

# The Trench Coat Man

Written by

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This is dedicated to those who endlessly overcome;  
and to the ones who still have the ability to do so.

## Prequel

What is tragedy but a valid concept of time – when trauma strikes, when grief grasps us, when we attempt to see reality as untrue due to the nature of our broken hearts or torn apart souls; this is how the concept of time came to be – there is no *time* in the blissful present but when this is taken away from us time is all we seem to have. We impatiently wait for the pain and suffering to dissipate, from waking up with anguish to sleeping with it and even at times too dreaming of it; our dreams become our nightmares and our nightmares become our dreams. When our pain appears to be solid and this cloud lingers over our heads, this numbing feeling of sadness, this great loss, it imparts the ways of being; because the state of being, the state of absolute presence takes no effort, it is easily pleasant. Fighting this state is unnatural; we can rationally and even irrationally solve this by the exhaustion that it brings. When reality appears to be abstract then this disconnection from the world occurs, from the universe – the pain is so great it's all we can see; it's all we *choose* to see. Projections, fixations, aversions; these will all attempt to distract from the root of the cause but they will just cause more unnecessary suffering. Overcoming this is innate and buried within us – deliberate courage is truly necessary. This is when stubbornness becomes a virtuous trait by means of the will to productively survive; when relentlessness becomes a way of life the habit of overcoming again becomes part of our unconditioned cyclic nature.

What happens when vengeance comes into play? What happens when retribution becomes of mourning? Time then becomes something else; it becomes a countdown to the moment of justice. Anger, bitterness and revenge suffice the tortured soul; this keeps the victim's heart beating, it keeps their veins pulsating with self-righteous vigor. Their meaning now comes from the very beast that causes their own suffering therefore solidifying that love and hate do take the same effort and both can advocate meaning in one's life; whether it be natural to being or not, this villain has now gained an admirer and this admirer is now the tarnished reflection of the victim. It's a matter of time before a skewed molting takes its course and digression occurs. When the victim becomes a vigilante – some think this is a hero but it's not; it is a voluntary imprisonment of the soul. They've surrendered their last human will to grief – not only have they chose to consciously suffer but they have chosen to become an avenger; playing god has its consequences and nature will always eventually make that known.

Even at the catharsis of “revenge” it must be known that this is not the end but only the beginning. If I have learned one thing in life despite the fact that the concept of time was birthed in tragedy, this shows no significance upon the endless beginnings of life itself. Life is one endless beginning with infinite choices; there is no *right* or *wrong* choices. The only mistake made is when one conceptualizes the idea of an “end” – like nature the end is the birth of new beginnings. Life then begins once again at the death of a wilted flower.

# **CHAPTER 1: Kill Feast**

*1992 Kill Feast* is written in red drooling letters while gently rippling in the wind. Cheer and laughter fill the crisp autumn air in the quaint town of Merderton, New Jersey. The town's heavily prideful Halloween festival 'Kill Feast' is in order. This is an event that the town of Merderton's been famous for and draws horror lovers in from states away; for such a docile and suburban town this is substantial. Their value of Halloween is akin to Salem and their synergy with witch culture.

Clove Firello, a classically beautiful young mother walks with her son Michael; in his hand is an action figure, a wrestler, and in the other is his mother's hand. He inquisitively looks around the festival: food booths, games, all actors and workers dressed up as murderous clowns and masks, even some dress from horror's past: Michael Meyers, Freddie Krueger, Jason, anything and everything relevant in horror culture in the 90's. Many of Steven King's creations also flood the festival-decorated streets of the town: *Carrie*, *The Shining*; a woman even wanders dressed as Carrie covered in pig's blood and is rather frightful. The rides at the park are even relevant to these ingrained horror pictures like the *Nightmare on Elm Street* Funhouse.

"Mommy, I want to go in there," Michael eagerly says to his mother while looking to the direction of the fun house.

"Aren't you scared?" she puzzledly asks.

He quickly nods no.

She leans and looks to him with compassionate eyes. “Let’s find your friends first.”

Thump – a frighteningly tall man wearing a torn and tethered trench coat stands over her. He has long black hair, so long that it’s tied around his face in a knot, as if it’s his chosen mask, and it is; not only does this original hair-entwined mask induce a perpetuated angst incited by the shallow pockets carrying this man’s beady eyes, but the feeling exuding from his aura, it’s hauntingly pulsating. The tall man breathes heavily; he stares down the young boy. Michael looks back up to him scared. Goosebumps rise upon the young boy’s arm.

“Excuse me,” Clove clumsily says while she picks up her purse from the ground while gathering stray items that have rolled out. She picks up her things from the ground. Dried blood stains the military style boots of this tall man. Clove briefly looks to them, she then looks back up to her son as he, in a trance, gazes up to this being.

“Hold on, baby...” Michael stares at the tall but he pays no mind to the boy and now stares straight-ahead to the funhouse, and then slowly peering around the area, observing. He steps forward and walks through the animated crowd. From the cuffs of his sleeves an ambient light reflects from something metal and barely sticking out. The young boy leaves his mother’s side and begins to follow this man through the crowd. After quickly disappearing, his mother looks up to where her son was standing while in the midst of gathering her scattered things and notices he’s no longer there.

“Michael...” she nervously looks around and quickly leaves her lipstick, eyeliner and a Scooby Doo sippy cup on the ground. She anxiously walks through the crowd as she calls his name “Michael!” She then screams “Michael, where are you?!”

Michael, not too far ahead from his mother, but blocked by the flow of the crowd, follows the irksome walk of this mysterious tall man to the entrance of the funhouse. The trench coat man walks up the metal-grated steps of the exit. Michael drops his action figure on the ground; quickly it’s crushed by people walking by, a group of drunken college kids stumble on through. Clove frantically searches amidst the crowd but cannot see her son.

In the distance, a mayoral booth stands in the middle of the festival. A young man is being sworn in as mayor by his governor father. This elite family is the Hawthorne’s. Hawthorne Jr. smiles as his father Hawthorne Sr. takes pride in his son’s accomplishment. Even Hawthorn Sr.’s father (Hawthorne Jr.’s great-grandfather) is there as well, seated in his wheelchair; he’s decrepit but nevertheless still breathing and dressed elegantly wearing a pastel blue suit and a white hat with a yellow feather in it. A young girl around the age of 11-years old runs up onto the stage. She anxiously tugs on the bottom of her father’s (Hawthorne Sr.’s) suit with tears in her eyes. Her dapper brother is ignorant to her due to all of the publicity he’s receiving as the newly sworn in young mayor.

Her father then looks down to her and behind his loving demeanor sternly says, “What, Sadie?” She



innocently looks up to him with tear-filled eyes – he then turns his head away and gets back into the groove of political fame.

This group of drunken college kids stands at the entrance taunting the thin worker dressed up as Freddie Krueger. “Come on, dude,” Chip says (the obvious alpha of the group); his name is engraved on his varsity jacket. Chip and his posse throw popcorn at the attendant.

“I have to go pee,” Chip’s ditzy girlfriend dressed as *Raggedy Anne* says in a buzzed and frightened manner. She anxiously walks off from the group while “pee-dancing” and the attendant lets the vexatious group of 10 or so college-enthralled partiers into the funhouse. Chip’s girlfriend pushes through the crowd, attempting to walk to the sea of dark green porta potties in the distance.

“We’ll meet in you inside, babe,” Chips says as his gang of degenerates follows behind him. One of the drunken girls playfully strokes the mask of the worker.

Clove continuously calls for her son in the distance with fearful intent. A friendly-faced man shooting basketball with some of his friends notices. He attentively makes his way to her. “Hey, what’s wrong?”

Clove anxiously replies, “My son, I lost him... I looked down for a second and then he was gone!”

“It’s okay. We’re going to find him.” He calmly says, “Don’t you worry.” The friendly man

gently holds her shoulders attempting to calm her manic state.

Raggedy Anne eagerly approaches the line of porta potties. She pulls on the first door and it's locked. She then continues to pull on the others; all of them are locked as well. "What the hell?" she says to herself as she continues her pee-dance, rocking back and forth.

Inside the haunted house Michael nervously follows the tall man through a row of neon glowing lights. The tall man disappears around a bend. THUMP! Michael walks into Chip and his gaggle of sloshed friends. "Oh shit – a little fucking kid," he stupidly chuckles while he and his group proceed on through the flickering funhouse.

"I'm scared," one the girls says in a long, drawn-out vocally-fried voice. Another girl in the pretty college sorority bends down to Michael and gets extremely close to his face, uncomfortably close, then kissing her fingers and caressing his young lips thus leaving a bright purple smudge upon his face. He wipes it off while entranced by the encounter.

Clove and the friendly guy walk outside near the funhouse. "Where did you see him last?" he says as they walk through a wild crowd.

"Over there," Clove points nearby the funhouse.

"Does he get scared easily?" friendly guy inquisitively says.

Clove quickly retorts, “No,” while shaking her head with tears in her eyes.

Pee-brained girl keeps trying to open the door and then finally she decides to walk away upon sighting a sheltering tree. As she takes her first step – the door creaks open. She stops and curiously turns around, and then quickly runs to it.

Michael slowly walks through a 3D room. The floors shake and move back and forth. Decapitated plastic limbs drop from the ceiling. He sees the silhouettes of the drunken frat and sorority soiree – a shrill SCREAM from one of the women is heard!

Clove and the friendly man stand outside the funhouse; he looks to it and then CRUNCH – he steps upon Michael’s action figure; it’s broken in half, the head being severed is most noticeable. Clove bends down to pick it up, then quickly running into the funhouse.

The porta pottie door is opened as the young girl stands paralyzed, staring. She drops her purse to the ground near the pool of blood at her feet as it oozes from the plastic floors of the portable bathroom. Her heart beats heavy. Urine drools down her bare legs and into the puddle of blood beneath her. 5 decapitated bodies lay messily stacked upon one and other. One specific body stands out; a little girl’s decapitated torso holds tightly a blood-covered teddy bear dressed up as a nurse, this contrasts her floral, innocent purple princess dress. The head of the little girl rolls out to the feet of the pee-relieved college girl.

Hyperventilation sets in; she lets out a belting scream!

Back inside the funhouse Michael stands near the bend in which he saw the irksomely tall man go; 666 is written in bloody letters upon the walls along with the words *Devil's Den*. He hears the haunting sounds of slashing, stabbing, screaming... he keeps slowly approaching.

In another part of the funhouse his mother and the nice guy anxiously wander. They walk through the mirror-filled hall. The screams echo throughout; little do they know it's not a part of the show.

Chip gets thrown upon the butcher's table in the staged set of the funhouse, "Help! Help me!" Lights flicker in the room with a seizure-inducing strobe effect. The tall man leers over Chip as he holds the sharp sickle high above his head, his blade catching the light, glimmering with blood and a metallic hue. Bodies of the butchered college kids fill the ground; the mysterious menacing murderer steps on the intestines of one of the college kids as he wrestles Chip, holding him against the table. Bile and blood ooze from the organs and cake upon the bottom of his treaded boots. Chip turns around and WHACK! He cracks him in the chin with a hard right... but nothing phases this tall beast, even his hair remains resiliently masked over face; the blade-wielding man uppercuts Chip with the sickle, impaling him through his jaw and the curvature of the blade comes out of his forehead. Chip coughs up blood as the last amount of life barely glistens in his eyes. The monstrous man drops Chip's lifeless body to the

ground – THUD... the tall killer breathes heavily and maniacally. Anger resides in him so deep that you can hear it in every breath. His breath begins to change as he feels Michael's presence – he stares from afar midst the flickering lights gazing to a murderous scene; a scene no human being should ever experience nevertheless a child.

The drunken-pee-drenched college girl runs through the streets of the fair and screams, “The bodies! Oh my god! Help!!!” she can barely make out any words as she stumbles and falls in an immense panic. Police in the distance notice and quickly make their way over to her.

Clove and the friendly man bolt through the funhouse as fast as they can, entering the 3D room now with real blood splattered upon the walls.

The tall man drags the body that's still impaled upon his sickle. He moves towards Michael; the innocent young boy watches on towards the dragging body with paralyzing fear in his big brown dough eyes. Tall man pulls the weapon from the head of the Chip. Tears stream down Michael's face as he's crippled with fear. The tall man nears him and wipes the boy's tears with his bloody and dirty fingernails. Their shadow casts upon the wall and makes silhouettes for Clove and the friendly man to follow from their adjacent path. They bolt down the funhouse trail to her son's petite shadow and the monstrous man's – SWIPE! The shadow shows young Michael's head getting cut straight-off. THUD – his head rolls on the ground and stops at his mother's feet. The lights flicker upon his frightened eyes now

frozen in time; Clove looks to her son's severed head in utter shock. The friendly guy now slowly approaches her and looks on in awe. The shadow of the tall man appears – friendly guy notices. The tall man reveals himself and approaches Clove; her new friend grabs a gun from his boot and opens fire – BANG! – BANG! He sends the murderer backwards, stunting him temporarily with the gunfire. He runs over to Clove; she's beyond frantic. She touches her son's cheek; it's still warm and despite the blood pooling from the base of his neck, a pulsating cheek still faintly exists. The friendly guy watches on with horrified compassion. He sees movement from the tall man and sternly says, "We have to go!"

