonight who sports a moustache. He also has an earring. The second stranger is also in his early twenties. He

has thick brown hair and light brown eyes. His face is handsome with a strong jaw. He has a foreign look to him, and when he speaks KJ realizes that he's another Irishman.

The "rocker" guy says something to him and the Irishman laughs with force.

"Let's meet the fellows," Johnny says, "Excuse us, Gary."

"Mason!" Johnny says, "Come here. This is KJ..."

Mason cuts off Johnny's introduction.

"KJ, yeah, I remember," he says, alternating his view between Johnny and KJ and finally settling on her.

Mason takes her hand and then kisses her cheeks. KJ is surprised by his move, which mimics Cristi's.

"You never did that before," Gary says.

"Don't tell her that!" he says.

"I hope you didn't drive," Gary says.

"No, I'm good," Mason says, "Nice seein' you, KJ."

"You too, Mason," she says.

She laughs a little from the levity. As usual her laugh is all but silent and reserved, but sincere and sweet. She looks at Johnny to see him laughing to himself and shaking his head.

"OK," Johnny says, "KJ, I'd like you to meet Austin."

The "rocker" guy is a mechanic, not a musician, though like most of them he, too, loves music. In his case, his preferred genre is heavy metal, a taste that many of them share. His job and private exercise routine have sculpted his body and he is in excellent shape.

"Nice meeting you, KJ," he says.

He shakes her hand.

"Austin's a lot like Jimmy over there," Johnny says, "He's a damn good mechanic."

"We're the gearheads of the old society," Austin says. KJ does not know what "society" he means but now's not the time for asking, so she remains silent. "Johnny's one of us. Ask him about Blackjack."

"Some other time," Johnny says, "I'm glad you could come, Austin."

"Are you serious?" he says, "I wouldn't miss our little get-together." He looks at KJ. "There's some very good people here."

She smiles. Johnny touches Austin's shoulder and then moves on.

"This handsome young lad is Sean," he says, "Sean's from Ireland. Sean, this is KJ."

"It's a pleasure," Sean says when he takes her hand.

"Good to see you, man," Johnny says, "How's Niamh?"

His voice expresses sympathy. KJ believes that whoever Niamh is, she must be of great importance to Sean, and she must have suffered some misfortune.

"She's as well as can be expected," Sean says, "Thanks for asking, Johnny."

"Let us know whatever you need," Johnny says, "We'll do whatever we can, alright?"

"She'll want us to have a good time," Sean says, "She won't want any tears or regrets."

"Absolutely," Johnny says.

KJ looks at Sean and smiles for a moment. She feels like she's among a wonderful family, and, just maybe, she's a long-lost relative.

About this time, Anna and a young, raven-haired woman come in from the dining room.

"That's Sarah, Tom's wife," Johnny says to KJ.

KJ nods. Sarah looks a little like Joanie Mancuso; just a little.

"Thank you for introducing me to everyone," KJ says to Johnny.

"Sure," he says.

Anna sees them and hurries over.

"KJ!" she yells. She embraces KJ, who squeezes her just as hard.

"It's so awesome you could come! How are you? You look so beautiful!"

"I'm so happy I could make it," KJ says, "Thank you so much."

Anna is wearing a gorgeous green and white dress and she rivals KJ with her remarkable comeliness. As they stand together, it's obvious the two have become young women of tremendous beauty, and that their beauty will grow even stronger. That they are awake and love their race is nothing short of amazing. Such love of kin and race, once as natural as breath, has become especially rare among white women, who are the target of relentless propagandizing and pressure to betray their own brothers and sons. Those who rise against the genocidal tide would face the wrath of the anti-white zealots, and the vast machine that profits from the slow death of the white man. Those who rise must be prepared to fight.

Tonight the enemy cannot touch the young ladies of the Core, or the spectacular new member KJ, who has already fought, alone, against the anti-white system. Tonight, on the Eve of Christmas, Anna and KJ are safe among those who cherish them for the right reasons. The knowledge that such women still exist steels the nerves of these men, who are willing to risk life and limb for a loyal woman and for children yet to be born. It is an ancient reciprocity that is waning but is not yet dead.

"You look beautiful, Anna," KJ says once they separate.

While the two exchange embraces and compliments, Bill Donnelly watches from the dining room door. He can imagine KJ becoming the sister that Anna never had, and Anna being the sister that KJ should have had. Their bond would be unbreakable. He looks at Johnny Bowen. His glance is brief. His affections for the young man are deep and need no exploration. Bill looks at Garret, whose arm is around Rian's shoulder. Jesse, Rian's girlfriend, speaks to them both. Garret already knows of the big announcement that Bill will make later tonight. The others do not. He can see these souls being strong through hard times. KJ already has. He clears his mind of such thoughts and the images they conjure. Tonight he will not contemplate the future, for it is Christmas Eve and peace and joy shall reign.

Megan Donnelly comes to the door. She summons Anna, Sarah and Sinead. The others she invites into the dining room. They enter to a magnificent sight. The big oak tables are covered with a gorgeous green and white spread. Boughs of holly hang from the walls and doorways. There is a clear space opposite the door at the far wall. Considering the rich décor and furnishings, the space must be empty for a reason. There are names at each chair along the length of the large table. The guests find their spots; KJ is between Johnny Bowen and Sarah Neely. She's opposite Anna, who will sit between her father and Garret Fogarty. KJ is overwhelmed by the sight. From the wooden floors to the carved rafters and elk horn chandelier, the dining room is a place of beauty and custom. In the carvings and designs she can see the legacy of the Irish people, one of the many branches of her race. Her race's past is not dead. It is not a thing to abhor. It is beautiful.

KJ glances at the little card with her name, just in front of the seat reserved for her. She has a place here.

Mrs. Donnelly and the three young women emerge from the kitchen, each carrying a covered dish. Bill is last to exit. He pushes a cart with more covered plates. The meal consists of Christmas goose and Limerick ham, pork belly braised and roasted and delicious sides that include rosemary potatoes and hazelnut and celeriac slaw.

"So, what shall we drink?" Bill asks.

Johnny Bowen jumps up, followed by Garret Fogarty. They exit from the dining room to the living room. At the door, Johnny turns back toward the guests and the Donnelly's.

"We'll handle this part," he says.

The guests wait with anticipation until the two men return. They each carry a large cooler. In one is an assortment of beers and ales. In the other

are natural non-alcoholic beverages, such as homemade juice and cider. Garret hurries back to the living room and returns with two gift-wrapped bottles. He presents them to Bill Donnelly.

"What would you like to drink?" Johnny asks KJ.

"I'll have some homemade cider," she says, "Thank you, Johnny."

Bill remains standing.

"Before we begin," he says, "I'd like to introduce you to a person who has already endeared herself to my heart. This beautiful young lady is KJ. You will find her to be an extraordinary young woman. Please welcome her into our humble little group."

KJ recovers from her surprise and rises for a moment, a little embarrassed but in her heart touched by Bill's words.

The meal commences after a brief prayer delivered by Bill Donnelly. Most guests make the sign of the cross; Johnny and KJ are the two who do not. The quality of the food is extraordinary. KJ savors every bite. She doesn't usually have the time to make such a meal at the Campbell House. Erica never cared to make her a sumptuous meal, except when there were guests at the house.

Conversation follows its natural course once everyone's plate is full. KJ and Johnny engage in a little small talk about the goodness of the meal, as well as their shared interests in music and the natural world. The gist of the group's interactions is joyous and easygoing. It is a great respite for KJ. On occasion she closes her eyes and imagines a life with such people, all the while enjoying the delicious food and drink.

After a while Sarah Neely strikes up a conversation with KJ and Johnny. Sarah's hair is shoulder-length now and as always raven colored. KJ notices that Sarah's eyes are also pale blue. She's too thin to be beautiful, though that does not come from self-starvation. It's just her natural build. Still, her face is lovely, and she is a very pleasant and intelligent young wife.

The desert - apple cake baked in a pot oven - and a wide selection of homemade cookies and breads complement the meal in taste and variety. When the guests and the Donnelly Family finish their desserts and coffee, Bill rises from his seat at the far end of the table. The others fall silent out of respect.

"Members of the old Celtic Society," he says, "and the lovely new faces among us," his glance moves to KJ when he says the second part, "I have an announcement to make that is one of the most important of my entire life. It is my great pleasure to announce the engagement of our son Rian to the beautiful young lady Jessica Hanratty. They couldn't have

given this old heart a better Christmas present. May God bless their union and grant them eternal happiness."

Rian and Jesse stand. He kisses her and the guests applaud. Soon after, everyone is on their feet, congratulating the couple. Garret whispers something in Bill's ear and Bill opens one of the bottles wrapped in gift paper. He holds up the bottle of Krug champagne. Everyone has a glass - small ones for the younger members - and joins in the toast in honor of the big event. Once the drink and hugs and pats on the back are complete, the men begin to leave for the large room while Megan, Anna, Sinead and Sarah begin clearing the table. As they depart for the kitchen, KJ hurries to join them.

"Hey, Johnny," Mason says, "she doesn't have to do that."

"Young KJ likes to be helpful," Bill says, "We'll let her enjoy the evening in her own way."

Once the table is cleared and everyone is together again in the dining room, Tom and Jimmy depart for the interior of the house. They return with instruments - Tom with a fiddle, Jimmy with a guitar. The two move chairs to the open spot and warm up with an old Irish jig. Both men are quite skilled; Jimmy is phenomenal. They continue playing as several guests rise. Anna and her father share a cheerful little dance. Rian and Jesse are quick to join them, as are Tom and Sarah. Since there are too few women for all the men to dance at once, a few sing and attempt traditional Irish male dances. These aren't always successful in execution but never cease to be entertaining. Sinead and Rian persuade Bill to sing the one solemn song of the evening, the ubiquitous "Danny Boy," accompanied by the guitar of Jimmy Ford. KJ would like to share her voice with them. But her newness and her shyness keep her from asking.

"Would you like to dance?" Johnny asks her.

She's had classes and took them very seriously, though the only practice she's had in the last two years has been solo. She has, however, practiced and incorporated more energetic dances into her aerobics routines.