Clove pleadingly replies, "I can't – I can't," while shivering in shock. Tall man rises up from his back as the flickering strobe lights continue.

"We need to leave now," he begs of her. He begins trying to pull her away. He sees the tall man getting up and aims his gun, firing – nothing. *Click. Click.* It's empty. "Fuck," he nervously utters. He knows what he must do; he grabs Clove and pulls her off as she kicks and screams. Young Michael's head lights up amidst the flickering strobes. The tall man's blood-covered boot turns the corner.

Outside of the funhouse the frantic drunk girl explains to the police officers what she saw at the porta potties; one of the officers runs off to look. Officer Gray, the head officer yells to the streets, "I need everyone to evacuate the premises now!" None of the festival attendees pay him any mind. He turns to a Rookie officer, "Get in the vehicle and drive

through the street announcing that there is a killer on the loose.”

The rookie nervously looks around, “That’ll cause a riot,” he replies.

“They think it’s a fucking joke – can you think of a better way?!” The rookie stares to him briefly pondering and then runs off. Officer Gray turns to other officers, “Get her a blanket.” The soiled college girl shivers as she gazes to the perpetual abyss within her mind. She’s seen too much, fortunate men of war don’t even see the carnage that she has now witnessed and has not signed up for. Human beings aren’t meant to experience this, human beings aren’t meant to kill and murder one and other; this ego of mankind has created an inept hole in the hearts of many, it has skewed the perception and has created monsters – this monster has imprinted his demons upon this young Raggedy Anne-dressed college girl. This monster has imprinted his pain upon a formerly untarnished soul; as this young girl shakes from the scarred memories projected within the frantic irises of her eyes, she’ll forever remember this day – for this is the effect of war – this is what begins when mankind decides to create beasts. More screams are heard from the funhouse and nosy people walk by and gaze upon the tortured young girl as she’s blanketed by the officers.

The friendly man drags Clove behind him through the maze of mirrors in the funhouse. They run through mirror after mirror. He looks for an exit sign. The tall man eerily reflects upon several of the mirrors as he walks, thumping; the sound of his

heavy blood-stained boots. The friendly man sees the exit sign thus flocking to it while dragging Clove behind him. They burst through the exit doors and run outside through the crowd of people. “Help!” the friendly guy screams. People are still lined up outside of the fun house – he screams to the worker, “Don’t let them fucking go in there! There’s a killer!” The group in line laughs at him thinking it’s a joke.

The rookie drives the police car through the streets and announces on the loud speaker: *There is a murderer on the loose! This is not part of the show or event! Your life is in danger. Leave now!*

Most of the people begin to get frantic; families with their young children are the first to run off. The friendly guy gently pulls Clove to the officers in which he begins speaking to. All is tunnel vision for Clove, she can barely stand, her knees are shaking, she’s discombobulated yet filled with unknown rage that is dormant due to the surreal event she had just witnessed – shock beyond shock. All is seemingly a dream to her, the lights are glistening blurs and the crowd’s voice echoes as they’re just scattered pigments of energy. She’s gasps for air and her body now voluntarily notices that she was asphyxiating herself. It’s unbelievable that even despite the tragic event she had witnessed her body’s innate nature to survive kicks in – or something beyond it... possibly a somber vengeance. She walks off in a trance; she sees a female cop directing the crowds of costumed people to exit from the fair. Clove locks eyes with the gun in her holster as she



approaches. Bumping into pedestrians, Clove doesn't take her eyes off of that gun as she makes her way towards it. She quickly grabs it and places it to her head, pulling the trigger – she gets tackled by the officer! BANG! A bullet fires off. Her protector (the friendly guy) and the other officers hear it and immediately turn their attention to it. Crowds flee from the loud gunshots and they try to make their way to Clove. She angrily screams from the ground, “Get the fuck off of me! He killed my son!” she shrieks and repeatedly cries. “He killed my son!”

“You need to calm down,” the female officer says while wrestling her.

Clove looks up passed the scattering crowd while fighting only to see the tall man venture through the streets. He's left the funhouse and there's no fear of being seen. A new purpose fills Clove's face.

The friendly man sees Clove in the distance and then the leeringly tall man walking through the crowd. “No!” he screams while veraciously shuffling through the mob.

The officer gets the gun out of Clove's hands. “Who are you after?” she grumbles. People scream in fear of the gunshot. Clove looks to the gun nearby on the ground. The officer looks up to see people now getting slashed by the sickle of the murderer; specifically those not paying attention, too drunk, whatever lack of awareness

or stupidity it may be, get harpooned in the back by this killer.

The rookie watches from his car as he sees the man slicing people as he slowly walks; nothing phases this beast of a man, he strides with no fear whatsoever. He seemingly doesn't even get pleasure in killing, there's something, an objective but what is it? What could pain this man so much in order for him to murder, to kill all of these innocent people? What provokes this evil?

"Oh my god," the rookie says in awe with oval eyes.

Clove kicks the officer between her legs and rolls over, grabbing the gun. She quickly rises and aims at the tall man as he drags a young boy from his sickle. The boy screams and cries barely making out any words from the deep fear and pain he's enduring. Clove briefly second guesses herself due to the possibility of shooting the young boy but opens fire anyway. BANG! BANG! BANG! She hits the beast in the shoulder, the neck, the back – BANG! She misses another time and hits a man attempting to get his family to safety – she doesn't even notice in her voided rage. She fires until the clip is empty, hitting him in the back and legs; he drops his weapon and the boy attached to it – this is the first sign of genuine distress in this soulless mutant... but he still stands. Clove watches on sickened with the smoking gun. VROOM! The police car zips through with its sirens and WHACK! The car nails the tall villain and sends the man flying into the

air; the police car then crashes into a light pole! The pole teeters and falls, shattering onto the ground. Sparks fly everywhere and it then ignites the crumpled hood of the police car; flames engulf the car.

The rookie groggily moves the airbag and climbs out of the car as it burns more and more. He stumbles and holds his ribs; blood drops down from his bare face.

All becomes silent. Clove sees the young boy still breathing; she quickly runs over to console him. She wraps him in her arms. “Hey baby – hey – you’re okay,” Clove gently says with a consoling voice.

“I’m scared,” the impaled boy pleads as tears run down his face; white paint drips, his sheet-wearing torso is covered in blood. He was dressed as a ghost – white face-paint, a white sheet, and black painted eyes.

“There’s nothing afraid of,” Clove says with her motherly love. She wipes the tears from his eyes and unknowingly makes a smudge of blood going down the right side of his fair face, mixing with the black and white paint.

“I’m – I’m – I’m just kid, I don’t want to die – I don’t want to...” the boy barely gets out his last words and finally closes his eyes to rest. Clove stares down to him with tears in her eyes and a definitive look that all is lost. She rises to her feet and walks a few steps. The friendly guy stands

afar and painfully watches. More police and ambulances finally begin making their way into the fair. Clove barely shuffles a few feet and drops to the ground, beginning to hyperventilate. She lets out a murderous scream and cries the last amount of hope from her now truly dead eyes.

Police circle and cover their noses at the stench of corpses within the porta potties. Even the police canines whimper at the smell and sight of the hacked up bodies. Officer Gray fearfully stares while knowing that this will forever taint the small town; blood is on the hands of Merderton and now the name of the town is truly well-suited.

The friendly guy approaches Clove and does the best he can to console her but his voice is just an echo far-far away from wherever she is; in the middle of the finished chaos Clove sits on the hard, cold ground. The streets are littered with fair garbage and scattered bodies. Not only did Clove lose her son but she witnessed the gruesome death of another young boy the very same age as her own son – it's as if she had relive her son's death twice; a dual death of innocence. There she sits in the midst of it all: police and ambulances, scattered bodies, crying families, and the opposing Halloween rides and friendly amusements. Clove's barely alive yet heavily breathing.

# **CHAPTER 2:**

# **Endless Beginnings**

Through a sea of murky swamp water with shards of thin ice floating atop of the mirror-like tranquil river, Clove walks through, wearing a white nightgown and wielding a sharp steel kitchen knife. Bare trees are scattered throughout the swamp waters with the occasional herds of bamboo. She timidly walks through the water as she shivers; her lips twitching and her teeth chattering. Her nipples protrude through the thin silk material. Despite her frigid demeanor her warm skin projects a layer of steam in the midst of the frigid air. A white crane stands in front of her and shows its brazen force by exuding such poise in its posture. Bubbles begin to flow up from the depths of the water. The crane quickly flies off through the desolate trees. Clove is left alone as the trees shake. A head floats to the top; it's her son's! She looks on in horror and to follow is the tall and monstrous man, he rises with his sickle while grasping Michael's head in his bloody hand. The water quickly recedes from their feet consequently leaving a thick suction-inducing sea of mud. Clove raises her knife and attempts to stab him but she's stuck. He raises his sickle high into the air! She attempts to move her feet to reach him but is obviously stuck in the muck; with his long reach he strengthfully swings down and stabs her between the neck and shoulder...

Clove jumps up in from bed in fear and hears boisterous music and yelling outside of her small apartment window. What a nightmare... A big handle of vodka sits upon her nightstand along with a gun and a police radio. She rises and

walks over to the window looking out to the bustling avenue as a parade goes on; her black ripped T-shirt just covers her backside while gazing out the vibrantly lit window.

It's Kill Feast 2020 – 28 years have passed since the town's massacre. Despite the obvious consistent drinking, Clove physically looks very well; she's incredibly fit and despite her hardened state there is still something living inside of her, a perpetual motherhood that she still yearns for. Her "ideal" lives for reasons she doesn't even know – hence her perplexities to emotional-stunting poison. She stares to the large parade as different costumes flood the street amongst decorated cars blasting Halloween music. A large group of teenage girls mixed with college girls from a local sorority are dressed as scantily clad angels – they obsessively take pictures of one and other for their social media accounts. They're dressed so *scantily clad* that Jesus' "resurrection" might come earlier than Easter. The Munster mobile drives by with a family dressed up as the famous TV icons; they honk their horn and happily wave to the crowd. Clove sees a police officer directing foot-traffic in the distance.

Officer Cello, a mustached man with a Bostonian accent listens into his radio as he's boisterously hit on by a flamboyantly dressed man in fishnets, "Can I go for a mustache ride?" The officer ignores and sheds a straightly-flattered grin while attempting to listen in to the

muffled woman's voice coming from his police radio; he walks over to an alleyway.

Radio: *There's a fight over on Mount Prospect – Over.*

Cello: *Roger that, I'm barely a block away – Over.*

The officer makes his way through the dressed up crowd. He glances up to the parade while he walks and looks to the intricately decorated cruising vehicles and another chipper family costumed as the Ghostbusters while seated upon the outskirts of their tricked out Ghostbusters mobile. He sheds a grin while they blast their theme song.

The flamboyant man wearing fishnets gets thrown against a porta pottie by a burly jock. "What the fuck you doing wearing that shit?" he growlingly yells. His college-aged friends gawk on while sipping their beers with a grin.

The gay man looks to him frightened as his friends yell, "Leave him alone!" The burly jock shoves him against the bathroom hard and then quickly grabs him and presses his face alongside it, bouncing his head on the hard, cold plastic.

The flamboyant man looks to him fearful but brazenly says, "Is it because you have gay thoughts that you're so angry...?" He wittedly continues by saying, "there's nothing to be ashamed of..."

The burly jock doesn't like that; he raises his fist and... "Hey!" Cello stoically stands and shouts.



He let's go of the gay man and turns to the officer, "Nothing to see here officer, move along..."

Cello looks to him with big eyes as he approaches him and the burly jock's friends all chuckle. The gay man runs to his group of eccentrically dressed colleagues while they all begin console him and watch on with eager eyes. "You're gonna tell me that there's nothing going on?" Cello shrugs his eyebrows while nearing and then getting into the face of the burly jock.

"Bro, get out of my face." The two stand near one and other in the center of the street adjacent to the parade.

The burly jock looks to Cello with his inflated ego, "Do you know who I am?" –

"Do you think I really care?" Cello then replies, "You're under arrest."

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Cello turns to his friends, "And all of you will be too if you don't get out of here..."

The burly jock clenches his fist and grabs Cello's arm, "Officer, you---" Cello turns around and CRACK! Punches burly man in the throat and drops him to the floor. His friends look on with big eyes and the gays watch while covering their mouths in shock as the burly jock gasps for air while rolling on the hard concrete ground.

Cello cuffs him as the gays begin to cheer and chuckle. “What do you care who’s cock goes where?” Cello says while he drags off the arrogant kid.

Clove enters her bedroom as she dries her naked body off with a red towel; her hair is wet from the shower and drips small beads onto the wooden floors of her apartment. She sits on the side of her bed; Clove has small scars around her chest, arms and shoulders, it could be old scars from the night of the massacre but it may just as well be possibly something else. She stares to nothingness, just towards a blank wall. The police radio goes off – she raises the volume. She then rises and pours herself a glass of vodka. It’s obvious what her vice has become to numb her feelings, to mask her deeply rooted pain. A picture of her son sits on the nightstand nearby; they both hold each other on the beach, both wearing their bathing suits. There’s also a picture of her with a handsome man and they look well in love, this is Michael’s father and he doesn’t seem to be around. A wedding ring sits in front of the picture. Clove places her now empty glass down near the pictures upon her nightstand. She looks at a calendar placed upon her wall with the words marked, *Death Day on October 13<sup>th</sup>*, written in red ink.

Inside the police car, Cello drives as the cocky jock sits in the backseat angered by not getting his way. “You know you’re going to lose your job,” he bitterly says to Cello. Cello ignores him and continues driving to the station. They drive passed a lit home with a long driveway. Outside of this quaint

home not too far from the cheers of the parade; a man sits in his garage tinkering on a birdhouse. How blissful, the simple things.

Cello enters a home and turns on the light. He sees his former partner and mentor, Officer Gray, lying face down with bottles of alcohol surrounding him as well as the Munster's on TV; it seems as if anyone that was involved in the massacre could barely suffice the will to live without some sort of stimulant. What's the point of going through life numb, intoxicated, and cowardly? – There's obviously a desire to live but they're not truly living because life is about *feeling*, life is about suffering and everything in between; what is life without it? Despite the tragedy, the horrendous sufferings that one has endured, is numbing themselves really essential? There must be a more natural way to alleviate this and it doesn't lie in vengeance or religion, it's within and even in the surviving souls of others. There are great lessons to be learned in tragedy and despite the perpetual vice-grip upon the heart; they are not to be drowned. Gray has heavily aged from this purgatory he caters to; his beer belly and grey hair suit the fact that he's a retired officer but rather than "Buddha-bliss" he's required the pounds from self-loathing.

Cello places a box down upon the table; inside of it is a birthday cake with a drawing of an angry pig wearing a police officer's hat. He picks up the drunken officer staggeredly slumped over on the coffee table. A picture of the two of them sits upon the dresser; they stand at a barbeque and Gray has a

rib hanging out of his mouth. The two of them are obviously very close; Gray has become a father figure to Cello due to the lack of his father being a part of his life. “Come on,” Cello says as he lifts Gray.

Gray groggily voices with a stupid smile upon his face, “Hey, Boston. How was – ah – the parade? Everything okay...?”

“Yeah... It was nice.” Cello says while hobbling him to the couch, placing him down. He looks to his face puzzled “What’s on your face?”

“I don’t know. Twinkie frosting probably...” Gray utters. Cello shakes his head with a grin and takes a rag from the table and tosses it to him. “You’re a good kid. I love you like you’re my own – you know that right?” he expresses while wiping his mouth.

“You’re fuckin’ drunk...” Cello mumbles as he cleans the bottles scattered throughout the floor.

“Kid, if it wasn’t for you I’d be dead already,” Gray groggily sits up.

Cello walks to the kitchen which is connected to the living-room. He sheds a grin from the kind words as he gawks to a pile of dirty dishes in the sink crusted with old food upon them. He takes some and begins to clean, forks first. “Ya know, with the pension you get you can afford to hire some maids...”

Gray picks off yellow crust from his shirt, “This is my favorite shirt...”

Cello grabs some clean forks and plates from the dish rack and walks over to the kitchen table. He sits down. Gray then rises from the couch and then wobbly follows. “Thank you for this. Really,” he says while starting cry. “You treat me better than my own daughter.” He hugs Cello and the young cop embraces the hug from his seated state.

“She’s a kid,” Cello attempts to justify the poor actions of his daughter with his assuring tone.

“She didn’t even wish me happy birthday,” he angrily says.

“She’s probably occupied with college shit.” Cello cuts the cake.

“College shit, yeah, I’m paying for “college shit”... you just have a crush on my daughter.” Gray dabs his finger into the icing.

Cello’s voice quickly goes up several octaves with a defiant, “What?”

“She’s too young for you – you and these young damaged college girls...”

“So, you’re calling your daughter damaged?” Cello places a piece of cake into a dish.

“She’s the daughter of a cop, her parents are divorced; she blames my lack of sobriety and my infidelity to be the cause of it – so yeah – I’d say so. If she wasn’t going to school here she’s probably be living in New Orleans with her mother,” Gray defeatedly ponders his paternal role.

“She could still be here for a reason; to passively look after you.” Cello distributes the dishes.

“What are you a fuckin’ Bostonian shrink?” Gray sarcastically retorts. “I still think she’s mad at me from breaking her last boyfriend’s leg.”

“When the fuck did you do that?”

“A couple weeks ago... she told me he smacked her – she knew I what I would do. That kids a real fuckin’ prick. She loves assholes.”

“Her father’s a cop.” Cello quickly replies.

“He’s lucky that’s all I did to him,” Gray licks more icing from the cake.

Cello quickly rises, “Wait, hold on – I forgot,” and grabs the cake plate, running over to the kitchen counter. “Happy birthday to you... happy birthday day to you – Happy birthday dear Tommy – happy birthday to you. Ya Douche...” Cello gruelingly sings with his harsh Boston accent. “Make a wish,” he places the cake down.

“Can I wish to cleanse my ears of a Bostonian singing ‘Happy Birthday?’” Gray playfully says.

“Fuck you,” Cello chuckles.

Grey mimes his cadence, “Fack yo-o...” The two sit and finally begin to eat. “But seriously though, you guys need to stop breeding...” he takes a big bite of the cake, “this is delicious.”

“It’s – ah – vegan,” icing sits in Cello’s mustache.

“What?” Gray says confused.

“There’s no milk, eggs, or butter.”

“Then what the fuck’s in it?” Gray says befuddled.

“I don’t know,” Cello studies the cake atop his fork.

Gray then justifiably says, “It’s really good.”

“The hippie-chick from the bakery said so...” Cello articulates reassuringly.

“Fuckin’ hippies... they know their munchies” Gray takes another big bite.

“Hey remember when we busted those middle-schoolers and confiscated all of their weed?” Cello reminisces.

“I do... I do...” Gray grins with an ear to ear smile.

“Where did 12 year olds get such good shit?” Cello laughs.

The quaint home sits nestled in the quiet suburban streets as the two eat their cake. Their laughter fills the air. And to those that wander the streets, always wondering what the inside of these stranger’s homes is like, whether it be from the wholesome smell of home cooking or the light of the TV, the shared love of life is always hidden within the backbone. At times when we stand on the quietest of streets, we become entranced with not so much the silence, but the synchronic bond between all. As the moon begins to fall and as dawn attempts to make

its way, it seems as if nature too has this natural bond – the brisk air carries the autumn melody and the sun peeks upon the moon as it too curiously attempts to see what it is doing.



# **CHAPTER 3:**

## **Hawthorne Asylum**

Haunting screams fill the ears and begin to grow nauseously; to those unfamiliar with such screams it would easily throw their equilibrium out of balance due to the surreal yammering of these mental patients – it’s enough to make your skin crawl. A squeaky wheel bounces off of the hard concrete floor. An armed and familiar face pushes a patient through the large hallways of the secured building. The friendly man that helped Clove many years ago has now become a guard at the Hawthorne Asylum – his name is Kenny, as it says in cursive written upon his white jacket. A younger guard walks alongside him, it’s obvious this kid is new due to the previous description up above, he’s synonymous with it, and in fact the observation of this man provoked this descriptive thought.

“Are the cuffs really necessary?” the nervous young man says.

The cuffs are around a monstrous, scarred hand with long fingernails; they hang off of the stretcher while the guards push him down the plain hallway.

“Last week when a guard went to uncuff him, he woke up and bit off his ear,” Kenny nonchalantly continues to say, “he was under enough anesthetic to take out 2 horses. How he woke up... no idea. But that’s why you’re here.”

The young guard swallows his words while they walk the long halls with steel doors along each side. Breathing begins to get heavier from the patient as he pants through the muzzle-type apparatus over

his face. His distinct long black hair hangs over it; a mask over a mask – it seems the Kill Feast murderer is still alive and well; despite his hair slightly greying and a scarred eye that peeks out between the waves of straight hair, he still holds a dauntingly tall stature (being that he hangs off the stretcher). His scarred grey-blue eye groggily opens in his half-comatose state, he looks up to the two guards but locks his eye on the new one, staring through him.

“Are they not allowed haircuts?” the young guard asks as Kenny swipes his badge to get passed the next doorway. Patients lean up to the small window of their secured room and stare to them, some scream and some run into the padded walls within their room.

Kenny turns to him with his raised eyebrows, “No one’s cutting his hair...” he pushes the patient through the doorway.

Outside of the asylum in the dusky hour, patients play outside and are dressed for the cold weather. Some patients that are purely just mentally ill and aren’t dangerous do have the freedom to roam with their nurses and monitors. Obvious this isn’t the case for the row of patients locked away in the most secure part of the mental hospital.

A black guard sips on his cherry Slurpee as he’s surrounded by several empty bottles of Pepto-Bismal, empty candy wrappers and potato chip packages; these diabetes-inducing items find their home religiously upon this guard’s desk. He scrolls on his phone, swiping from app to app; Snapchat,

Instagram, Facebook, he then opens a dating app while switching hands and shaking out his 'swipe hand'. "Fuckin' Tinder-itus," – he continues swiping regardless. "Oh shit – Cousin Jeanie?!" He swipes through her pictures and they ooze with "thirstiness" and seductivity. "She does look good..." he says while deeply pondering. The junk food guard then impulsively swipes, "Fuck it, she's my second cousin." He swipes 'Like' and then lets out a large burp, nearly puking into his own mouth; he quickly reaches for a new box of *Pepto* while he utters, "Cousin Jeanie grew up overnight..."

An opening sits beyond the tall asylum gates near the woods and gently rocks in the dawn wind. The sun just begins to peek midst the bare trees – its orange-rusted hue is something to be worshipped, even some of the patients stop their gallivanting and notice its beauty, some clapping their hands with excitement. The dull-minded seem to be more appreciative of what they are, who they are, and where they come from – maybe some of their illnesses aren't truly mental but rather socially inept because they're beyond their time and know their own place that doesn't exist to the perceptive reality – either way all comes back to the cherishment of Nature.

Back inside the frightening patient's room, he lays upon the gurney with his arm now unchained. The creak from that gate beyond the tall asylum is carried through the wind all of the way to the small ventilated window; the patient hears this noise as he lays down, you can see the change in his body – the

poise becomes invigorated with the false hopes of freedom. But I don't feel it's freedom this man wants; he's still hungry for whatever he was seeking that night, whether it be the lust for blood or to just simply feel human – this rage within him has not yet dissipated, in fact I would say that it's grown even stronger and wiser. When one is locked up for extended periods of time sanity becomes insanity and those who were insane to begin with simply see themselves as prisoners, even despite the help, the classes, the “medicine”; they know what the world perceives of them and this enrages the cognitive beings, the ones with deep scars. And for the truly naïve, they're merely there because they don't care where they are simply because the concept of space does not exist to them – they were born with, unfortunately its embedded within their DNA.

“Let's go...” Kenny says as he opens the doorway. The younger guard takes his gaze and turns to look back to Kenny – the patient abruptly sits up causing a wave of eeriness to take over the room. Kenny notices and yells, “Hurry the fuck up!” He reaches in and pulls the young guard out, slamming the metal door behind him. The tall man stands and stares down to them through the small window – his hair covers his face and the shadowy lighting from the dim cell adds that much more uncomfortableness.

The young guard looks up to in awe, “By the grace of God.”

“Yeah, I don't think so, kid.” Kenny strongly says.

The patients that are kept in the hall with the insane murderer all begin to laugh and scream; some bounce off of their padded-walled rooms, and some wear straightjackets. The younger guard is oddly enamored with this monster-of-a-man; he stares up to him and the daunting man stares back down to him. “What did he do?” he inquisitively asks.

“What didn’t he do?” Kenny reminisces as he walks off.

The two guards walk through the halls as they pass more patients in their cells. “You heard of the Kill Feast Massacre?” Kenny numbingly asks.

Younger guard becomes even more intrigued, “That was back in the 90’s, wasn’t it?”

“92.” Kenny quickly retorts.

The younger guard puts two and two together and says, “That’s the guy that murdered 23 people in that haunted house...”