"Maybe later," KJ says, "I don't know."

Johnny sees on her face that she's a little more nervous after he asks. Her hands do not tremble, however, and he notices this as well.

"No problem, KJ," he says. He leans over to her. "I didn't want you to feel left out," he whispers.

She smiles when he leans back.

"I don't," she says, "Thank you for asking me." She sighs. "This is the best I've felt in a long time."

"Good," Johnny says, "This isn't my favorite type of music, but these guys are pretty damn good."

KJ nods. She almost says she'd like to sing someday, but she waits. The time will come. It can't be forced. It's more than enough to be here; to be valued. She feels a fondness for these folks that grows with each minute. It grows with Tom and Sarah's embrace after they dance, and it grows as Austin claps and Mason tries to dance. Now the music is lively and Anna is dancing with Garret. Sinead is dancing with her father, and Mrs. Donnelly with her son. KJ feels so good she smiles again. Johnny notices and does likewise. He leans back in his chair and watches the dancers and the musicians.

The floor clears for the last dance. Bill and Megan take the floor and share a slow dance as Jimmy and Tom play an instrumental version of "Fair and Tender Ladies." Everyone is silent during the song. In some ways, tonight is the final breath of the old Celtic Society. It is also the birth of something new, something that promises both happiness and sorrow.

At ten in the evening, Aaron, Austin and Sean take their leave. They wish everyone a Merry Christmas and congratulate Jesse and Rian. Each departs with handshakes, embraces and kisses. There is no difference in the manner that they treat Anna, Sinead and KJ. KJ is already becoming a member of the group from their perspective. She begins to feel it, and the realization is an unparalleled comfort for her wounded soul.

Bill accompanies the men to the back door. Austin is last to exit.

"Tell Mason and Aaron we'll meet the week after next," Bill says.

Meanwhile, Johnny excuses himself and goes with Cristian to the hallway. Anna takes a seat beside KJ.

"Nice, huh?" Anna says.

"Yeah," KJ says, "I've had a wonderful night."

Anna smiles and rubs KJ's hand.

"Hey," she says, "In three weeks, *Chironex* is playing again at Diamond. You want me to pick you up?"

She knows the answer.

"Yeah!" KJ says, flashing a little grimace when she has to answer so obvious a question.

Anna laughs.

"That's not all," Anna says, "In two weeks there's a really good Goth metal band coming up from Virginia. If you're interested we could go."

KJ raises an eyebrow.

"Yeah," she says, nodding slowly.

Anna throws her arm around her sister, who looks down and smiles.

As the evening winds down, the guests and the Donnelly's gather for a few final words. It is almost Christmas Day.

"You've thanked me," Bill says, "Now let me thank all of you on behalf of my wife and myself, first for coming, but more important, for gracing our lives and giving us so much joy. It is more than a man can hope for in a hundred lifetimes. May each of you have a very Merry Christmas. God-speed, and may we all meet again come next Christmas, in good health and cheer. God bless each of you, my friends."

The guests bid farewell to the Donnelly Family, with some of the hugs lasting quite some time. KJ and Anna depart, accompanied by Gary and Johnny Bowen. The night is cold and the sky is clearing. The silence of the forest is broken by an occasional sloughing off of snow by the trees. It is a picturesque Christmas Eve.

Anna and Gary give their regards to Johnny and KJ, and then leave for the Murphy House. They'll be spending Christmas with the Murphy and Buckley clans. Johnny and KJ walk the road out to the Long Hall.

"I'm glad you had a good time," Johnny says as the white pickup comes into view. A very thin layer of snow coats the windshield.

"It was wonderful, Johnny," KJ says, "Thank you so much."

"You're welcome, KJ," he says, "I'm really glad you could come."

KJ smiles. She pulls him toward her, stretches and kisses his cheek.

"Thank you for giving a shit about me," she says.

He looks into her eyes. After a moment she looks down and smiles.

"Merry Christmas, KJ," he says.

"Merry Christmas, Johnny," she says as she looks back into his eyes.

KJ climbs into the truck. She immediately reaches over and unlocks his door. He looks at her for a brief moment when he enters and then asks for the scraper from under the seat. As the truck warms she watches him clean the windows. Ten minutes later they depart from the Donnelly Homestead.

The drive to Markleysburg usually takes twenty or so minutes. Tonight it will take about an hour due to road conditions, and Johnny Bowen's extra care.

"Johnny," she says, "may I ask you something?"

"Of course," he says, "You don't have to ask permission."

"OK, well, Austin mentioned Blackjack," she says, "I know it's none of my business."

"KJ, if I don't want to talk about something I'll tell you," he says, "Why wouldn't you ask? You're not walking on thin ice, not with me at least. If you want to ask something, just ask."

"Alright," KJ says, "Thank you."

He smiles a little, keeping his eyes on the road.

"Blackjack," Johnny says, "OK, sure. Some time ago, six years I guess, I saw a truck for sale. Old piece of shit, you know, didn't even have a passenger side door. 1975 Mack. It was that old and looked every fucking year of it. I got the crazy idea of fixing it, because we might need it, you know? Took two years but I wouldn't give up."

"Really?" she says, "Can I see it?"

"Sometime, sure," he says, "It's busy right now, though."

"Cool," she says, "Is Blackjack a model name?"

She's never heard of it before, and she read about truck repair while at Kaminski's.

"No," Johnny says, "That was written on the door. I have no idea why."

Bill Donnelly stands at the bedroom window. He is as silent as the winter night. Megan waits for him to come to bed. Tomorrow is the family meal and they'll have to rise early to finish preparations. Something is troubling him, that much is clear. She thinks she knows what. Megan begins the conversation, speaking in the Irish as the two always do on such occasions.

"Sweetheart," she says, "Come to bed."

Bill doesn't respond. Megan climbs to the side of the bed and slides to her feet. She walks up behind him and wraps her arms around his waist.

"What's troubling you, dear?" she asks.

"Garret isn't the only one who's like a son to me," he says.

"So is Johnny," she says.

"Yes, love," he says, "KJ doesn't have a father. The fool that fathered her doesn't deserve the title. It would be easy for Johnny to fall into that role. It would be easy for him to think it's best."

"It's not fair to him," Megan says. She kisses Bill on the shoulder. "He'll need someone; a woman he can trust with his life. I imagine it will be lonely and they might only have each other. He doesn't need a daughter and she certainly won't need a father by then."

Bill sighs and nods.

"It's hard to see these things, sometimes," he says.

"You're done a miraculous job, love," she says.

"I believe I can help the two of them," he says, "Whatever comes of it will depend on them, but I think I can help so that they alone can decide. I can make sure it's up to them, when the time comes."

"You think Johnny is best for her," Megan says, "I think she's best for him. We'll see if we're both right. Do what you must, dear. I trust in your decision."

She kisses his shoulder. Bill turns and embraces her.

"You give such strength to this tired old soul," he says.

"You give breath to mine," she says.

They kiss and she leads him to bed.

At around 2 AM, KJ and Johnny arrive at Markleysburg, Pennsylvania. They stop at a small but attractive cabin-like home just off Route 281. The driveway and path to the entrance are clean except for the light snow that fell during the late afternoon and evening.

Bowen exits and KJ starts to open the door. She sees him circling the truck and gently closes her door. When he arrives, he opens it for her. The cabin interior is sparse in its furnishings but is very clean. KJ takes off her wellies at the door and puts her coat on the nearby rack. The place is warm in spite of the unlit fireplace. The furnace will keep the place comfortable all night.

"I'll get a fire started," Johnny says.

"No, please, Johnny," KJ says, "It's nice like this. I don't want you to get home too late. You sure you don't want to stay? I can sleep on the couch."

He looks at her and shakes his head.

"I knew you wouldn't stand for that," she says, "But I had to ask. Johnny, it's kind of bad out tonight. It's not like you're taking advantage of me. I'll be in here and you'll be in the other room, and it's, like, really late."

"No, KJ," he says, "Now, are you sure you don't want a fire?"

"No, thank you," she says.

"OK, then," he says, "The bedroom's over there, the bathroom's at the far end. You can see the kitchen." He turns and walks into the kitchen. She can hear him open something but when he comes out his hands are empty. "Is there a time you have to be home?" he asks.

"No, Johnny," she says, "Whenever you can come by."

Erica will be angry, but it's more important to KJ that Johnny have a good night's rest.

"OK," he says, "Oh yeah, there are blankets and stuff in the dresser and on the bed. You'll be OK."

"Thank you, Johnny," she says.

"Merry Christmas, KJ," he says.

"Merry Christmas," she says, and flashes him that ephemeral smile that he loved the first time he saw it.

Johnny Bowen lays the keys on the table in the kitchen before he departs.

"Lock up before you go to bed," he says, "I'll lock the doorknob, but make sure you lock the deadbolt as soon as I leave."

"I will," KJ says, "Good night."

As Johnny pulls out of the driveway, KJ opens the door to the bedroom. She stops at the threshold. God knows how far he'll have to go tonight, on these roads, at this hour. It's a sacrifice he's making for her.

You won't regret what you do for me. I promise.

KJ curls up in the comfortable little bed. She does not try to sleep at first, but looks at the white drapes and the curtains with wolves running in the snow.

On a sunny spring day it takes about forty-five minutes to drive from Markleysburg to Deer Park, Maryland. Tonight it takes two hours. Johnny Bowen manages to get in bed at 4:30 AM. He sets his clock to ring at 7 AM.

KJ wakes up at 8:30. She brushes her teeth and takes a quick shower before putting on the t-shirt and jeans that she brought in her bag. Then she returns to the bedroom. Her dress is on the chair by the bed. She folds the dress carefully before putting it in the bag. It was a beautiful night, surpassing even the highest expectations. She goes to the kitchen for a glass of water and sees that Johnny set out several bags of tea, a honey bear and a kettle. She chooses blackberry since there is more than one bag of that flavor. When the tea is done she adds a little honey and goes into the main room. There, she relaxes on the couch, cups the mug in her gloved hands and sips her tea.