“It was a funhouse – and there was nothing fun about it.” Kenny wipes some sweat from his forehead as he slightly beads up just thinking back to the event, “I was there that night and I’ll never forget it. He used a – sickle – a real sick individual.” Pure sickness comes over Kenny and the young guard notices, “He cut a – a – young boy’s head clean off.” The young guard soaks in the unnerving words and he’s speechless. They continue walking through the halls as more patients in the less detained area draw on the walls of their cells; their rooms are padded but more open, spacious and free. Some

stand while sleeping, others just stand frozen staring, and some act out theatrical performances. The young guard looks to Kenny's ring of keys hanging on his side. Kenny grabs his jingling keys, "I don't know how I'm still here, but I am. I also don't know how I haven't murdered that son of a bitch after all of this time. I guess part of me gets pleasure seeing him locked up. Knowing the world is a safer place as long as this thing is either dead or in a padded cell – gives me purpose," he says as they walk through yet another set of doors.

"You don't think he's repented his sins?" the young guard says with a subtle but strange tune. "It's been such a long time..."

Kenny adamantly replies, "He isn't human – that beast – *is* a sin..."

They make their way to the front and into the reception area. "Hey Rosie," Kenny says with a smile; she smiles back to him. The young guard gives a friendly nod to the receptionist. They continue walking and make their way outside. Cameras flood the receptionist's desk showing each and every room within the facility. A bottle sits on her desk: *Psyllium Husk: For Constipation – A Healthy Source of Fiber*

Outside of the asylum the younger guard quickly attempts to keep up with Kenny's stride as he walks up to his old Trans Am. "They said he didn't have a name, right?" the young guard asks, still intrigued by the story. "He had no ID, nothing...?"

“No one knows who, why, how, where or what the fuck that monster is... it took 20 cops just to restrain him. And that was after he got hit by a car and shot with a bunch of bullets.” Kenny takes off his jacket.

“So – what do you call him then?” the young guard stares to him.

Kenny opens his car door and utters, “33...”

“Why 33?”

Kenny looks up to him from his car, “Because he killed 33 people that night, not 23. And 13 of them were barely teenagers. The youngest of them was an 8 year old boy and a 6 year old girl,” he fiddles with the radio, “enough history for ya? – But tomorrow, his life ends. That state’s done paying and execution of the most insane is necessary now unfortunately.”

“They’re going to kill all of those men and women?” the young guard sadly asks.

Kenny grabs a piece of gum and pops it into his mouth, “Most of them,” he begins to chew, “and a lot of them don’t deserve to die. They’re just born sick, mentally ill – number 33 is another story...”

“He’s never spoken to you?” The young guard watches Kenny fuddle around in his car.

“They tried to study him but there was no point – he hasn’t said a word since they apprehended him.” Kenny looks through cassette tapes and then looks up to the young guard confused, “Why did you sign up for this job?”



“Student loans.” He quickly replies.

Kenny nods, “You need a ride, kid?”

“No thanks,” the young guard nervously scratches his face and quickly says, “I actually forgot something in my locker.”

Kenny starts his car. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

The young guard nods and begins to walk off while looking up to the tall red bricked building. A noticeable window with a lurking patient stares out of his small vented view. It is number 33; he stares down to them with just his ghoulish silhouette. Chills consume the young guard.

“Kid,” Kenny voices out from his car window, “his other nickname is The Trench Coat Man – that’s what he was wearing that night. It’s stupid but it paints the picture.” He reaches into each and every pocket. “I don’t know where the fuck my badge-key went.” Kenny shakes his head, “It’s probably in there somewhere but if for some reason you do find it, leave it at the front for me.” The young guard nods to him. “Thanks,” Kenny says as he drives off. The young guard stares off to the brake lights of the car as they become further and further away, driving to the entrance gate.

Inside the asylum at the front desk, the receptionist’s stomach begins to growl. She quickly grabs it and rises to her feet and then abruptly running off. The cameras of the patients quietly sit upon her desk. The monstrous man still stares out the window with his back turned. The young guard

reenters the building and looks to the desk to see that the receptionist is gone.

The young guard begins walking through the halls towards his locker. He passes other workers at the facility; they give a brief greeting to one and other. As the guard approaches his locker sweat falls upon his head – something isn't right. He begins to breathe deeply, and then opens his locker. A white collar sits in his locker. He grabs it and shuts the locker door.

He walks the highly secured area and holds in his hand Kenny's badge and keys. He walks toward a sign reading: *No Unexperienced Personal Beyond This Point – Exercise High Caution – Patients Are Deadly!*

He swipes the badge and opens the large steel doors. The young guard's jacket drops to the ground and he now wears the outfit of a priest and holds the bible – it looks like this young man was a self-righteous delusional superhero this whole time. He does the sign of the cross and nervously utters to himself, "I'm doing the Lord's work." He then proceeds to walk down the highly secure halls...

# **CHAPTER 4:**

## **The Trench Coat Man**

Inside the Church of Righteous Jesus, the young guard takes prayer while wearing his priest attire. He looks to a tall statue overlooking the several rows of pews; it is of Jesus wearing the crown of thorns, taunting him to do right of him due to the death that he *supposedly* subjected himself to in order to alleviate and free mankind – yet this man seems to still be a prisoner and to not even himself but a inexistent stranger plastered upon the wall. Could a death of this magnitude be possible? – Jesus simply died for beliefs that *he* believed in, no one else's. Was he subjected to bigotry and a war of what's expected of mankind to be, what to abide to, did he remain insubordinate to others beliefs? – If this is the case and Jesus died for his own principles, whether he had a slew of groupies with similar views and he was just the most brazen and outspoken – *if this was the case* and let's say Jesus were alive today to see himself plastered throughout the churches of the world, money being given in his name, wars being fought in his name, racism and segregation, and social class and world imperialism, would he then be proud of this attained fame? – Maybe his ego would be, but if this is a man of integrity, of evolution, of compassion, nevertheless he would be sickened with what his posthumous fate has become of him – is this quite possibly the *shame* that is the only true shame to exist, that is the shame of the past, not so much as learning from history but becoming it, staggering evolution by clinging to a metaphysical condonation of Kings and war-hungry men from the past? God's to be loved within and hence forth not externally by false means of justifications and fears –

not objectively but subjectively – this is beyond the soul and innate to human beings.

This young priest (the young guard) holds the rosary bead within his hand as an old priest blesses him with holy water. “We have Father Tom working within the local abortion clinics to passively shame women to not taking the innocent lives of children, Sister Anne and Father Peter are making their rounds to local Alcohol Anonymous groups to intervene with assistance and persuade them to become members of our congregation, quite a few of our fellow worshippers are working the addiction circuit, and then we have you, my son Messiah.” The young priest looks up to him with loving eyes. “You’ve obtained your place at the asylum and now it is time to rescue God’s special children, for it is in the name of Christ that he wishes for no more crucifixions, it is within you the power of Christ and it is within him that the strong son of God will save these men and women.” The old priest places his hand alongside the young man’s face and grazes his lips with his fingers.

*It is within him and then within him and then within him and only then is the power of you but it is not actually you it is him.* This way of thought destroys the ability of any human being to obtain any sense of Self – there is no power and the life lived is that of a herded animal kept for slaughter, fed and sheltered for one purpose only: for someone else. Would you rather be eaten by those who lovingly imprison you or be eaten by the mysterious freedom

individualized yet collectivized by Nature – the Universe’s blatant truth...?

This priest that wears the mask of the guard is no different than the war-hungry colonel or world leader – hiding behind their ways with self-righteous indignation, too concerned for others because they refuse to know themselves, doing the work appointed to them for the love and the affection of their abandoned child – they’re bastard children and they refuse to accept this and this is why they have no desire to grow.

The older priest releases his fingers from the young priest’s lips as saliva salivates upon the lower lip of the old priest – he does the sign of the cross and rises from the seat of the church, he exits and walks through the empty pews as the old priest watches.

And here is the former guard undercover priest standing in the high security area with keys in hand, staring down to the daunting rows of doors. He wipes the sweat from his forehead and takes a step forward, tossing holy water throughout the area. He approaches the first cell...

Inside the bathroom the receptionist sits on the toilet as she swipes on her phone, scrolling through her social media feed as her stomach gurgles; she stubbornly pushes and holds her breath, releasing it as sweat gently drips from her constipated forehead.

The doors open to the first cell; a nebbish-looking woman exits and touches the face of the priest as she chuckles like an excited child. He douses her with holy water and she begins excitedly dancing throughout the halls.

Key after key, more and more doors begin to open, and then more and more patients begin to run free; most are laughing and are happy while some don't really know what to do with themselves, they just stand there awkward and uncomfortably. The priest approaches the door near the end of the hall; he's a bit hesitant because he knows who's behind it. His mission is to "free all" but is this man considered to be part of *all*? Is this murdering beast a "son of God" as well? – These thoughts render within the head of the priest as he slowly nears the door of prisoner number 33, the trench coat man: *How could a man murder innocent children, how could a man murder innocent human beings? Were they innocent? Were they sinners? – If so then this still doesn't justify the doings but we are all sinners at least once in our lives... if I free this man am I to a sinner? Is this really God's work? Does this man deserve to live? – To be free?*

The ego is a powerful force but an even more powerful force is an ego hidden behind organized religion because the organized religion began from the fearful individual's ego and is now a conglomerate of egos. It's not just 'false thoughts' brought on from the human condition but now it is false thoughts within false thoughts within false thoughts within false thoughts – it is a conjoined

onion falsely stitched together and now the labyrinths within layer after layer have been intertwined – it has now made humankind’s efforts to be *kind* even more difficult, even more buried; it is conditioning within conditioning.

And there he stands with the key; he slowly raises it up to the lock and opens the door. The man sits with his back turned and gazes out the vented window slightly above. The undercover priest slowly enters the room, almost on his tippy-toes. He *very slowly* approaches – his heartbeat begins to pound deep and slow as if time has slowed down, a frost has come upon his heart and rather than it beat rhythmically, it palpitates; it echoes in his eardrums as he approaches the side of the murderer – his hair covers his face, it’s a shadow to the vision of the priest.

“I know what you did... I know why you’re here.” He nervously says and proceeds by reassuring number 33:

*I spoke to God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and they told me I couldn’t let my fellow women and men die in here. They said save them. Let them be free. Bless them and let them repent.*

He now stands directly in front of the patient and blocks the ambient light from the window and now makes an even greater silhouette of the man as the priest looks like a gently glowing nervous angel:

*You see, I always knew the insane were really sane – they simply could see and hear things not of*



*this time. Their abilities are beyond ours – we’re all God’s creatures but I do feel the ‘special’ are truly gifted. You’re all not mentally ill but seers of the Heavens. And that’s why I shall gift you a biblical name; for they don’t see their fellow human being as their own so they give you a number. Like a beast. But even a beast deserves a name. Azrael.*

This gargantuan man rises; the priest’s heart immediately drops as the monstrous man stands from the seated position and now towers over the priest; he then nervously squeezes the holy water and then gently unscrews the cap:

*God’s Angel of Death. You see, in order to overcome the tragedies you’ve done, you must embrace the name and know that there is good in you. You must know that you too have the ability to be an angel.*

The undercover priest gets even closer while sermonizing as his vein pulses midst his white collar. “You and I are no different,” he says while grabbing the tall man’s hand – instantly evilness fills the room, even more so than prior if even possible; it’s as if a swarm of spiders are crawling all over the skin of this priest and he’s too frightened to move. The man leers over the falsely courageous priest. “May I bless you with this?” he politely asks while holding the holy water. “May I cleanse your soul with it?”

All is silent. The priest looks up to the shadowy face of the man and he looks ahead out to the window, not even looking to the priest. BANG! A gunshot is heard from outside the door – a maniacal

laugh proceeds thus following a psychotic patient carrying a gun. The patients that the priest freed are causing havoc. He peeks around the massive body of the man and sees them dragging a guard by his legs leaving a trail of blood. “No,” the priest frighteningly says as he begins to walk off – WHACK – quickly both hands of the monstrous man get placed upon each side of the priest’s head. He places them like a vice grip wielding his face – fear is beyond him and now he truly is frozen in time, a self-induced purgatory. The strong beast begins to lift him up from the ground and the guard nervously kicks his feet. “Don’t let the devil consume you, my brother...” he says while dropping the holy water and bible to the ground. *Thud!*

More odd patients peek in from outside of the cell and add to the suspenseful feeling as the audience has now taken root and all eagerly stare in; they cheer and laugh while the screams of other guards are heard and echo throughout the halls.

The priest stares into the eyes of the beast; now revealing his scarred dead eye in the glimpse of light and CRACK! He squeezes the jaw of the guard; dislocating it – POP – he continues with the force and then squashes his head, blood drops down to his white collar, tarnishing it. CRUNCH! His body drops to the ground. The bible and the holy water lay on the floor with his lifeless body as rigor mortis attempts to set in, his feet twitch, his body insists to stay alive but Nature has taken its course; or in this case a monster has taken its course. Blood seeps into the puddle of holy water and makes Yin-Yang

swirl, and then melting and becoming one. The patient then pulls his body with one arm effortlessly and drags him off out his cell doors – the other patients quickly move out of the way. A blood trail is left from his oozing head. The sun glimmers through the ventilated windows upon the solution of blood and holy water – duality has effortlessly become nondual.

Finally the toilet flushes and the receptionist lifts up her black underwear beneath the stall and opens the door – she washes her hands at the sink and glances up into the mirror, fixes her mascara and then looks back down to continue washing; a deviant woman appears in the corner of the room from the view of the mirror. The receptionist walks over and dries her hands under the hand drier. A noise is heard – she turns to see one of the stall doors swing shut but no feet are under the door. Confusion fills her face.

The receptionist approaches her desk and pumps hand sanitizer into her hands (as if washing them wasn't enough). She looks to the camera and her eyes go wide, "Oh, fuck no!"

On the security cameras the priest's crushed head is on a broomstick, his jaw jangles open as crazed patients jerk it up and down.

The receptionist stares in shock and hits the emergency button and the alarms begin to sound – she then quickly runs off but takes her constipation medicine with her; it's the one thing in an urgent

situation she decided to take and apparently it works very well.

On the camera patients flock throughout the halls opening and freeing more of their own.

Outside in the watchtower, the cousin-kissing guard watches a movie on his phone as he begins to nod off – the ALARM sounds and he jumps up. “Shit!” he nervously says and looks around the facilities confused. He looks to the building and sees random office and medical supplies raining from the roof, thrown by animated shadowy figures. A prominent figure stands over all of the chaotic patients as he carries something large in his hand; the guard looks to them confused and then quickly picks up the phone.

In front of the building the receptionist runs out of the asylum while nervously looking behind her; patients are seen through the glass windows as they dance through the halls. THUD! Glass shatters – a sound-booming explosion fills the ears of this woman as the headless priest’s body lands upon her little yellow Volkswagon Bug demolishing it; her face is covered in blood and bodily matter. Her jaw is dropped in awe and the white pupils of her eyes offset the contrasting and viscous blood. She lets out a belting scream!

# **CHAPTER 5:**

## **Welcome Home**

A teapot whistles atop the counter. Clove reaches over to grab the metal handle making it sizzle as sweat drops upon the scorched steel therefore creating steam. She doesn't bother to feel the scald of the burning hot handle while wearing her black sports bra and being covered in sweat from her intense workout; she has renounced pain after she experienced the worst of it several years ago. A worn and tethered heavy bag hangs in the middle of her TV room – it's as if the best have fought it and repeatedly won. She takes the hot kettle and pours the boiling water into a French press filled with the darkest coffee anyone could ever find. She walks to her room holding a mug with a picture of her son, Michael smiling upon it, as well as the French press. Inside of her room she passes the calendar with the specific date (October 13<sup>th</sup>) circled but doesn't pay mind to it; Clove knows that this exact date is embedded within her veins. She plays with the police radio while seated upon her bed near her nightstand; it's not working – there's an open pack of batteries nearby as well. Her phone rings – she looks to it and quickly rises.

In a rush, Clove is now barely dressed, she throws on some dirty jeans and a black sweater, her hair's still messy – to some standards this would be considered “frumpy” but the desolate attitude she exudes leads to be more “punk” or just “badass”; and though this isn't by choice, her beauty just happens to be synonymous with her exuding aura of hopeful hopelessness. She walks with the coffee and mug in her hand. At the counter sits a bottle of rum, half empty – she places down a large thermos and dumps

her cup of coffee into the mug. She then grabs an envelope off of the counter nearby and makes her way to the door, grabbing her long black coat from the hanger and then coming to a halt with the door opened about to leave; she reenters and walks to the counter, grabbing the whole bottle of rum and treks back the same path and out the door. A picture of her and Michael sit on the small table near the door; they're at the beach, happy and cheerful. As established prior alcohol is the primary fuel that drives her, it is her newly ingrained habit – there is no “addiction” within these means of life but simply a crisis, a lack of purpose, an immense amount of scarred emotional traumas; feelings too deep will be masked with an easy escape and there is no easier way to hide from your problems than at the bottom of a bottle or in the numbing of pharmaceutically prescribed pills. Rather than confront life Clove's developed poor habits to do all she can to hide from it, to hide from herself. The pain she experienced is so grueling and one can't even imagine what she feels on a daily basis but there must be a natural way to make peace with this burden other than false stimulants and vengeance... What's still keeping her alive...?

Driving in Clove's old car, airplane bottles of rum and vodka lie completely empty upon the floor alongside some scattered prescription pill bottles. They clank together while driving on the bumpy roads. She wears dark sunglasses despite the sun not being overly bright and the clouds bearing most of the glare. Clove stares out to the small town as she drives, it's quaint and warm outside of her car;

families walk the streets and the homey store fronts sandwich the busy roads – but within Clove’s car is a cloud, it is dark and unlike the seasons with their natural cyclic way of life, Clove holds this cloud like an umbrella – her poisons of choice don’t help this, a matter of fact they prolong the alleviation and any possible catharsis to be. She did experience something unknown to most, the decapitation of her own child, the slaughter of many others, but as difficult as this may be, there *must* be a better way while knowing that this pain experienced will never subside – it is in the making of peace with this pain that only can then lead to more productive habits and new ways of life therefore actually living a *life*. One cannot imagine how difficult this is, this experience but there others who share this pain, not all but the few – knowing we’re not alone doesn’t lighten our burden but it gives a sharing bond of mutual suffering; it is in this mutual suffering that the ability to find our own individuality bursts through and runs wild but we must first grab it by the reins. Clove must overcome this voluntary prison; she has locked herself away and swallowed the key – the irony is that the key is literally within her.

Clove’s car quietly sits parked outside of an old New Jersey diner.

Clove slides the envelope across the table to a well-dressed woman. The woman then opens it up and looks to pictures: they’re of her husband and he’s with another man – tears immediately stream down her face. Clove looks to her and numbingly



says, “I’m sorry,” as a waitress walks over with a pot of hot coffee.

“Refill?” asks the waitress with her old Virginia Slim fermented voice. The well-dressed woman stares off in a daze – Clove opens her thermos and hands it to the waitress. She pours the hot coffee into the thermos and gets the aroma of alcohol in her nose; it’s a trip to a melting pot of passed memories from this waitress, a Proustian experience fills her and in one concise statement of playful euphoria says, “Well, good morning.” The hot coffee steams its wholesome goodness grounding one’s soul from the intoxicating smell of the grounds. She places the mug down.

“Thank you.” Clove replies.

The well-dressed woman continues to gaze out the window to nothingness. Clove looks to her watch, “I have to get to another appointment...”

“Right, sorry...” the well-dressed woman utters with deeply rooted rage and sadness as she reaches into her purse, then taking out a large wad of money and sliding it across the table to Clove.

“Thank you,” Clove grabs it, “now you know. You’ll get through this. It’s difficult now but – the power is in your hands, not his.” She attempts to articulate some sort of compassion through her numb tone as she grabs her thermos and walks away. The woman continues to stare off in a daze, similar to the waitress that gawks at Clove exiting the small diner while being overly reminiscent of the

alcohol-induced trip down memory lane. Maybe this is the shared bond of mutual sufferings, if only the waitress had chosen to share this bond rather than withhold it. Regardless of the outcome anything is better than harboring. Anger does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored opposed to which it is poured. The woman turns her head from the window view and stares down at the table as Clove walks to her car outside and enters her old, beat up Cadillac.

A street sign reading *Kyle Road* sits at the corner of an intersection and beneath are the words written cursive *in memory of*. Cloves car turns onto this road making a wide left turn. She pulls up to a row of brick homes with iron gates in front of each of them. She parks her car in front of one of the homes wielding dead flowers – it seems the only vibrancy of the home’s exterior is a blue flag waving college pride in the wind but has become wrinkled from the fall breeze.

Clove sits outside of the home as she counts the money from the envelope and then stuffs it back into the envelope. She looks to her watch – this seems to be a religious occurrence for her. She opens her car door and exits the vehicle.

Her long strides tell that she wants to do whatever she is doing in a hurry – she keenly looks around the area, scoping once again. Clove walks up to the steps up the home and once atop she lifts the mail slot and places the envelope in – upon doing this the door opens and a young girl wearing a UMASS college sweatshirt stands; they awkwardly stare to one and other. Guilt wears Clove as the first

sense of true obvious human emotion blatantly makes an appearance unmasking her constantly numbed stupor, “No one’s ever home at the time...” Clove bashfully says.

“I’m home from school,” the young woman then retorts with wit, “which apparently you pay for.”

“Your mother works very hard,” Clove insecurely utters.

Anger cuts the tension of the awkwardness, “Don’t talk like you know her. That’s creepy...” says the young girl.

Silence begins to rekindle the awkward tension between the two. Clove’s eyes begin to glaze over. “I’m sorry,” she pleads.

“You’re sorry for killing my father...?” the young girl sarcastically retorts surprised. “I remember that day – I was just a little girl but I remember it so vividly. I remember when my dad got shot – as he was trying to pull us out of harm’s way. I remember when I looked to see where the gunshots were coming from – and there you were, firing bullets at this – monster. You were filled with a rage so deep that I think I felt more for you in that moment than my own father. I know what that thing took away from you that day,” the young woman painfully continues to say as she pulls from memories of the past, “I know all about you; you became a private investigator to ‘help’ people, didn’t you? – To try and fill that black hole inside your heart...” Clove wipes the tears from her eyes as the young woman bends

down to pick up the money. “And that’s what this is,” she bitterly says while holding the envelope in her hand, “you giving us money all of these years...” Clove looks down ashamed. “But it doesn’t erase the guilt, does it?” the young woman prods. “It gives you purpose though – this is why you’re still here, living, breathing in the air my father could have...” she instantly chokes up and then quickly becomes enraged. “Isn’t it...? This gives you a reason to live...” She voices while shaking the money. Numbing tears fill Clove’s eyes. “I’ve went through a lot of therapy because of you – and I bet you did too because of your son Michael.” Her words stab into Clove’s gut as she stares in immediate pain; she turns around and begins to walk away. “Don’t walk away! I *need* this – I’ve been waiting for this moment!” the young woman screams as she chases Clove with the money in hand and throws it at her. “Take your fucking blood money!” she screams, hitting her in the back. The young girl quickly walks down the path to follow Clove.

Clove enters her car, starting it and driving away. The young woman runs into the street and angrily picks up the money she had thrown at Clove. She stares with tears and pants like a rabid dog – she apprehensively throws it back to the door of her home and lets out a furious scream.

Clove wipes a tear from her painful eyes. She opens her glove box and takes out a bottle of vodka which lies right next to a handgun. She opens it and chugs it down as tears stream down her face. This is Clove’s *will to survive* – her giving money to the

family of the father that she accidentally murdered the night of the massacre; this is what keeps her heart beating, this is her motherly instinct that still faintly pulses.

# **CHAPTER 6:**

## **Beginning To The End**

Cello looks to Gray seated in the passenger seat of his car as they drive down the bare tree-covered road. “I don’t get it – what’s a keto diet?” Gray asks.

“You just eat mostly healthy fats. Like avocado, coconut oil, seeds, nuts, berries...” Cello replies.

“That’s the diet of a fuckin’ squirrel. Can you eat pasta?”

“No. That’s like the number one thing you can’t eat. You can have Zoodles though...”

“What the fuck is a Zoodle?” Gray says befuddled.

Cello retorts, “It’s a zucchini spiraled in the shape of spaghetti.”

“Oh yeah, you made those for me once and they were really good.” Gray reminisces and says surprised, “I like Zoodles – but that’s not pasta; it’s a vegetable deceptively disguised as pasta.”

“Costco has frozen Zoodles,” Cello excitedly says, “a whole bag for \$7.99 – organic too....” He looks up as the two take their mutual appreciation for “Zoodles” and notices the commotion up ahead. The asylum is filled with state police and is taped off with yellow *Crime Scene Tape*. Befuddlement fills the two of them. “What the fuck is this?” Cello says as he pulls their vehicle into the lot.

He puts the car in park and then turns to Gray, “Wait here.” Cello exits the car. Gray

immediately follows him and Cello notices, “I told you to wait.”

“What am I a Shih Tzu?” Gray sarcastically replies.

They both approach two state officers, a male and a female. It’s obvious who the alpha is, the frail and shy young male officer is a rookie, and the female officer’s ponytail is so tight that it makes her already-fierce eyes look that much more intense; she still takes pride in her femininity with her permanent tattooed eyeliner around her pretty green eyes. “You two are gonna have to get back...” she sternly says.

Cello steps forward, “What the fuck is this? Why weren’t we notified?”

“This is a matter of the state,” she sternly says and attempts to turn away.

Cello steps up to her, “Whatever happened happened in our town.”

“It’s beyond your jurisdiction and we have everything under control,” the female state officer retorts with a fed-up tone, “end of conversation.”

Gray eyes the young male officer as he uncomfortably looks off; he’s unsure of why he’s there, the rookie is incredibly insecure and nervous. The female officer walks off and her partner then follows.

Cello yells, “Does our town have anything to worry about?”



The state officers completely ignore him – Gray stares in disgust, “State police have always been entitled pieces of shit.”