Johnny Bowen pulls in at 11:15 AM. The drive took a little longer due to a minor accident at Chalk Hill. He has a spare key but knocks rather than barging in without warning. KJ knows who it is; she saw the truck enter the driveway.

"Merry Christmas, Johnny," she says when he enters.

"Merry Christmas, KJ," he says and smiles.

"You didn't sleep much," she says.

She frowns.

"Couldn't," he says, "It's Christmas."

In truth, he doesn't want her parents to come down hard on her.

Johnny hears the tea kettle in the kitchen. The whistle is very soft; the gas must be very low.

"Would you like some tea?" she asks, "I had it on just in case you did."

"Sure," Johnny says, "Thank you, KJ."

He won't decline her hospitality.

"It's my pleasure, Johnny," KJ says. She jumps up to get the tea. "Do you have a preference?" she asks from the kitchen.

"Mint," he says.

About an hour later, the two depart for Uniontown. KJ's elation helps her block any thought of Erica and her home life. The outside world is spectacular; a White Christmas Day with clean, white snow.

"Did you sleep well?" he asks.

"Yeah," she says, "It's really nice there. I like that kind of place."

"You also like wild places, I gather," he says, "Woods, mountains, or maybe the seashore?"

"I want the seashore to be protected," KJ says, "but I never cared to go to the beach. For one thing, the sun's harsh. I avoid it because it'll fuck up my skin. Why would I want to get dark, you know? I love my white skin. It's just, the sun doesn't like me."

"Fuck the sun," he says.

She laughs a little when he says this.

"Seriously, though, I don't want to burn my skin," she says, "I like it nice and white. I love mountains and forests, too, to finally answer your question."

"I didn't think you were into that stupid bronze look," he says, "I fucking hate that. It's like a game to some people."

"I've thought that," she says, "It's, like, a competition to see who can fuck up their white skin the fastest."

Johnny smiles when he hears her.

"There's a place I know in West Virginia," he says, "I think you'd like it there, up in the hills. You and Anna should check it out someday."

"Cool," KJ says, "I'd like to. You'll have to show us around the place, though. I don't think we'd have fun alone."

"We'll see what's going on," he says, "It won't be 'till spring and you'll have a license by then."

There is a silence for a few minutes.

"You can see all this wilderness going away someday," he says, "We're the only ones who care about woods and wild places, and more and more I see houses and goddamned shit food restaurants. And now we're disappearing just like they are."

KJ looks at him.

"You're right," she says.

She remembers saying the same thing. It seems a lifetime ago.

KJ tells Johnny to drop her off out of sight of the Campbell House. He has trepidation but fulfills her wish. She climbs out of the truck but remains at the open door as he speaks.

"You know, KJ," he says, "Next time it might be best if I drop you off at the entrance. If they ask I'll be happy to talk to them."

KJ stares at him, unsure of what to say.

"It's something to think about," he says, "It might be best in the long run."

"I'll think about it," she says, "Thank you, Johnny. Have a nice Christmas."

"I will," he says, "Good luck, KJ."

She smiles and looks down. Then the two part ways.

KJ enters through the back door. She knows she'd better not try stealth. If Erica is home, she'll be waiting, and suspicious behavior will trigger an immediate conflict. It's Christmas and KJ isn't looking for a fight, even if the holiday is still alien to her. She knows it doesn't depend on her alone. Two steps in the door, KJ sees Erica entering the kitchen. She looks at KJ and folds her arms.

"Where were you last night?" Erica asks.

There must be more than that. Erica might attack her for staying out all night, but she wouldn't be waiting for KJ to come home. There's more; it will come out when Erica's ready.

"I was helping out at a Christmas Party," she says as she removes her wellington boots and her coat.

"Dressed like that?" Erica asks.

The disdain on her face is obvious.

"No, mom," KJ says, "I was wearing my dress."

"Uh-huh," Erica says, "Where'd you stay?"

She can't say at a friend's place. She has none that Erica knows about. She can't tell the truth. It pains her to have to mislead someone, but she must; things have changed forever.

"In the guest bedroom," KJ says, "It was too late to come home and then go right back again."

"Why'd it take so long for you to answer my question?" Erica asks.

"Do you want to call my boss?" KJ asks.

She's frustrated and her anger creeps out.

"Don't take that tone with me!" Erica says. She approaches KJ. "You better not get pregnant!" she says.

Gene rushes into the kitchen. KJ looks at Gene and Erica turns toward him.

"I'll handle this!" Erica says.

"Where were you?" Gene asks.

"I'll handle this, Gene," Erica says.

Gene looks at her, and then glares at KJ. He retreats to the den. Erica turns back to KJ.

"How do you know if you're not?" she asks.

KJ feels the rage growing inside.

"I haven't fucked anyone, mom," she says.

It's loud enough for Gene to hear but he keeps to his hiding place.

"Foul-mouthed brat," Erica says, "Listen to me, you're not going to dump some little monster on us while you're out having fun. When you end up pregnant, remember, we're not taking in your little bastard."

KJ looks at her with a stone expression that begins to show signs of the enormous pain and rage within. Erica's words are reminding her of what happened after the fight with Stephanie - and what was revealed.

"If I were pregnant," KJ says, "You wouldn't lay a fucking finger on my baby."

"Keep going, Kaylee," Erica says, "You're already in over your head. You better not be pregnant, if you know what's good for you. Which I doubt. We'll deal with that later. First, there's something else you'll have to explain."

Now Erica arrives at the reason she waited all day for KJ.

"What?" KJ asks, "Just say it!"

"Principal Weems called yesterday," Erica says, "He said that you've been making anti-Semitic remarks to another student."

Gene is too much of a coward to face her with the accusation. He stays out of sight.

"What the fuck?" KJ says, "They're the ones who fuck with me! They put swastikas on my locker and glue the fucking lock." Erica opens her mouth to speak but KJ continues. "After all the shit they've done, they deserve a few remarks." Her face shows anger and annoyance. "They deserve more than a few words," she says, "... a lot fucking more!"

"If you wouldn't talk like a Nazi," Erica says, "then maybe they wouldn't bother you. Can you really blame them?"

"Fuck them!" KJ says, "They started this shit after that nigger grabbed my breasts. I never said shit to them."

"Those words..." Erica says, "You think it makes you hard, don't you? You sound like a redneck. For the life of me I can't understand how you ended up this way. I didn't raise you to be white trash. You chose to be that way."

"I woke up, mom," KJ says, "In spite of you and that...that coward in there!"

A tear escapes when she describes her father in that manner. It's warm. It feels like blood.

"Don't you dare talk about your father like that!" Erica snarls, "You had better show him some respect!"

"Like you do?" KJ asks.

"You're letting one event define your life," Erica says, her lips narrower than before, "Are you going to linger on that one event forever? Is it that precious to you? It could have been a white guy, you know."

"You can't say what happened to me?" KJ says, "If the goddamned teacher hadn't come over to punish me, they'd have raped me. Rape! Isn't that the worst fucking crime to you? Why the fuck is it different when some nigger does it?"

"Watch your mouth!" Erica says.

"Why the fuck is it different?" KJ asks, "If a white guy helped me you'd want him punished, wouldn't you? But don't worry, mother, your kind have cut off their balls."

KJ wipes her face.

"I'm not going to feel sorry for you," Erica says.

"As if I want that from you," KJ says.

"I'll try to figure out what to do with you later," Erica says, "Weems says your grades are down compared to last year and with your anti-social behavior, it's getting harder and harder to convince them not to expel you."

Good, KJ thinks. She doesn't speak. Erica will think that she's won. She may let KJ pass if she does.

"Get upstairs," Erica says, "And don't come down until we're gone. We're meeting with Stephanie tonight and I don't want to see any sign of you."

KJ charges off to the stairs. There's some good news, after all.

Once she's sure Erica and Gene are gone, KJ creeps down to the kitchen. She makes supper - Christmas dinner of a sort - and then loads the dishwasher. Before going back to her room she leaves fifty dollars on the kitchen table. Ostensibly it's for family expenses; for KJ it buys a little freedom. As long as she pays, her parents don't crack down as hard as they could.

Wednesday afternoon takes its sweet time in coming. KJ avoids her family, emerging from her room to make a quick lunch and then to prepare sandwiches for her time at the Donnelly Homestead. When 4 PM arrives,

she hurries down the steps and charges out the front door. Erica, who is in the foyer at the time, hurries over to block her exit.

"Where do you think you're going?" Erica asks.

"Work," KJ says.

"Like hell you are," Erica says.

"Where do you think I got the money I left on the table?" KJ asks.

"I'm afraid to ask," Erica says.

"How can you say that to me?" KJ asks, "You think I'm a whore, is that it?"

Erica doesn't respond. Neither does she move.

"They're waiting for me!" KJ says, "You can call..."

"Where?" Erica interrupts, "Who's waiting?"

"At the entrance of Kimberly," KJ says.

"Let's have a look," Erica says.

Great, KJ thinks, I hope Johnny came today.

Erica and KJ arrive at the meeting point almost as soon as the white Chevy turns on to Kimberly Drive. KJ's eyesight is twenty-twenty; she can see it's not Johnny at the wheel. Anna drives up as if nothing is different and stops in front of the two. She opens the passenger side door.

"Hi, KJ," Anna says. Her warm smile and beautiful white face are a lovely sight. "Johnny couldn't come," she says, "He wanted to. He asked if I could take you to Bill's."

Anna's hair is loose today. The thick red strands flow over and around her shoulders.

"Who might you be?" Erica asks before KJ can speak.

"Anna Murphy," Anna says. She's wearing a long-sleeve turtleneck sweater.

KJ is glad it's December. If Anna wore a t-shirt, odds are Erica would see her ivy tattoo. She'd make some stupid comment and insult KJ's red-headed sister.

"I'm Kaylee's mother," Erica says. She turns toward KJ. "Work, huh? Just what do you two plan on doing?"

"I'm dropping her off at work," Anna says.

"I didn't ask you!" Erica says, snapping her head toward Anna.

KJ feels like throwing up. Anna smiles and keeps silent. The anger wells up inside KJ.

"Don't talk to my friend like that!" KJ says.