The two state police walk with one and other amidst the crime scene:

“We have 24 hours before we have to legally notify them about any missing patients,” the female officer says, “so, we sweep the area, gather them all up and that’s it.”

“But ma’am, can’t they assist us?” her timid partner asks. “Have more officers on this...?”

“If we tell them and they go digging or the town goes digging and they see the lack of security that goes into hiring here after this shit-show, then Governor Hawthorne looks bad and the Governor handles our budget, our retirement; part of the job is looking out most for the people that have our interest – it’s a favor for a favor.” The female officer looks to the forensic officer approaching with a plastic bag in hand; he hands it to her. She studies it with brief disgust and then turns to her partner and hands it to him, pressing it hard into his chest and subtly making him off balance. “Someone had a little collection,” she playfully says.

The male officer looks to the plastic bag and within it is yet another bag filled with bloody, ripped off fingernails. Vomit fills his mouth immediately and he leans over to the side and throws up.

“Don’t be a cunt...” she says bothered and walks away.

Gray and Cello approach their vehicle as they're still apprehensive to what's going on. Clove pulls up in her car and Gray locks his eyes on her. She parks her car and exits. "Oh fuck," Gray says.

Clove quickly nears them. "What is this?" she asks in confusion.

"We know as much as you," replies Cello.

Gray intercepts, "It's a state issue."

"He was supposed to be transferred and executed today." Clove looks to the commotion in the distance: the state police doing their investigating.

"I know. It doesn't look like that's happening." Gray replies.

Clove frantically begins to pace and then screams, "Fuck!"

The state police in the distance turn their heads and look to them with suspicious eyes.

Gray quickly approaches her, "Clove, come here." He calmly continues to say, "We don't need to draw suspicion to ourselves. You know I'll give ya the first piece of information I get – who gave you the leads on everyone and everything you needed?" Gray looks to the suspicious state officers in the distance, "Their mouths are shit and *I think* it's because of that greedy fuckin' governor of ours being that he owns this place. Whatever happened, they don't want it getting to the press. So go home for now. I'll let you know of anything." Gray looks to her with love in his

eyes, a genuine passion and a shared amount of suffering from the tragic event that they both survived.

Clove looks to him with big eyes, nodding and then walking to her car. Cello stares from his car as Gray walks back to him the few yards he ventured. “What was that about?” Cello asks.

Gray watches Clove speed off, “Just an old friend helping an old friend.”

The two begin to get into their vehicle as Cello inquisitively asks, “Does she like me? – Because every time we’ve been around her – she makes me feel like I don’t exist.”

The two sit in their vehicle and Gray replies, “She doesn’t *not* not like you.”

“What the fuck does that even mean?” Cello says with scrunched eyebrows.

Their car starts and the two drive off down the narrow road.

The female state officer watches them from the sidelines unsure of their characters.

A large mansion sits upon the Jersey shore as the waves break and the gulls squawk. The previous young mayor of the town that was being sworn in at the 1992 Kill Feast with his father and grandfather is

now the new Governor Hawthorne. He stands upon his balcony wearing a white wool sweater as he looks out to the foam-covered ocean. He's aged but still has the snide look of privilege and a hint of that handsome political charisma within the peppering of his wavy hair. He stares to the foam covered ocean – his phone rings and he quickly answers it, “Yeah.”

His son approaches exiting from inside of the house and it's the burly jock that bullied the gay man at the festival; his inflated ego was inherited from his father obviously. He approaches his dad with a big smile along with his phone in his hand; “Dad, you have to check this out...” his father quickly puts up his hand with a bothered face, causing his son to turn around disappointed and deflated thus walking back inside.

How influential are our parents... how we crave their attention and affirmation – why have a child if he or she is going to be neglected? Sternness, a lack of empathy and compassion – if you desire to make a human unhuman then these are the parental traits to abide by – and then you too will become the monster.

“Have you rounded up all of the patients yet?” Governor voices into the phone.

Inside the asylum the alpha female officer walks through the messy lobbies while on the phone with the Governor, “We have more than half of them. We have a lot of officers in town as well to make sure no one makes it that far.” She looks to the walls in

disgust as a cleaning crew cleans up feces smeared all over mixed with blood.

“Patient 33?” Governor nervously asks.

The officer climbs over scattered chairs and crunches upon the broken glass of the ransacked asylum. “Not yet, sir...” she says as she walks by coroners taking the head of the priest off of the broomstick.

A ponderous look fills the Governor’s face, “He’s the priority. Find him and kill him.” The Governor adamantly says.

“Will do, sir.” She replies as she maneuvers around more scattered garbage throughout the facility.

The Governor hangs up the phone and walks back toward the entrance of his luxurious home upon the beach – it is the only one visible on this private part of the connecting islands belonging to the Jersey shore.

Up in northern New Jersey, clouds cover the sky and faint rain droplets drip upon the red brick building where the crew diligently cleans the rioted mental penitentiary. The female state officer’s police vehicle drives over a plaque lying in the driveway of the asylum reading: *Hawthorne Intensive Care And Rehabilitation Wing EST. 1992*

**CHAPTER 6:**  
**Cold Potpie & An Eye For**  
**An Eye**

Clove sits inside of a cold cell and stares to the wall with blood upon her jeans, hands and white *The Doors* shirt – she’s in shock from the witness of her son’s death. This is that murderous night of 1992 – an officer approaches her; it’s Gray. He opens the cell doors and she still continues to sit in a trance – the only thing that moves on her are her tears dripping down her chin and falling onto the cold concrete cell floor. Gray nears Clove and sits down alongside her in the small cell within the police station. He takes a deep breath and says to Clove with tears in his eyes:

*Words won’t convey anything to you with what you’ve just went through. The only thing I can say is, during that scuffle, you accidentally killed a man.*

Clove slightly breaks from her frozen state and looks to the Gray.

*I wouldn’t even be telling you this but this case has become jurisdiction of the state and they want to take you in for questioning. I told them that you’re in no shape to answer anything – I can only do so much, but I assure you that I know several state and federal judges and being that I was there, I will vouch for you and I will not let you end in up in prison for involuntary manslaughter or anything of the sort – most you’ll get is community service.*

Clove continues to stare off.

*Stay with it, Clove – you don’t want to end up at Hawthorne Asylum. I’ll do whatever I can to help you.*

Gray rises from his seated position on the cold wooden bench of the cell. Chatter from other officers is heard as it gently echoes through the small station. He exits the cell. Clove sits staring into the abyss that is her blackened soul – the emotions within her cannot even be articulated.

Back in 2020, Clove is seen through the window of a ‘mom and pop shop’ as she pays at the register. She exits and looks around to see obvious undercover and regular state officers patrolling the street – she knows something is up. She enters her car and begins to drive off.

As she drives she changes the batteries in her police radio and then reaches into a brown bag and opens up a mini bottle of vodka, she briefly looks down to open the cap and then upon looking up she sees a very tall man wearing a large hood midst the crowd of people – she jams on her brakes and the car screeches as do others behind her. She looks to the tall hooded man – it’s not the monster she had thought. She turns her gaze away and nervously looks ahead. Cars honk behind her and one zips alongside her and some dude leans over towards the passenger side of his car and yells out, “Crazy bitch!” Clove just stares straight ahead. She grabs the brown bag filled with alcohol and exits the car with it, then approaching a garbage can and tossing it in. Some young teenagers nosily watch, a few boy and a few girls. Clove gets back into her car and drives off;



the teenagers walk over to the garbage and take out the bag, seeing that its alcohol their faces light up. Clove knows that if there is a fight to be had it can't be numbed – she must feel all that she has drowned out in order to survive, in order to avenge. She doesn't know if war is to be had, but she plans on being ready if it is.

The sun begins to fall behind the pastel colored clouds as the minutes of daylight grow day by day to retiring winter.

The House of Pies sits on the corner of a busy road and indeed is busy itself. People of young and old flock in and out of this eatery – it's thee spot and open 24 hours as stated on the large yellow neon sign.

Cello hands a handful of money to the woman at the register. "Thank you, Roberta," he says as he grabs several boxes of pies and cups of coffee. "The monk fruit sweetener in here too?" he asks. She smiles and nods. "Thank you," he replies with a grin as he moves through the slew of people in line waiting to get their pies as well.

Outside in the parking lot Cello strolls and sees a beautiful blonde-haired college girl hanging out with a group of other college-aged kids. Three girls and three guys – one of the guys are on crutches. The blonde girl leans on the front of the car as it blasts rap music – Cello approaches. "Sarah," he yells to the blonde girl, provoking her to look up to him.

One of the frat-like dudes blurts out, “Sarah’s in trouble,” while chuckling to his friends – they all giggle as they puff on their cancer-inducing vape pens.

“Can I talk to you for a minute?” Cello gently asks.

The hobbling white boy on crutches appears and climbs out of the car. “Is there a problem?” he arrogantly greets Cello.

Sarah turns to the frail boy. “It’s fine. Wait in the care, Tucker.” Tucker then stubbornly hobbles to the car – Sarah walks off with Cello as her friends nosily watch from outside their vehicle. “What do you want?” she botheredly utters.

“Just seeing how you’re doing... you missed your father’s birthday.” Cello politely says.

Sarah rolls her eyes, “I knew that’s why you wanted to talk to me,” she justifyingly retorts, “I texted him.”

“I don’t even think he gets texts...” Cello looks to her off-looking scowl, “Just call him. Check in. Let him know how you’re doing.”

She looks up to him with her big green eyes – there’s a connection between the two but it’s very veiled despite also being obvious that there is either a mutual relationship with her father or even something just between the two of them. Human emotions are paradoxical – as are words.

“I’ll call him,” she says and then briefly pausing, “for you...”

“Don’t call him for me – he’s your fuckin’ father – more importantly he treats you right and loves you more than you can ever know...” Cello turns around and begins to walk off.

“He’s lucky to have you,” Sarah somberly says.

Cello turns around and replies, “I’m lucky to have him,” while shuffling slowly backwards towards his police vehicle parked near Sarah’s friend’s cars. A lifted Jeep with tons of LED lights sticks out in particular. Cello parked right next to them and he looks to the crutches of the bratty young man while he stares back daggers through Cello. “What happened to your leg, Tucker?” he continues by uttering, “Fucking pussy...”

Sarah’s friends all laugh at Tucker’s expense. One of the man-bun donning friends hysterically laughs, “Oh shit! Dude, the cop called you a ‘fuckin pussy!’”

Tucker quickly turns and angrily points his crutches. “You can’t say that! That’s illegal...” he says to Cello as he pulls away, ignoring his childishness. “Enjoy your donuts and coffee, pig! Tucker screams out. Sarah stands by his side and briefly evaluates her decision to date him while also grinning with her slew of friends.

As Cello pulls out of the parking lot he turns on his loudspeaker. “They’re pies, idiot – Fuck you, Tucker!” he says while driving off.

The whole group laughs at Tucker, including some random stragglers in the parking lot as they too pick up the infectious ambience. A female friend of Sarah then says in a vocally fried voice while scrolling on her phone, “That’s a chill fucking cop.”

Tucker looks off angry and then notices a group of young boys grinning to them as they walk by. “What the fuck are you little pricks looking at?” he angrily taunts the young boys as they ignorantly walk by the college crew while sipping their flavor-diverse milkshakes.

A few miles in town that quaint house with the long driveway still sits in the night with the light of the garage brightly shining. An old man with grey hair wearing suspenders wipes grease upon his big belly. He works on an old lawnmower while smoking a fat cigar. He hammers a screwdriver attempting to unjam something – bang! He slips and hits his finger, “Mother fucker!” He screams as he looks to his swollen red thumb – the blood drips to the ground. He places it into his mouth sucking on his pointer finger.

“Dinner’s ready,” his old wife yells from the window.

Her husband pulls his thumb from his mouth, “You didn’t burn the pie crust, did ya?”

“Of course not,” she lovingly says.

“Last time ya did...”

“I did not!” her voice goes up an octave as she defends her pie.

The old man wraps a white rag around his finger. “Whatever ya say...” he passively says.

“I should poison your fucking pie – ungrateful, little...” she utters as she walks away from the window.

The old man wipes his hands and places a rag on the wall next to a sickle. He leaves the garage with the lights on and enters his home.

The woman places the chicken-pot pie on the table as it steams an earthy goodness – it looks picture perfect. Her husband enters from washing his hands and looks to the pie surprised, “That actually looks pretty good...”

She looks to him with raised eyebrows. “Pretty good?” his wife says with the knife in her hand and then shakes her head bothered. “How have I been married to you for 30 years?”

Outside the window the light goes off. The old man notices and scrunches his forehead in befuddlement. “The light went off,” he says puzzled.

“You shut it off,” she declaringly replies.

He takes a forkful of the pie and says, “I didn’t shut it,” and then rises.

“Where are you going?” his wife retorts while she tosses the salad. The tomatoes are so vibrantly red and plump alongside the deep purple sliced onions.

The old man walks outside and approaches the dark garage. “Fuckin’ raccoons.” He continues to walk towards the shadowy garage as the wind chimes blow nearby echoing in the cadence of the lightly flowing breeze.

The old woman sits bothered with the lovely food in front of her and begins to pray, “Our father, who art in heaven...”

The old man leans into the dark garage and turns on the lights. He looks around the garage to see if anyone or anything is in there; he scratches his head confused – the sickle on the wall is missing but he has no idea. He turns back around to walk away and the light goes off yet again. He stops and turns back around, staring, scratching his head confused – he reenters and turns the light on but nothing happens this time. “Not the breaker again,” he discouragingly says. He takes his cellphone out and looks for the flashlight app.

His wife continues her prayers inside as she patiently waits for her husband, “Give us this day our daily bread...”

The blinding glow of his cellphone light shimmers briefly upon a tall shadow. The escaped

patient lurks in the corner as his dead-grey eye shimmers in the dark corner while the old man maneuvers the light as he looks for the breaker. He's clueless of the man's presence. He fiddles around the back and attempts to open the rusty breaker box – he drops his phone to the ground and the garage door suddenly SLAMS shut!

“Deliver us from evil...” SLAM! His old wife gets started from the door slamming and yells, “Fred, you okay?”

The old man attempts to pick up his phone from the ground, feeling around everywhere – he notices a boot in front of him and attempts to throw it out of the way, “What in god's name are my boots doin' here?” He grabs the boot – breathing is heard. He realizes the boots are being worn by someone; looking up to his dirty white jumpsuit he nervously makes his way to his face as it is just a mere shadow in the darkness. His cellphone light just begins to light his shadowy face – SWOOSH! The monstrous man swings down the sickle towards him. The old man's head rolls upon the ground.

The old woman rises to her feet, “He better hope he had a heart attack...” The knife sits in the chicken potpie with condensation dissipating from the warm steam that's now slowly beginning to cool.

The old wife approaches the garage in her jacket covering her white muumuu and the light goes on. She hobbles over to the garage and bends down to open the long spring door – she pulls open the garage – nothing. It's empty. “Fred?” she peeks in.

THUD! She turns her head to see – raccoons; they run out from garbage cans. “Bastard raccoons...” she shakes her head bothered. She turns around and begins to walk outside the garage and looks around the house, “I don’t know where the hell you are, Fred... but this is not funny...”

Inside the home and upon the table, the knife is missing from the potpie. The old woman enters and takes off her jacket. She turns and walks over to the table while yelling towards the window, “You’re not getting laid tonight! I’ll tell ya that much...” She looks up to the table and sees her decapitated husband seated – his head is cut clean off. Shock fills her face. “Fred...” she stutters as tears fill her eyes. The tall man stands over her. She feels his breath upon her neck and begins to turn around but he grabs her by her hair and cuts her throat with the potpie knife – blood squirts upon the table. She attempts to hold her wounded throat while he still holds her hair in his hand like a doll – he takes her neck and SNAP – he drops her to the floor, leaving her with a crooked neck. His newly owned boots walk through the large puddle of blood left upon the floor.

Clove sits on her couch with a handle of vodka in front of her right next to her lit laptop. The TV is on. She holds her phone up to her ear: “Hi, I’m calling to check on how my brother Joseph Petton is doing – I heard about the recent event on the news in regards to that guard that accidently fell off the building. It



just made me a little worried and I figured I should call and check in. I'd come in but I'm on a business trip..." Clove deceptively spews and is very convincing. Clove has the patient list of Hawthorne Asylum up on her computer as she takes a sip from her vodka.

Her police scanner goes off: *Officer, come in. We have a possible...*

Clove quickly lowers it and continues scrolling through the asylum files as the police scanner whispers; she doesn't pay mind to it because she doesn't want to fail this foolery in which she insists to getting the information that she desires.

The woman on the phone says: *Yes, your brother is perfectly fine.*

Clove replies with a large and fake smile, "Great, that makes me so happy." She rises and walks to her window, "Now, I just want to know, for the safety of my uncle – is he okay there? Why would a guard so carelessly fall off a building? Don't you guys take safety precautions seriously there?"

The woman says: *I can assure you that your – brother, or uncle is it?*

Clove utters to herself, "Fuck!" while pulling the phone away from her face and then quickly adjusting her tone, "my brother, forgive me. Meetings all day..."

*Your brother is okay:* warmly replies the woman on the phone.

“Thank you...” Clove hangs up the phone and then screams, “Mother fucker!”

She takes the bottle of vodka and throws it against the wall. It shatters everywhere and instantly smells like a Russian retreat.

The yellow streetlights glare off of the moist street as Clove sprints down the street to run out her aggressions. An old car pulls off from the side and follows her – it’s too dark to see the type of car.

Cello’s patrol car sits parked and the radio calls in;

*Radio: Officer, come in. We have a 187.*

Cello enters his vehicle – his police lights are on as he has another car pulled over. “Roger that,” he replies confused by the code number. “What’s the location?”

*Radio: 18 Grenich. A neighbor reported it, so he’ll be available for questioning.*

Cello tosses a license to the passenger seat, “I’m on it – over.” He quickly puts the car in drive and speeds off down the road.

His vehicle flies by the car that he has pulled over and a white man yells out the window, “You have my license and insurance!”

His dressed up wife lecturingly says with her pouty red lips, “You shouldn’t have been speeding...”

“Fuck you, Janet! Okay!” her husband blurts out.

It looks like date night is now taking a somber turn for the middle-aged couple.

Cello drives down the road and looks out the window to see Clove sprinting down the avenue; he then shakes his head in awe but is not surprised because it’s a regular occurrence, but he is impressed by the sheer velocity she has in her stride.

His phone rings and he answers, “How were the pies?”

Gray replies as he walks down the street while wearing his red robe and slippers, “They were delicious. I feel like a fat piece of shit with borderline diabetes but – hey, life is good.” A grin becomes of him, “My daughter called me...”

Cello zips around the corner in his car, “Really? That’s great. Hey – I gotta get to a homicide over on Grenich, so let me call you soon...” Cello quickly turns on street after street. “You’re not fucked up, are you?” he concerningly asks.

“A homicide...?” Gray ponders surprised. “Pick me up.” Gray looks across the way to see the towns guided ghost tour as they stroll and begin the commencement of the towns “haunted” tour that walks in the opposite direction of Gray.

Cello continues to drive through the quiet streets, “I have to get to the murder scene...”

Gray barbers, “They’re already fucking dead; it’s not gonna change anything.” He looks to a street sign, “I’m over on Comly – don’t be a prick...”

Cello nods his head bothered and hangs up the phone, tossing it to the passenger seat.

The guided ghost tour walks the streets with lanterns in their hand; like most towns, when tragedy strikes, they make it a part of their history and generate money by becoming the town’s tourist attraction. An overly passionate and very passive-aggressive tour guide delivers his monologue to a group of six middle aged men and women, as well as two teenagers and two young children, a boy and a girl each in both age groups. The group is an ethically ambiguous blend and they’re rather attractive; they look like belong on a Unicef box or a Disney commercial. There are some diamonds in the conventional rough, a Wiccan couple that sticks out like a sore thumb breathes in the mystical air in which the same murders it once inhabited. The streets are empty, they’re simply residential streets, a suburban neighborhood – it looks rather boring and not scary at all. The group looks on and the Wiccan couple takes a selfie with the street behind them. The tour guide excitedly says:

*This is Kill Feast... I know it may not look like much now, because the festival isn’t going on anymore and they turned it into a multicultural and multiethnic and multi-sexual preference Halloween parade but if you listen closely, and truly let yourselves feel the presence of the ‘pure terror’ that*

*was once right where we're stepping; the massacre of 33 people – you can taste it...*

A young and innocent boy with a cool little Mohawk wearing a Batman t-shirt looks up to his sassy mother, “Mommy is the monster man still alive?”

The nasally tour guide overhears and leans over to the young boy, “Why, yes, young boy...” He oddly continues to say, “A matter of fact, he is...”

The Wiccan girl says, “He’s locked away at the Hawthorne Mental Asylum.”

“This is true,” the tour guide agrees and quickly takes a playful condescending tone, “though it’s not your job to give tour guide information but I appreciate the help.” He turns to the young boy, “The monster man, the trench coat man – he’s locked away from good.”

“The terminal patients were supposed to be put to death last week but something had happened and they postponed the date,” the Wiccan girl interrupts yet again, “my summoning group was supposed to have a séance but...”

The tour guide agitatedly interrupts, “Yes, they did postpone the execution which many local activists are happy about but Governor Hawthorne seems to think that the state budget should go to the schools rather than keeping clinically-insane murderers alive – so I’m sure eventually you’ll have your séance,” he states to the Wiccan girl.

A blue-collar guy that's dating the sassy mom with the cute and inquisitive young boy blurts out, "Are there any bathrooms around here?"

"There will be porta potties outside of the park nearby and that's actually a part of the tour – so if you can hold it that would be greatly appreciated!" the tour guide cheerfully walks off and gestures for the group to do the same.

Inside the home of the old couple the bloody bodies lay on the kitchen floor – the potpie is beyond cold with blood stained upon the lattice crust. Blood is all over the place; the old woman's neck squirted everywhere due to the keen artery slicing habits of the trench coat man. The headless man is still seated at the dinner table and the crooked-necked woman lies on the floor.

Outside of the home the male neighbor, a young nerdy man in his twenties, talks to Gray, who is still wearing his robe and slippers. Cello throws up along the side of the garage and the young man gawks to him, "Is he okay?"

"He's fine," Gray adamantly proclaims as he looks to Cello, "he had bad pie – tell me everything you know." The young neighbor looks him up and down, from the top of his robe to the bottom of his slippers. "A uniform's a uniform. I'm fuckin' retired. Tell me what you know."

“Well every night,” he reminisces, “they have the nightly fight over *Laverne and Shirley* or *Mork and Mindy*...”

“Those shows are on at the same time?” Gray asks surprised.

“I guess – well, no. They record it on the DVR but they can’t figure out what to watch first. So 8 o’clock comes around and the house was just so quiet,” the young neighbor worriedly justifies, “so I thought I should call the cops.”

“You didn’t see anything...” Gray looks to him confused.

“No,” the neighbor quickly retorts.

“Hear anything?” Gray continues to pry as the neighbor nods no. “Thank you, kid. You can go.” The neighbor walks off.

Cello approaches while wiping his mouth, “He doesn’t know anything?”

“That kid has got way too much time on his hands...” Gray looks to the neighbor’s light on in his bedroom; he thinks deeply and then wanders to the house.

Gray looks to the bodies in the kitchen and studies them. Cello holds his mouth sickened. Gray bends down to pick up something – it’s a long piece of black hair. He looks to the head of the old woman – gray hair – and then looks to the missing head of the old man. “Find that one’s head...”

Cello disgustingly turns and exits. Gray still methodically looks around the murder scene.

Cello searches outside with a flashlight in hand and looks around the outskirts of the garage. *Thump!* Cello turns with his gun aimed – it’s a raccoon. “Fuck!”

Gray looks inside of the garage and sees a trail of blood – he follows it to a tarp. He bends down and looks under it, then locking eyes with the old man. “I found it!” Gray rises and exits the garage with dire incentive, “He’s loose...”

Cello approaches him from behind, “What do you mean he’s loose?”

“The guard that fell off of the roof at the asylum – it’s a cover up...” They continue to walk to their vehicle. “We have to go to my place and get guns. Call it into the station and tell them there’s a murderer on the loose,” Gray sternly looks to Cello, “and this only the beginning...”

Cello sheds minor skepticism, “And you’re assuming this just from that one piece of hair you found?” The two get into their vehicle.

“Kid, you have to trust me. You know why those bodies didn’t phase me – you know what I’ve seen – and you know why I drink...” Tears fill Gray’s eyes, “I can’t let people in this town die again...”

Cello stares to him in pure belief and quickly starts the car. He grabs the police radio, “We have a



confirmed murderer on the loose – exercise extreme caution...”

“A white male, extremely tall – about 7 foot, long black hair, about 40 years of age...” Gray voices to Cello.

Cello repeats Gray’s description as they pull out of the long driveway and peel out down the street leaving a cloud of exhaust fumes.

# **CHAPTER 7:**

## **Cold Air & Despair**

The state police officer sits her car and listens to the end of Cello's report. "Fuck!" she yells and punches her steering wheel; the horn briefly blurts. Outside of her car the officers escort two mental patients that they have captured. The patients are both heavily covered in mud. "We don't have time for them," the female officer says while exiting her car, "kill them and we will take care of the bodies later."

Her partner looks to her dumbfounded, "What?"

She angrily shakes her head and takes out her gun – BANG! BANG! She shoots both of the seemingly harmless patients in the head and then turns around to get back into her car. "They're psychotic murderers. We're doing god's work because he's too lazy..." she angrily justifies her cold actions. "Let's go!" she yells while walking off. The other officers quickly follow and walk to their car – her saddened rookie partner stares to the bodies and then turns away to walk and follow his callused partner.