"I forbid you to go with this..." Erica hesitates.

She searches for a good insult; one that is not low brow but yet insults the redhead. She blows her chance.

"Leave her alone!" KJ yells.

Her voice is raw power.

If you insult her again, I'll shove you on your ass.

Anna speaks up.

"It's OK, KJ," she says, "I'll let Mr. Donnelly know you can't make it today. He'll call and set things straight." She looks at Erica. "Nice to meet you, Mrs. Campbell."

Erica ignores her. Anna winks at KJ and closes the door. KJ watches as Anna pulls out and drives away. She considers running after her. She considers never coming back to this accursed place. She wishes she could trade her parents' lives for her brother's.

The walk back is like a funeral procession for KJ. She refuses to approach Erica. KJ knows she has to escape. Right now that option does not exist. She doesn't have near enough money. Besides, she doesn't want to kill her chance to be a part of Bill's and Anna's - and Johnny's - lives. On an emotional level, it is almost impossible to stay.

When KJ enters the Campbell House, she bolts for the basement. Erica does not pursue. Although the weight program she follows doesn't call for repetitions today, KJ cannot resist. She grabs the dumbbells she keeps behind Gene's unused canoe and begins doing curls. She stops only after realizing that she hasn't stretched. That done, she begins again at a furious pace. Her growing willpower trumps her emotions and prevents her from shooting past her target number of reps. It is a narrow victory. Several times she looks at the weights and comes very close to picking them up again. Instead, she does crunches. She must consciously restrain herself from exceeding her limit, which is lower than that for most of her other exercises. KJ wants to be strong - especially her arms, whose strength is a great advantage - but she neither hates nor wishes to destroy her womanly form, and has studiously avoided routines that would alter the femininity of her chest and belly. Today it is an effort not to push things too far, especially the crunches, but KJ keeps her wits and resists the temptation.

When her fury fades to dull anger, KJ heads upstairs to the bedroom. For supper, she eats the sandwiches she prepared for her day at Bill's. She washes them down with a bottle of warm water from her handbag. She cannot stand the sight of Erica right now, and for the rest of the evening she remains upstairs.

Anna arrives home at around 5:30 PM. Gary sees her pull in and wonders why she left the Donnelly's so fast. He looks at the clock and realized she didn't have time to pass by with KJ. Something is wrong. He

sets his coffee up on the counter and charges outside. If someone's done them wrong, he won't hesitate to act.

Anna walks around the truck as Gary descends the front steps. He can see that Anna's upset. Her stoic façade in front of Erica was for KJ's sake. She tries to hide her troubled look from Gary but he knows her far too well.

"What's wrong, Anna?" Gary asks.

"KJ's mother followed her outside," Anna says, "She doesn't believe that KJ works at Bill's and she wouldn't let her leave with me."

"Come inside," Gary says.

He puts his arm around her. She grabs his big hand.

When they enter the kitchen of their little home, Anna sits at the table. She explains what happened. There's still one day left of what the school system calls "Winter Break." This is the perfect way to ruin the final day.

"Do you still remember what I told you about saving someone?" he asks.

"Dad, please," she says, "I know she wants to save herself. She's strong, dad. You should have seen her defend me when her mother started to insult me."

Gary shifts his jaw when he hears this. He'd like to ask what Erica said, and then go and beat KJ's worthless father before slapping the shit out of the foul woman who insulted his daughter. He does not, for Anna and KJ's sake.

"She's been through so much, dad," Anna says, "She won't give up, but she needs help. Honest-to-God, I thought she was going to smack her mother when she insulted me. I trust you, dad, but how can we let her go?"

"You forgot what I told you," he says, "You're just remembering part of it."

Anna closes her mouth and looks into his eyes, a little perplexed.

"You can't save someone," he says, "But you can help them save themselves. KJ's trying to save herself, so we're going to help her."

Anna laughs and covers her mouth. Huge tears begin to roll down her beautiful, freckled face.

"You didn't think I'd abandon your friend, did you?" he asks.

She shakes her head.

"No," she says, "But I trust you, dad. I'll go with whatever you say."

"I'm not always right," he says, "No man's God."

"You're almost always right," she says, "and that's enough for me."

Anna's eyes, her smile, her words; the affection she has and the inner strength, they all ease the pain he still feels over the loss of Mary.

"I'll call Bill," Gary says, "I don't know what will come of it, but we'll see what he can do." Gary stands and touches Anna's head. "Red, you'll make a good man very happy someday."

She smiles and wipes away the tears.

At 6:15 PM, Bill Donnelly's cell phone rings again. He's pacing the floor at the meeting room in the Long Hall. From the number he knows it's Gary Murphy calling. Neither Anna nor KJ has arrived; he knows something is wrong. Bill remembers the anxiety he felt the day before his first combat mission. He remembers waiting for his brother to rendezvous with his combat cell once the deed was done. Though the reasons are different, this is no less nerve-wracking. He closes his eyes and prays that neither young woman has been harmed. Bill answers the phone.

"Is Anna in danger?" are the first words he speaks.

He'd ask about KJ, but if either is in peril, Gary Murphy will want him to ask about his daughter first.

"They're OK, Bill," Gary says, "A little problem's come up."

Bill is elated but it doesn't show. There is a problem, after all.

"What's wrong?" Bill asks.

"KJ's witch of a mother forbade her from going with Anna," Gary says, "From what Anna tells me, her mother must have thought they were going out to have fun. Sounds like it gets pretty hot between KJ and her mother."

He doesn't tell Bill about the insults. He'll deal with that should he ever meet the woman.

"I see," Bill says, "I wondered when this might happen. I'll give them a call. Gary, if the guys have no reservations, I'll invite her parents to visit the place. I'd offer an invitation right now, but the guys have a right to know and voice their objections if they have any. What do you say, Gary?"

"I say let 'em visit," Gary says, "KJ's worth a minor inconvenience."

Gary, too, considered this possibility.

"I agree," Bill says, "I'm going to call them now, but I won't offer an invitation until the men have their say."

"I better not be there when they visit," Gary says, "I hope you understand."

"I do, Gary," Bill says, "Thank you."

At 6:35 PM, the land line rings at the Campbell House. KJ does not hear it ring. She lies in bed listening to *Celtic Frost* on the shuffle that Anna gave to her. She considers running away. She could easily escape if she

were 18, but what would she do? Where would she go? There are no racially aware white organizations or groups that would shelter and aid a young white person - even a young white woman who is racially conscious and would gladly work each and every day to repay their kindness. Those who have the courage to found such an organization would have to do so in deep secrecy.

Perhaps she's found one such group at the Donnelly's Homestead. It would be far too risky to find out. If she fled to them, the oppressive, anti-white authorities would surely follow. Would they embrace her anyway? Would one soul be worth such extreme risk and peril? Anna would say yes. Johnny would say yes. Gary and Bill and the guests at the party would all say yes. If KJ were among them, she'd say yes. That is why she cannot run to them. She must not risk all those souls.

KJ closes her eyes. She will not drown this sadness in chemicals. She will use it to fuel her resistance.

Gene Campbell answers the phone. He does not recognize the number. The voice that he greets is masculine and foreign, though his English is fluent.

"Good afternoon," he says, "My name is Bill Donnelly. May I speak to the man of the house?"

"Speaking," Gene says. He hears Erica come to the kitchen doorway. She asks if KJ is in trouble. "Just a moment, please," Gene tells Bill.

Bill hears Erica ask who is on the phone. He hears Gene hand the phone to her.

"Is this the lady of the house?" Bill asks.

"Yes I am," Erica says, "To whom am I speaking?"

"William Donnelly," Bill says, "I am the proprietor of a small farm near Lemont Furnace. Your daughter Kaylee is one of my employees."

"She works for you, Mr..." Erica trails off.

"Donnelly," Bill says, "Yes, Kaylee works for me, she did not report for work today."

Erica wastes no time in responding.

"No," Erica says, "I sent her home. That other girl, the ginger, is she one of your workers, too?"

Bill stifles his rising displeasure.

"Anna's her name," Bill says, "No, she's not. She's the daughter of one of my friends. The workers were occupied and she offered to drive Kaylee to the farm."

He doesn't call her KJ, not to Erica. He knows it peeved Erica and as long as KJ is in her midst he has to be polite. It's a grueling task.

"She knows Kaylee quite well, it would seem," Erica says.

"I'm sure they met somewhere," Bill says, "She used Anna as a reference."

"How did she find out about the job?" Erica asks.

Bill does not appreciate the interrogation, but since KJ's fate is in the balance he continues to entertain Erica.

"I can't answer that," Bill says, "I'd guess from a flyer we made. I left a few at the grocery store about two months ago, and at the library. Kaylee's a very hard worker, Mrs. Campbell. I could have used her today. Might she join us tomorrow? We're short-handed after the Christmas season."

Erica hesitates. Finally she gives her answer, weighed down with a demand.

"Fine," Erica says, "but I don't trust that disrespectful ginger girl driving my daughter. Find someone else to pick her up."

Bill curses her in his mind for calling Anna a ginger.

Because of parents like you, Bill thinks, girls like KJ are seeking refuge in the arms of our enemies. But not this time, you harridan.

"Certainly," Bill says, "We'll pick her up tomorrow."

"I'll accompany her," Erica says, "Just to be sure that she arrives on time."

It's her way of insulting Bill. He's not baited into losing his cool. KJ is more important than the satisfaction of telling Erica to fuck off.

"I understand that tomorrow is the final day of Christmas vacation," Bill says, "We'll have someone over at 10 AM."

"Fine," says Erica.

She hangs up before Bill can say another word.

Bill calls Gary on his cell phone. He resolves to pick up KJ.

"Gary," Bill says, "Might I speak to Anna? Thank you, Gary. Hello, Anna. Yes, she's fine. KJ will be fine. Be a dear and tell me how to arrive at her home."

KJ is up at 8:30 AM. After a shower, she goes to the kitchen to make tea and breakfast. Erica is there. KJ cannot stand to look at her.

"I talked to your boss last night," Erica says, "He's sending someone to pick you up at ten."

KJ stops in her tracks.

"Who was that girl who came by?" Erica asks, "Where do you know her from?"

"Her name is Anna," KJ says, "She used to hang with some of us after school. She doesn't go to Uniontown."

KJ recovers quickly and begins heading back to her room to get ready. She shows no emotion on her face, though inside she is feeling a rising tide of happiness.

"This better not be some act, Kaylee," Erica says.

KJ knows that maintaining contact with Bill and the others is far more important than mouthing off to Erica. She ignores her mother and heads upstairs. To make time, she'll have to skip breakfast. She dashes into her room and throws her things into her backpack. The cell phone's still in there. After grabbing a second shirt and donning a pair of tight gloves, she hides her iPod deep in the closet. Downstairs, she looks for energy bars but finds none. There's plenty of water, and she grabs a bottle. It will have to do for lunch. She will make up for lost meals when she returns.

Bill arrives to find KJ and Erica waiting along Kimberly Drive. He sees Erica talking and KJ looking away, her arms folded. The physical distance between the two is telling. As far as "eye candy" goes, Erica is very attractive; even more so considering her age, though her impressive sexuality is waning. Should she be homely but at the same time a strong and loving white mother, she would possess a beauty far greater than she does. To Bill this is everything. In Erica he does not see a desirable woman. He sees a destroyer; he sees a creature that is devouring its own youth.

KJ looks at him and waves. She must recognize the dark green Cherokee. Bill drives up close to her.

"Good morning," he says.

"Good morning, Mr. Donnelly," KJ says, her gloved hands on the frame of the now-open passenger side window.

She smiles a little. She had hoped Johnny would come, so that she might avoid a repeat of yesterday's fiasco. Bill will suffice of course. It's a very pleasant surprise for her. She climbs inside the Jeep.

"Here," he says, "put your backpack on the seat."

KJ shuts the door. She doesn't look at Erica. There is nothing between them, except the war between a tyrant and a young rebel. Bill pulls back on to Kimberly Drive and swings around. Erica doesn't budge until they're out of sight.

"How are you, KJ?" Bill asks.

"I'm good," she says, "Thank you, Bill. How have you been?"

"Fine, thank you," he says.

"If you prefer to call me Kaylee," she says, "I'm cool with that."

"That's for your mother's amusement," he says, "We have to put up with her whims for the time being."

"It seems like I'll have to put up with her forever," KJ says.

"No, you won't," Bill says, "In time, that will be your decision to make. There is much you'll have to decide in the near future."

KJ stares out the window. The snow is melting in the spotty sunlight.

"No matter what happens to me," she says, "I won't betray my people."

She does not hold back. If anyone sympathizes it will be Bill and Johnny and Anna. If the world will sacrifice her for loving her kin, she'd rather it be sooner than later.

"I believe you, KJ," Bill says, "It would seem you've already made that decision."

He can imagine what future she would have should she forsake her identity as a white woman and embrace the anti-white American system. As beautiful and talented as she is, she would not suffer a lack of attention and opportunity. She would pay for them of course, in the form of self-betrayal and the betrayal of her future children. Bill cannot imagine KJ surrendering her mind and soul for a life of wealth and prestige, of pills and hatred. Just the thought of a girl like KJ betraying her true identity is a razor stroke across his hopes and happiness.

"My love guides me," she says. She looks at him. "It always will."

Bill recalls a discussion with Johnny Bowen. It wasn't long after the two met. Johnny's words were similar.

"If you had decent parents," he says, "they'd cherish every moment they had with you. I can't imagine a father being more proud."

"Thank you, Bill," she says, "Thank you so much."

"It took me twice as long as you to realize that we have a decision to make," he says, "Each of us. We can stand with our white brothers and sisters, or we can betray them. I chose the right path in the end, but it took a great deal of pain and loss to open my mind."

"I haven't always been strong," she says, "I've come close to falling. I let things get out of control once, not long ago, actually. Nothing happened, but that wasn't because of me. I put myself in a position where I could have lost so much. Things I could never get back."

"You're seventeen," he says, "You're in this world, in this place, with the trials and tribulations that a young lady faces; I'm amazed at your will to resist. I'd expect you to awaken when you're in your late-twenties and full of regrets, that is, if you awaken at all. You woke up so young, KJ. You're the blessing that we prayed for."

"Thank you, Bill," she says, "That's so nice of you to say. But I feel so weak sometimes, like I can't do anything. I want to help. I want to see

something happen. I want to see my brothers and sisters demand justice. I want those who betray our race to answer for their fucking crimes!"

KJ began to respond with such passion that she could not control all of her words. KJ goes silent for a moment and then looks at Bill.

"I imagine you don't care for that word," KJ says. To her it's just a word, but the last thing she'd want right now is to harm her growing relationship with Bill and his family. "I'm sorry, Bill. I'm..."

She looks down and rubs her arm.

"Times have changed," he says, "In my youth, girls didn't often speak like that. It's not something I'd encourage, truth be known. That being said, in my youth, back in Ireland, we didn't have the lies and hate shoved down our throats like you have. It was softer and much more subtle. We helped the enemy a great deal, I'm sorry to say. We allied ourselves with non-white movements that we should have recognized as genocidal in the long run. We were wrapped up in the present and didn't consider the future. But it wasn't like it is here. Here you face the heart of the anti-white cult, most of them as white as you and I. KJ, you go ahead and resist as you see fit. When you say 'fuck,' and 'nigger' you grab them by the balls. We need that energy, so don't soften your ways to meet my approval. This is your time." He sighs. "I'm sorry we left such a mess for you to deal with."

KJ remains quiet, though she feels a whole lot better inside.

"You said that you feel weak on occasion," he says, "You couldn't be further from the truth. You're already powerful and you'll be even more so in time. A girl like you, young and lovely and strong, is the greatest inspiration a man could ever hope to imagine. That should be enough, but I know that you're fiery and restless; I can see it in you. Don't worry, soon enough you'll have opportunities to feel less useless."

Bill glances at her and sees her looking at him. He winks and she smiles a little. But there is something troubling her, and she must interrupt the euphoric moment.

"Bill," she says, "I'm not Irish, and for me this isn't about one member of my family or one white country. It's about all my white brothers and sisters."

"Johnny Bowen isn't Irish, either," he says, "and he's like a son to me. Jesse's half-Irish, half-French. She came to the old Celtic Society to learn our dances; no bigger reason behind it. She'll be my daughter-in-law soon. I wouldn't choose any other girl for my son Rian. She's white, she's racially aware and she loves her people and her race. KJ, the Celtic Society was a start. You have to begin with the familiar and have faith in those you can trust. If I were Dutch I'd have started with a Dutch Society,

and taken it from there. It took time for my mind to open and it came in stages. You realize all this already, and whether you're Irish or not means nothing. You're white and you're aware. That's all that matters to me."

"You're the only ones I've ever known who are like this," KJ says, "I really started to believe that I was alone, but I'm not."

She gasps and gets a wounded little smile that does not last.

KJ looks out the windshield at the passing buildings and the trees and brush that are growing up around some of them.

"I knew a young man once," she says, "I think he was like us in some ways. But he moved away and I didn't have time to talk to him very often." A defunct car wash passes by and then the trees return. "I think he was awake."

"What made you come to that conclusion?" he asks.

"He defended a white girl from a black student who was harassing her," KJ says, "and Donny stopped it cold. That was his name, Donny Patrick. I saw a couple of them trying to attack him from behind, so I warned him. They backed down in the end."

She gets a very brief and sad little smile. The conversation brings back bittersweet memories.

"Did the girl thank him?" Bill asks.

"No," KJ says.

"Of course not," Bill says. He shakes his head. "But you did."

"Yeah," she says.

"Be very careful, KJ," he says, "They could still retaliate for your good deed."

"They already have," she says, "They attacked me after Donny left. One of them groped me. I called him a nigger, and now my locker's glued and defaced almost every day. You should see what they write for me."

Bill is silent for a moment.

"Do whatever you have to, KJ," he says, "Protect yourself. Call me or Johnny if you need help. I'll give you both our numbers. Memorize them and then destroy the paper. You have to have trust in someone and I trust you with our numbers. It could be a mistake, but if we don't ever trust, we are damned to extinction whether we fight it or not. You pass my test, KJ. I trust you. Call us if you need any help."

Bill chose Johnny for a reason.

Johnny would help her without question and he would fight for her without hesitation. He would show no mercy to those who would do her harm. Though Johnny is dear to Bill, the elder Donnelly would send the young man to a fight before he'd send any other. Johnny would fight to the

death and Bill knows it. KJ may need someone who is willing to go the distance.

"I'll never betray your trust," she says, "I know those are just words, but this is me, promising. I'll prove it's not a mistake."

The Cherokee approaches the long private drive to the Donnelly Homestead. The ride down the lane is more pleasant with each trip. It feels like escape. When the two arrive at the Long Hall, KJ sees a red Dodge Ram parked in the small grassy area left of the parking lot. In the lot she sees both the Chevy dumper and the white pickup. Perhaps Anna has dropped by.

Before exiting the Jeep, Bill announces the day's activities.

"You'll be engaged in another bit of dog watching," he says, "I'm glad you're wearing gloves. I'll call you when it's break time. You can come to the hall if you'd like. I'll be taking a break there, if you don't mind the company of an old codger." He turns to exit the Jeep but then stops. "Did you bring a lunch?" he asks.

She hesitates, not wanting to answer him and leave the impression that she's going to mooch off of the Donnelly's kindness.

"I'll have something waiting for you," he says.

"No, Bill," she says, "I can't..."

"You will," he says. He steps out of the Jeep but then looks back into the door at KJ. "In fact, from now on, you'll take lunch at the Hall or at my home, depending on what I have you do. So don't pack a lunch unless I tell you in advance."

"Thank you, Bill," she says, "But..."

"No, KJ," he says, "We're going to make lunch for you from now on. It's been decided."

She climbs out of the Jeep. Bill opens the door to the hall.

"Come in for a few minutes, KJ," he says, "Your radio is hanging by the door."

Inside the threshold, a pair of coats and a belt is hanging on the hooks by the door. There is a radio on the belt. As KJ reaches for it, Bill knocks on the door to the right. KJ begins to fasten the belt around her waist when the left-hand door opens. The visitor is not Anna; it's Johnny Bowen. He enters the main room.

KJ lays the belt on the floor and hops over to Johnny. She hugs him when she arrives. She didn't think to take off her boots, and certainly doesn't think about them now. KJ looks up into his eyes.

"Hi, Johnny," she says, a smile on her face, "How are you?"

Her arms are still around him.

"Good, thank you," Johnny says, a little surprised, "And you?"

"Good," KJ says as she finally lets go. "It's nice to see you again!" she says.

KJ feels animated. The fight with Erica and the frustration of yesterday are gone.

"You, too," he says, "Guess what? I have something for you."

He touches the tip of her nose and she laughs a little.

Johnny steps over to his black army coat. In the lower pocket is a book. He removes it and hands it to KJ. She looks at him and then at the cover. It's a brand-new copy of Marc MacYoung's *Street E&E*. He could have given her something fun; something that satisfies curiosities or frivolous desires. Instead he gives her a book of knowledge that might save her life.

The book, a guide to evading and escaping dangerous situations, feels like power in her hands. She looks at Johnny. Her identity and her well-being matter to him. She does not miss the significance.

"Thank you, Johnny," she says, "I'll get it back to you as soon as I'm done."

"It's a gift, KJ," he says, "It's yours. There's one condition, though. Read it and practice what you can, and take it seriously. I know you will."

She nods and smiles. He watches her look down at the book, and how she moves her thick hair from over her right ear.

"Just don't read it while you're on dog watch," he says and grins.

"OK," she says with a little laugh at the end.

"Now, off with you," Bill says, "I'll call at break time."

KJ bounds out the door. Johnny looks at Bill. Bill smiles; it's almost a laugh.

"She means a great deal to me," Johnny says, "She's one of us and she's awake."

"She's very young," Bill says.

"Of course she is," Johnny says, "That doesn't matter as much as you might think. I don't see her abandoning her principles or turning her back on the truth. I can't imagine what she must go through, and she hasn't surrendered yet, you know."

"That's not what I meant," Bill says, "She won't surrender, or I'm the grandest old fool alive. She does need someone to fill the void she's had all her life. That void won't always be the same, Johnny. She won't always be a daughter." Bill sighs. "We'll talk about that later. David's here, I don't know if you saw his truck. I told him to let Bobby off the leash sometime after eleven, just before we take lunch."

"Let her know the truth when we're done, alright?" Johnny says, "I don't want to mislead her. I say from now on we should be on the level with her, all the time. We don't have to tell secrets but we don't have to lie, either."

"I agree, John," Bill says, "We'll let her know."

Johnny puts on his coat and departs.

Nothing but the wind moves across the field. The snow persists in patches among the grass but its fate will be the same as the remnant around Uniontown. Neither will last the night.

KJ is able to clear her mind of all her troubles. Though she's just as vigilant as she is at school, there is none of the terrible anxiety she feels while she's at Uniontown High, nor is there the pain and loneliness of the Campbell House.

The whisper of the wind and the thick wall of gray and white stratum give her peace, though not as much as the gesture that Johnny Bowen just made. She is tempted to peruse her new book but is disciplined enough to resist. Instead she watches the edges of the field.

Bill is arranging the table for lunch when a call comes in on the radio. The dog has returned. Bill gets a smile and responds. Johnny Bowen is somewhere out in the woods watching KJ. Bill will ask him later at what point KJ saw the dog. He hopes it was as soon as Bobby entered the field.

A second call makes Bill stop in his tracks.

"Bill," KJ says, "There's a guy down there in the woods, not far from where the dog came. He's kind of tall, with a dark blue jacket."

She's seen David Fox. Unless he approached the field for some foolish reason, she's just performed a startling feat of observation.

"OK, KJ," Bill says, "Stay where you are for now. I'll call you down in a little while."

Bill walks out to the parking lot. He swings around the left and enters the woods. David Fox sees him. Bobby returns to Fox after smelling around the lower field and the two depart for the pickup. Bill meets them near the vehicle. He wonders if KJ can see them.

KJ does not leave her sheltered little spot. It was an excellent choice, and offers as wide a field of view as possible considering the forest and the hills. She takes a moment to remove her toboggan, which is getting a little warm in the 48-degree air. She's stuffing it in her jacket pocket when the radio on her belt comes to life. It's time for lunch.

Johnny Bowen is present when KJ enters the Long Hall. He's standing near Bill, who is sitting at the table in the center of the mostly-vacant room. On the table is an assortment of food items. KJ removes her boots

at the entrance, though she knows it's not required. She approaches the table and with a smile on her face glances at Johnny Bowen. Bill beckons for her to share his lovely little meal. Johnny pulls her seat out for her and then walks over to the right-hand door.

"Thank you, Johnny," KJ says once she's seated.

She looks down and smiles a little from bashfulness. It's not a regrettable feeling, not in the least.

The food on the table includes several types of cheese and smoked salmon. Both KJ and Bill have cups for tea, though the water must be boiling in another place. There is also a jar of pickled vegetables at center table.

"Help yourself, KJ," Bill says, "Don't wait on me."

KJ is timid at first but soon partakes of each item, much to the delight of Bill and Johnny. Bill also takes lunch. Johnny does not eat nor sit. He stands by the right-hand door the entire time.

"We didn't ask Johnny to join us," Bill says.

"He won't," KJ says, "He's busy." She looks up at Johnny. "Thanks for watching over me."

Bill laughs.

"I'll get the water for our tea," he says, "We'll try the chamomile. It's from my wife's garden, you know."

Bill goes through the left-hand door, laughing again as he does.

"How long did you know I was there?" Johnny asks.

"About a half hour after I started watching the field," she says. In her innocent joy she realizes she may have insulted Johnny by mentioning this in front of Bill. "Johnny, maybe I shouldn't have opened my mouth." Her face shows her rising doubt. "I'm sorry if I was out of line."

"Jesus, don't be sorry!" he says, "I'm not fragile, you know. Actually, I'm impressed. Shit, you must have known I was there all the time. Do you know when I left?"

"When Bill came and began talking to the man with the dog," she says, "But then you returned. You didn't come all the way into the hall. You left a second time when Bill called me in for lunch. You were almost at the parking lot when I left the field, and that's how you got here so much earlier than I did."

"Not that much," he says, "You moved really fast. That's also impressive."

Johnny gets a faint smile and KJ notices. She looks to the side for a moment, a little embarrassed from his flattery but mostly happy and surprised at his reaction.

"Let's test your observation a little bit," Johnny says, "Tell me, if you just arrived, would you know I'd been out in the woods, if you hadn't seen me before? I mean, if you saw me for the first time."

KJ nods without hesitation.

"You have wet spots on the bottom of your jeans," she says, "Down by your shoes."

"I might have come in from the yard," he says.

"Not likely," she says, "There are a few other spots, like the one on your shoulder. I imagine that's from a wet branch."

"What else do you see?" he asks.

"You have something behind you, in your belt," she says, "Right now it's under your shirt." Johnny is wearing an unbuttoned long-sleeve shirt over his tee. "It's what comes between them and me, if I need your help. It's a gun."

"Read that book, KJ," he says, "My gun can't always be there. Please, read that book."

Bill enters the room. In his hand is a small pot of boiling water. He waited for this moment to enter. Both Johnny and KJ know that he arrived at the door a while before. They did not alter their conversation. Now Bill pours the water through a small strainer laced with chamomile; first into her cup, and then into his.

KJ adds a little sugar and takes a sip. It is better beyond comparison to the teas from boxes and bags. Bill points to the water and looks at Johnny, who lifts his hand in refusal.

"I'm busy, Bill," he says and laughs to himself.

KJ glances at him as she sips her tea. When she sits the cup on the table she has a shy little smile on her face. It vanishes with the steam from the tea.

"Remember when I told you that you could ask me anything?" Bill says to KJ, who looks up when he begins to speak. "I also told you that it doesn't mean I'll answer. The way I see it, that applies to you as well as me. If I ask you a question that you'd rather not answer, feel free to refuse. That goes for all of you, Johnny and the rest included. You're not dogs and I don't want blind obedience. That's for evil men and women, not us."

She looks into Bill's deep blue eyes. There is seriousness and ferocity behind those eyes. There is also love and loyalty.

"I was well past your age when I realized what we face as a race," Bill says, "Tell me, when did you awaken to reality?"

"It didn't happen all at once," she says, "There wasn't an 'oh shit' moment. It was more like a puzzle that you can't see until it's done. You feel

around for the pieces if you dare, and you pay for every piece you find, like the edges are razor sharp and cut you when you touch them. The first one's so sharp you want to throw it away and run. It's like you don't want to believe anyone would do that to us, to actually want us to go extinct. Most of those who condemn us are white, just like us. I don't mean Jews, either. I expect that from them. White traitors are the ones pushing us to extinction."

KJ looks down and fiddles with her cup and rubs one hand with the other. At first she does not look at Bill, though she continues speaking.

"My first realization came during a lecture we attended in Seattle," KJ says, "I noticed that any time a white woman spoke about rape or violence, or even about something childish like making fun of a guy's dick, she always referred to white guys or showed a white guy in a picture. I realized the disparity and asked my mother about it. It was just a question, but I got cut. I could have run away, but I don't want to hide from the truth, no matter how much it hurts me. From then on I paid attention. My parents had taught me about genocide, against other races of course, but the more I paid attention, the more I saw signs of genocide against our race. Against me and everyone I care about, because that's what it means, it's against anyone and everyone with white skin. That's the truth. I saw how the media ridicules redheads like Gary and Anna, and now people are joking about redheads disappearing forever. I heard them gloat about whites becoming a tiny minority; I heard a fucking president joke about that. At the same time the media and corporate America encourage violence against us, and they encourage white girls to sleep with non-whites, and white guys to be punished for acting like normal fucking men. I began to wonder what my children will face, as our numbers fall. Those are all pieces of the same puzzle. When the puzzle's done you get the reward of knowing the truth." She looks down for a moment. "And if you say anything about it, you get punished."

"You've paid, haven't you?" Bill asks, "Would you go back if you could?"

Her stare shoots back to him.

"Never," she says.

"You could have a normal life, KJ" Bill says, "Actually, as beautiful and intelligent as you are, and physically capable, you could have an extraordinary life. You could be popular and esteemed, and have men eating from the palm of your hand if you wanted."

"I don't want a guy eating from my hand," she says, "I want to love a real man. Our child's future has to matter to him as much as it matters to

me. If our child is hated because he's white, what fucking future will he have? A guy who eats from my hand will not fight for his child."

KJ looks down, her eyes seeing something that Bill cannot. Pain and determination begin to show on her face. She looks back up at Bill, the pain still on her face.

"I won't go back," she says, "Maybe I'd be popular. Sure, guys would want me. They'd want me for a fuck. And, you know what, Bill? They'd be right not to want me for anything deeper than that. If I go back, I'm no longer KJ. KJ loves her race and her future children. I won't kill who I am, and I won't betray my little child before he's even born. I can't go back and I can't apologize. If I do either one then I let them win, and I betray who I am, and I betray every one of you. How could I ever be clean again if I betray my identity as a white woman or betray those who would stand up for my children? I have to endure everything they throw at me no matter how much it hurts or how much I lose. Why even live and breathe if money and fucking popularity are all that matters? Why? Why live if there's nothing greater than that?"

Bill wants to hug her and tell her everything will be fine. Johnny's urge is to take her into his arms and swear to God that no one will ever hurt her again. They let her continue when she's ready.

"I'd have a great fucking life," she says, "I'd look into the mirror and hate what I see."

Her voice is clear and its effect on both men's souls is enormous. Johnny looks at this beautiful and powerful creature before him. Those who turn beautiful white women against their own lovers and children have not triumphed over KJ Campbell. She is resisting. She is the rebel they could not believe exists.

Bill asks if she is alright.

"I'll live with the pain," she says, "As long as I resist, those with money and power cannot have me, and they know it. Only one man will ever have me, mind and body, and that man will never ask me to betray our children. He'll know what they mean to me. I'd offer my life for them."

Bill is silent. Johnny doesn't move. Both men see a tear flow down her face.

"Would you like to stop?" Bill asks.

"No," she says and looks up at him, "It's like bleeding dirt out of a wound."

Bill smiles at her. It is a warm and proud smile.

"What do you think is happening to our race?" Bill asks.

"Genocide," she says in an instant.

"When did you realize this?" Bill asks.

"It's what I saw when I finished the puzzle," KJ says, "When I noticed how white guys and only white guys were portrayed as idiots and assholes in commercials and in movies, I mean they're usually fat and stupid, and always clumsy, and when they are handsome they're either wicked fucking monsters, or race traitors who kill other white guys. I wondered why there were never any stupid or clumsy niggers. Not long after that, I realized that every white country has to accept massive non-white immigration, and we have to assimilate those immigrants. It's bad enough that we have to take them in, but then we have to assimilate them. If we do that, then our genetic identity disappears forever. Blue eyes, pale white skin, they'll be gone forever."

Those, among others, are her traits.

She looks down again.

"I noticed who has to accept non-white immigration," KJ says, "America and Europe are forced to accept non-white immigrants, but Israel and Japan are not. Even our smallest and most crowded nations have to accept non-whites, or else they're called racist and face sanctions, or even worse. Just ask the Serbs what happens to white countries that defy."

"You mentioned television and film," Bill says.

"Hollywood propaganda is fierce," she says, "They promote miscegenation between whites and non-whites and it's obvious that it's deliberate. Why would those with power and money promote black and white miscegenation? Why promote massive non-white immigration into white nations and only white nations? Why belittle white men and celebrate the extinction of whites with red hair? Why try to make it seem funny when white guys or white children get hurt in movies and commercials? What other explanation is there? All of those fucking acts will result in the genocide of a people or a race. All of those are aimed at whites, Bill, they're aimed at us."

"The entertainment industry rarely belittles white women" Bill asks, "Why do you think that's the case?"

"That's meant to divide us," KJ says, "Most white girls don't realize that we're being ripped away from our men, our natural partners, those who love and complete us. Our white brothers. On a personal level it has to do with profit. White girls profit from the system that favors us at the expense of our brothers. They aren't willing to see that our men are being destroyed. What the fuck happens to us, then? If all you care about is your own ass, you still have to ask, what the fuck happens to white girls when white guys are completely destroyed?"

KJ looks into Bill's eyes.

"But, you know," she says, "How it affects women isn't the most important part. It's fucking selfish to think that way. Like, what the hell happens to my son after he's born? What happens to my future children? When we're a small and powerless minority our future children are going to be in terrible danger. They'll be murdered. White girls will be raped at will. Have you seen the rape statistics? Do you know anything about South Africa? It's already fucking happening."

KJ glances at Johnny. He nods and sighs.

"We already have enough rapists," Johnny says, "We don't need any fucking more."

She gets a wounded little smile. "No" she whispers. She looks back at Bill.

"They know what's happening in South Africa," KJ says, "And if they don't they could easily find out. But just watch any movie. Rapists and violent criminals are always white. But isn't it funny how Hollywood whites surround themselves with other whites? If whites are the violent criminals, why not live among the steezers and the niggers? They fucking know why. They live a fucking lie, just like the other sheep."

"Why is this genocide happening?" Bill asks, "Is it a conspiracy?"

"No," she says, "If it was a conspiracy, I'd try to find those responsible." She is silent for a moment. So, too, are Bill and Johnny. Then she continues. "And I'd kill them."

Johnny's mouth opens for a moment but he says nothing. He looks at KJ, who wipes her cheek.

"Who's doing this then, and why would they do such a thing?" Bill asks.

"Big business makes money off dividing the sexes and replacing whites with non-whites," KJ says, "That multiplies the workforce, and drives down wages. They import Mexicans and the wages for white workers go down, but that's not the only reason why. They know that whites will demand to be treated with dignity, and form unions and go on strike. At least we'd try to resist. They know this and they fucking hate white working men because of it. White managers and CEOs have no racial solidarity because you can't move up in this fucking corporate economy if you're white and you love your race. Any white supervisor who loves his race doesn't have a chance to rise up the corporate ladder, so the managers end up anti-white or at least too scared to say a goddamned thing. They don't give a fuck what they're doing to white families or the white birth rate, which they helped destroy now that white mothers have to work all the

time. They don't give a fuck because they live in their big houses in gated communities, together with other managers and rich white traitors."

"So it's big business," Bill says, "I can believe that. Are there any others?"

"Yeah," she says, a sad, ironic smile coming and going, "Entertainers are the same. They want their dirty fucking money and a big role in the latest shit movie, so they create anti-white propaganda for their Jew masters and don't think twice about singing an anti-white song, or acting an anti-white part. They tell themselves it's radical, but it's fucking predictable. They're ass-kissers, and that's all they are. They don't give a fuck if you die, Bill, or if all white Irishmen disappear from the Earth. They don't give a fuck if white skin or red hair or blue eyes disappear forever, as long as they can live in their little fantasy fucking land, and indulge their sick fucking desires. As long as they get their filthy money and live with other white traitors and kikes in big gated mansions, they don't give a fuck what happens to our race. "

"So it's all about money?" Bill asks.

"No, not all," KJ says, "Some anti-whites grow up that way, surrounded by anti-whites and poisoned by their lies. But there will always come a moment of truth. I had mine. But for a lot of them it's religious. You have to believe that race does not exist, and at the same time you have to consider it the most important thing in the world. If whites are in jeopardy of going extinct, then that's fine because race is a social construct. If blacks agitate in the interest of their race, then suddenly race exists and blacks are encouraged to show racial solidarity. If we try to form our own pro-white groups, the rich and powerful will destroy us, and those poisoned by anti-white propaganda are willing to help them, regardless of their politics. Anti-racist has nothing to do with fairness. Anti-racist is a code word for anti-white."

She looks down again. Her hair is all around her, and several strands fall across her face.

"KJ, dear," Bill says, "I agree with you. It's not a conspiracy and that's why it's going to be so hard to overcome. Some of them will fall down when our people see them for what they are. Others will fight to the death. Right now they have the power. But they don't have us. They don't have you."

She looks into his eyes.

"They can't have me," she says.

"Do you mind telling me what happened at school?" Bill asks, ready for her to refuse to talk. To his mild surprise she does not hesitate.

"All my life I've been taught about the evils of my race," KJ says, looking down again, "We're the racists, they said. We're the haters. I've never known anyone who wasn't ridiculously polite to non-whites. But when we're polite in the face of non-white aggression, it encourages them to escalate. When we act weak they attack us. When only a few of us stand up and the others betray those with courage, it encourages non-whites to abuse us. At school, I warned one of my white brothers when some niggers were going to jump him. He was standing up for a white sister when it happened, and after he left they assaulted me..."

"Are you alright?" Bill asks.

KJ doesn't respond; she continues answering his question.

"The young man who I warned moved away," she says, "Once he left, they knew I was alone. Several of them attacked me. One of them groped my breasts. If a teacher wasn't coming at the time, they might have raped me. I fought them and one grabbed my breasts before leaving, so I called him a nigger." She shrugs. "The principal wanted me to apologize. I refused, so he suspended me."

KJ looks at Bill. Johnny is watching her. He'd like to visit her principal right now.

"What happened to them?" Bill asks.

KJ gives a short, cynical laugh.

"Nothing," she says.

Johnny's eyes burn with green flame.

"How can other whites ignore a sexual assault, and yet condemn me when I say a fucking word?" she asks, "If their political correctness isn't a religion, how can they punish heretics like me with such vengeance? If our brothers and sisters would refuse to destroy each other then this mad fucking machine would all come apart. But they don't. They're too comfortable in their soft lives, in their suburbs and their gated communities. They don't want to risk what they have, or they really do believe that whites like me are evil. I want my white children to have a chance to live in peace. I want what's best for them. I don't want them to inherit a world that hates them for who they are. How the fuck is that evil?"

"I can't imagine how bad it is at school," Bill says, "That was the anti-whites biggest victory. They can lie to our children and force them to internalize those lies."

"I hear the lies every fucking day of my life," she says, "in school, at home, every time I walk by and my father's watching the television, and every time I went to the movies back when I had friends. I've lived those lies. Why can't a man say he loves his race without fear of losing his job?"

A nigger can make fun of white men, and if I refuse to laugh, but instead tell him to shut the fuck up, then I'm the villain. If he beats me or rapes me, it's because he's oppressed. That's the same as saying it's my fault. They bury the story because it doesn't fit their worldview of the evil white man. They won't even say that a black man raped a white woman. The news will say he was a 'man' or a 'youth.' They'll never, ever say the real reason he dared to rape her: because he's a fucking beast, and they encouraged him to rape her by blaming white people for everything that went wrong in his life."

"KJ," Johnny says and she looks at him, "I'm sorry no one stood up for you. There's nothing I can say to remove that shame. Everyone who watched you suffer is guilty, and so are we, because we haven't done shit, and a young woman like you has to face this shit all alone."

"If you had been there," she says, "they wouldn't have dared to put a finger on me. I know you look out for us even when you can't be there. I saw the gun in the glove box when I was with Anna."

"Johnny's like a son to me, KJ," Bill says, "You can have faith in what you just said about him. Are you still alright?"

She nods and smiles. It's a little smile, but it's genuine.

"The dog's not bothering my cattle," Bill says.

"I know," she says.

"There's times we can't be on the level with someone," he says, "At least until we can be sure that we can trust them. Truth is, KJ, I didn't quite know what I should do with you. This has been sudden and most unexpected."

"You don't have to explain," KJ says, "You need to be careful. I get that. I don't want you to lower your guard, especially on my account. I'd die if something happened to you because of me."

"Tell me, then," Bill says, "When did you figure out that the dog wasn't causing trouble?"

"After you gave me the object test," she says.

"Are you curious why I gave you that test?" Bill asks.

"Yeah," she says, "But don't tell me the answer."

Bill smiles and takes her hand.

"You're still on dog watch for the rest of the day," Bill says, "He may be a good dog, but take the mission seriously. He may be back."

"I promise," she says.

"There's a good lass," Bill says, "Now back to the field with you."

KJ smiles and rises. She looks at Johnny as she heads for the door. She mouths a "thank you" and he nods. KJ puts on her boots and coat,

and dons her toboggan before she heads back to the woods by the field. In spite of the painful nature of the conversation, she feels quite a bit of relief, as if a tight bind has been loosened. She has found a place where she feels safe from sudden attack and the merciless war against her people; at least for the moment.

"Are you going to keep using Bobby to test her?" Johnny asks.

"No," Bill says, "I think we'll move on to something else. I'll bring in David so she can meet him, and then the three of us will move forward."

Bill has plans for both KJ and Johnny, and he has no desire to complicate matters.

"Alright," Johnny says. He thinks for a moment. "You know, Anna didn't see me the first time, not until I was a little too close. Sinead didn't either. Even Boyle didn't notice until I was close enough to get off a shot. I was thinking, it's tempting to say KJ could be something special. But then I realized how stupid it is to think like that. She already is special. Her eyes could be blind and she'd still be special."

Even as "quitting time" approaches, KJ is as attentive as ever. There is simplicity and freedom in the forest. There is a power as well. Without the distractions of school and home, she can observe each element of the world around her. She can see interactions and signs that the vast majority of people would miss. Each day she spends there she hones that ability. It was no accident or stroke of luck when she saw Johnny Bowen approaching through the woods.

About a half hour before Bill Donnelly calls her back, KJ hears the approach of a vehicle. From the sound of the engine it's a pickup or SUV.

After Bill calls, KJ works her way back to the Long Hall. This time she cuts through the woods where she saw Johnny Bowen. Upon arriving at the parking lot, she looks at the evening skies. Clouds are thickening and the temperature is rising. A nor'easter may be coming. Her educated guess about the vehicle was correct; the red Dodge Ram 1500 that was parked along the driveway has returned and now sits beside the white Chevy pickup. KJ walks to the door of the hall, knocks and enters.

Inside, KJ sees Bill standing by the table. Beside him is a man who looks to be in his lower-thirties, with short reddish hair and bright green eyes. He sports an attractive moustache on his face. It is clean and very well manicured. KJ removes her boots at the door as both men wait in silence. Johnny Bowen is nowhere to be seen.

"KJ," Bill says, "Come over here."

He beckons with his hand. As she approaches, Bill and the other man rise. She can see that he is taller than Bill. He is thinner as well.

"I'd like you to meet David Fox," Bill says, "David, this is the lovely KJ Campbell."

"Nice to meet you, KJ," Fox says.

He shakes her gloved hand.

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Fox," she says.

"David," he says, "Call me David, or Dave if you prefer."

"David is a firefighter in Pittsburgh," Bill says, "Has been for four years. He came to us a little too late for the old Celtic Society."

"We've had a lot of good times here, though," Fox says, "But speaking of the Society, did you hear Bill Cunningham moved? I lost track of him over the last two years, and now Tom said that he moved to Idaho of all places."

"I hadn't heard," Bill says, "I know he had a son out in Kellogg." Bill looks at KJ. "I'm sorry to keep you waiting, KJ."

"It's fine," she says.

"I'm going to take KJ home," Bill says, "Can you stay until I return?"

"Sure," David says, "Is Johnny around? I see his truck outside."

"Yes," Bill says, "He'll be back shortly."

Bill gets up and goes to KJ.

"Here's the phone numbers I mentioned," he says.

He hands her a piece of paper, which is attached with a paperclip to a sealed envelope. She can feel that there are papers inside the envelope.

"What's this?" she asks.

"Take it," Bill says, "It'll make life a little more tolerable. You'll earn it soon enough, so don't fret."

"Thank you," she says.

The money isn't the reason she's thanking him. She shoves the envelope and the paper into her jeans pocket.

"We'll be back in a little while," Bill tells David Fox.

"Nice meeting you," KJ says to Fox as she stands at the threshold of the exit.

He smiles and waves.

KJ wants to return Bill's money, or at least leave it in the green Cherokee. She does not, since she knows at the very least he'll be upset and possibly insulted. She tells herself that she will earn it. The night is getting brighter from the thick clouds that are coming in from the south. If the weather breaks, she may not be able to earn her pay this week.

"If the storm hits," Bill says, "and it looks like it will, we'll probably see you in a few days. I hate for you to have to stay at home, but for now we're stuck, it would seem."

"Maybe the meteorologists are wrong," KJ says, even though she, too, sees the ominous signs.

"Call me," Bill says, "Remember to learn those numbers and then destroy the paper. The first one is Johnny's and the second one is mine. Call either of us and let us know when you're free. If the storm hits, I'll call you when I think it's safe for you to return. I already have your number."

"OK," she says, "Thank you, Bill."

"Of course, KJ," Bill says, "Be very careful. Don't let them get too close or put a hand on you. If you need help, call us. We won't stand by and watch."

"I will," she says.

When they reach the Campbell House, Bill smiles and wishes her well. His tone is optimistic and it helps. There is already sleet falling when KJ gets out of the Cherokee. Bill waits to be sure she isn't locked out, and then he drives away.

An hour or so after David Fox leaves the Donnelly Homestead, Johnny Bowen gathers his jacket and shoes and gets ready to depart for Markleysburg. Bill, who returned two hours ago, sits at the table in the Long Hall. He's finished his mundane but important business with David Fox and now wishes to speak to Johnny Bowen about one of the many things on his mind.

"One moment, John," Bill says. Bowen takes a step toward the table but stops when Bill rises and approaches him. "Tell me, if you would, what task would you assign to young KJ?"

Johnny doesn't hesitate to answer.

"If I could find a place where whites can live in peace," Johnny says, "I'd send her there. I'd go get her tonight and take her there. She's already earned it."

"You'd spare her the world she lives in," Bill says.

"Her and Anna," Johnny says. He puts on his jacket. "I'd take Sinead if you'd let me. At least they could live in peace, and get married and be happy. At least they and their children would be spared the shit that we face."

"Gary asked Anna if there's somewhere she can go and have a peaceful life," Bill says, "She said there are no more homelands. She said she can't run away, even if there was. Once you know the truth, there's no way to live with yourself if you run. Another young lady told me that if she ran away from the truth, she couldn't look into a mirror without hating what she saw. I believe those were her words, something to that effect."

Johnny shakes his head from frustration. Bill sees it on his face.

"I know, Bill," Johnny says, "It's just not right that it falls on them. There are those who could speak out and it would really mean something. Famous motherfuckers who people would hear." Johnny opens the front door. "But they won't. They'll enjoy their goddamned fame and money and leave it to a girl like KJ to suffer for their children. She doesn't have money or an audience or any of the advantages those fuckers have, but they'll profit from her sacrifice, be sure of that. You know what burns me the most? Not the silence; I know that white celebrities are cowards and they'll never speak out. But those fucks will cheer her pain. They'll call her racist and they'll rejoice when she fucking suffers."

"We'll help her however we can," Bill says, "But remember, son, none of us will escape the suffering."

"I know," Johnny says, "No one did a fucking thing when it was easy, and now none of you will escape. I don't care if I don't. I really don't give a fuck anymore."

Bill takes a deep breath. He hates to hear that last part.

"But none of these teens deserve the shit that we dumped on them," Johnny says, "They should be fucking pissed."

Bill, who is now close to Johnny, grabs his shoulders.

"That doesn't get us where we need to be, John," Bill says.

Johnny looks into his eyes for a moment.

"Let her meet Boyle," Johnny says, "If he thinks she has potential, then ask her what she wants to do. Ask her if she's sure she wants to go forward. Sometimes you take a step and you can't go back, you of all people know that."

"Thank you, John," Bill says, "Remember, son, this is a long fight, and more than one person is at stake."

"Good night, Bill," Johnny says, "Tell Garret to drop by."

Bill nods. He stands by the open door until Johnny pulls out of the parking lot. The sleet is turning to snow.