The two unmarked vehicles drive off down the dirt trailed woods as their headlights hit the bare trees sandwiched on both sides of them. The bare foot of one of the patients twitches as rigor mortis sets in.

Clove stands over the grave of her son. She catches her breath from the long run across town – sweat drips down her face. Silence fills the graveyard; only the brisk air's gentle whistle sings

along as Clove closes her eyes and deeply remembers her son. “I love you, Michael.” A twig snaps. Clove quickly turns around. Creepy laughter is heard echoing in the distance. Shadows move between the graves. Clove slowly moves back and hesitantly looks around the cemetery.

The tour guide and his group approach the row of bathrooms outside of the park with their little lanterns still in hand. “This is where 5 decapitated bodies were found and piled up atop one and other – with that being said, do any of you need to use the restrooms?” the tour guide looks to his watch.

The eager guy that asked to go earlier runs to the porta potties as his girlfriend, the young and sassy mom, plays on her phone while her son attempts to get her attention, “Mommy...” he gently pulls on her velour sweater.

The tour guide approaches the mother, “Are you liking the tour so far?”

“I’m enjoying it,” she says while holding her phone. Her son still grabs her sweater as the two chat – the tour guide is deceptively flirtatious but has no game whatsoever.

“Mommy, I have to go to the bathroom.” her son begs.

Ignorant to her son’s needs his mother shushes him, “Hold on...”

The young boy looks to the row of portable bathrooms and then leaves his mother’s side without

her noticing. It appears she loves the attention from anyone or anything hence the number of times she checks her phone for potential “likes” or comments. The nerdy poon-hound-of-a tour guide even nervously snorts while speaking to this woman.

The lonesome little boy slowly walks to the tall green bathrooms. The Wiccan couple takes a picture with the *In Memory of* sign nearby with all 33 of the victims’ names engraved upon it.

Back at Gray’s house he opens up a large chest with all different types of guns: shotguns, handguns – Cello looks in awe, “Why do you have all of this?”

Gray tosses the guns into a duffle bag and looks up to Cello, “Incase he escaped...”

Clove wanders around the cemetery while attempting to make her way to the exit. The ghoulish laughter is heard as it echoes between the labyrinths constructed of graves. She reaches down and takes out a knife from her boot. A shadow runs passed her – she quickly turns. *Bam!* She gets grabbed from behind by a man with large disheveled hands; they’re missing fingernails and are filled with raised scars – they’re so prominent that even in the moonlight they can be seen in a glance. He laughs hysterically – this maniac is obviously one of the dangerous escapees from the looney bin. She slashes his hand as it’s wrapped around her neck – he squeals and screams in pain and rips it away, letting go of her, and

holding it in agony. He pants like a rabid animal and stares to Clove – she looks right back to him and briefly glances around to see if there are any others. He quickly bolts back after her and she drops to the ground while tying her legs around his legs using his force and her timing, dropping him face first onto a grave – CRUNCH! His teeth break upon the hard limestone – he’s knocked out cold. Teeth and blood sit upon the old slightly risen gravestone.

Clove rises to her feet with slight confusion. A shrill yell is heard – Clove turns to it to see a crazy woman running towards her with a shovel! She swings it at her – Clove rolls out of the way as sparks ignite upon the stone as the metal shovel scrapes against it.

The little boy continues his apprehensive walk as he nears the slew of plastic bathrooms. He takes a smell and the whiff haunts him from just standing outside. His mother still chats with the tour guide and doesn’t notice her *lack of son* by her side. The young boy steps on something – he bends down to pick it up. It’s something circular and covered in dirt; he digs out some of the crusted soil and notices it’s the head of an action figure. It’s all-too-familiar. This is Michael’s action figure’s head all the way back from 1992. Plastic truly doesn’t degrade. The young boy studies it.

WHACK! Clove kicks the crazy woman down to the ground – she quickly rises and swings the shovel every which way possible. Clove slips out of the way as the crazy woman swing and misses – the shovel keeps making sparks from the friction of the marble and limestone graves. Clove rolls on the ground out of the way and then looks to see her knife lying on the ground nearby – she rises to her feet. The two circle one and other, the woman stares to her with her grey hair and piercing frantic eyes. The crazy woman jabs at her with the pointed shovel as the two slowly circle one and other – Clove knows she needs that knife.

The young boy drops the action figure’s head to the ground and nears the doorway – he reaches to open it – it’s locked. He begins to move to the next one but then it opens just a crack – the timid boy looks to it. He bravely reaches to open it and – the guy that’s dating his mom exits while tying his belt, “I wouldn’t go in there, little dude...”

The boy watches him walk off, “Tell my mom I’m at the bathroom.” The guy ignores the poor boy while texting on his phone, completely ignorant to what he’s saying. The young boy goes to the next bathroom door and opens it, his face goes white – from the distance only his little feet show as the open

door blocks his view – his feet lift up as if he levitated and the door quickly slams shut.

Clove goes to run passed the crazed-shovel swinging woman but is halted – she slips one way and goes the other way and the woman WHACKS her with the shovel in the back – Thud! Clove falls to the ground and army crawls to the knife. The crazy woman hops onto her back and chokes her with the staff of the shovel – she squeezes it against Clove’s neck. Her vein pulses as she tries to pull it away. She digs her nails into the ground to pull herself to the knife as she gasps for air, her face is bright red and soon to be blue. The grazed woman drools while grabbing the shovel tightly with her dirt-filled fingernails.

“Where’s Tommy?” the neglectful mother says in regards to her missing son.

The neglectful boyfriend looks down to his phone and utters, “I think he’s in the bathroom.”

She urgently runs to the bathroom.



Harder and harder! – the crazed woman pulls against Clove’s frail neck causing her eyes to bulge out of her head along with spit flying out of her mouth as she desperately gasps for air. The crazed woman lets out a wild cackle and – SLASH – she falls over to the side as Clove deeply chokes for oxygen. The knife sticks out of the of the woman’s left eye. Clove rolls onto the ground still attempting to breathe.

The crazy man chokes on his shattered teeth as his head still lies upon the grave. Clove looks his way and notices that he’s not comatose anymore – she doesn’t like that. Rising to her feet she makes her way over to him, groggy but slowly gaining cognitive awareness. The man rolls himself over and sees Clove’s silhouette lit by the moonlight – he coughs up blood. She picks up the shovel from the ground and nears him – she stands over him and reads the jumpsuit tag: *Hawthorne Asylum* – nerves fill her face although she had already known this, but this solidifies the possibility of the *true monster* to make an appearance. The crazed man’s pockey-skinned face is decorated with sprinkles of blood from his cough – a laugh consumes him as he stares up to Clove. He quickly grabs her ankle – CHOMP! The shovel slams down at his throat – Clove didn’t give him the time or chance. A massive kink now exists in the man’s neck – Clove looks to him and angrily thrusts the shovel down into his throat again – CRUNCH! CRUNCH! SNAP!

His neck leans mangled over the low gravestone and dangles off of it. She breathes heavily and is filled with rage – Clove throws the shovel down and paces. “He’s here... He’s here...” she frantically utters and then walks to the crazed woman’s body, pulling her knife from her head, popping out the severed eyeball as it rolls onto the dirt-covered ground.

“Tommy!” the young boy’s mother yells outside the row of bathrooms. She begins to open each door.

The tour guide watches from afar while the group gathers around him. “Are we ready to go?” he then looks to the bathroom.

The mother opens the door her son was in – she stands completely still – her son stands but oddly tall, his eyes are at her level, even the slight step of the bathroom couldn’t accommodate this. She looks down to see her son’s levitating feet.

“Mommy, help...” he pleads while in the arms of the monstrous man as he appears out of the shadows from behind the young boy.

SNAP! He cracks the boy’s neck, dropping him and then taking his sickle and stabs it through the temple of the mother’s head.

From a distance the bodies fall from the bathroom door. “What the fuck?” the tour guy

watches in awe as the tall and feared man exits with his blood curdling silhouette.

A horror buff within the tour group gazes in awe, “Is this part of the tour?”

“No...” the tour guide says in a foolish stupor off-looking to the action. He remains frozen as the tall man approaches them – many of the others have their cellphones out and are taking pictures. “This is not part of the tour!” he screams. “Get the fuck out of here!”

Some of them finally begin to run off while others still stupidly take photos and film on their phones; they are kind of unsure as to whether this is just a really great staged performance.

Clove jolts out of the cemetery covered in blood, dirt and sweat. She holds a knife in her hand as she bolts into the street – a familiar car quickly pulls up to her. “Get in!” Kenny from the asylum says – this friendly foe from years ago was the car that stalked her back from her apartment. Clove looks to him confused but quickly hops into his car.

The tour guide runs and looks back to the frightening shadow of the tall man – he then looks forward to the families and other people from the tour and even just random townsfolk that are infectiously running for their lives and screaming in pure fright as well. SWOOSH and SPLAT! The sickle gets thrown into the back of the tour guide’s head – he drops to the ground like a sack of potatoes. The monstrous man slowly walks to him, dipping to black as he walks through each dimly lit streetlight.

Cello and Gray frantically drive around the neighborhood while Gray loads a large shotgun – the radio comes on:

*Radio: We have a public disturbance at Grover Park – people have reported a man severing the head of a mother and young boy. I don’t know if this is a prank or not. Over...*

Fear strikes Gray’s face as he looks off to the blurred lights in a daze as they fly through the suburban streets – Cello apprehensively says, “Roger that. Over.” He then cuts a quick left turn down the dark road.

Kenny drives the same old Trans Am – Clove looks to him baffled; blood and dirt still stain her

face – no time to clean it. “How did you know where I was?”

While staring straight ahead, “I followed you,” Kenny apprehensively replies. Clove pulls bloody pieces of skin and some sort of human remains from her hair and tosses it out the window. “That night at the asylum, they reported to the news that that guard accidentally fell – it was a lie...”

“Do you think I don’t fucking know that?!” Clove angrily laughs. “Those were escaped patients that just attacked me! Why the fuck wouldn’t you tell me?”

“I wasn’t sure. They didn’t even tell us! I heard from the receptionist – she told me the other day...”

“And you didn’t me...”

“I’m telling you now...” he says.

“Did he get out?” Clove stares daggers to him.

Kenny takes a moment. “She didn’t say – all I know is a handful of patients got out. They’re keeping the workers hushed by increasing our pension but something is way off because I can’t even get in touch with some of my friends that work there – so something serious happened in that place...”

A police car flies by with its lights on – Clove hungrily looks to the car. “Follow them...”

Kenny nervously looks to her.

“Go!” she screams.

Kenny gasses it and they blow through a Stop sign. A car jams on their brakes and skids – just missing them.

People from the tour run through the busier part of town with their lanterns still in hand and are in complete shock to what they've witnessed. Back near where the murderous action had ensued, the monstrously tall man walks down the quiet road towards a large field.

The ignorant boyfriend of the now dead mother and son nervously talks on his phone while cowering down amongst heavy trees in a small patch of woods in the park area, "I can't see you... do you have an Uber sign in your vehicle?" He looks to a car in the distance, "I think I see you," he frantically says, "stay there!" He nervously walks out of the woods, crunching on twigs and leaves. "I swear to fucking god I'll give you 1 star!" he angrily utters to himself.

The crooked state officers pull up to the park area in their unmarked car – her partner drives and is still taken back from what he had witnessed; the pure heartlessness from his superior. The woman hangs out the window and shines her flashlight towards the woods – she briefly catches the murderer walking as he disappears behind tall trees and

vanishes into the darkness. “There he is!” she excitedly yells. “Turn the fuck around!”

Her partner aggressively spins the tires and cuts the wheel; coffee rolls over and spills from the cup holder as he floors it in the direction of the escaped patient. He looks down to his lap as hot coffee steams from his groin. “Shit!” he yells in pain while looking down attempting to adjust himself from his scolding hot pants.

“What the fuck are you doing? She angrily gawks as he chaotically drives distracted by his hot crotch.

“It burns!” he frantically screams and swerves.

In front of them in the distance a cellphone light exits from the woods.

“Over here,” the hiding guy from the tour yells and waves while making his way from the side of the street into the middle to acknowledge his *Uber*.

The male officer veers to the side of the road while attempting to hold his pants away from his leg – his partner looks up to see the man in front of the car as they quickly approach and – BANG! Blood splatters upon the windshield as thumping and thudding are heard inside of the car. They quickly stop the car, jamming on their brakes, coming to a screeching halt. The male officer is pale white and beyond freaked out – the female looks to him and furiously stares to his jaw-dropped face – she turns the police lights on, flashing them.

Cello's car approaches at the opposite end of the action. They see the police lights of the state officer's vehicle turned on. "Is that a body in the street?" Gray squints while looking about 100 yards away.

Cello looks into his mirror to see headlights slowly approaching, "This night is not gonna end well..."

Clove looks to the action ahead and turns to Kenny, "Let me out," she eagerly says as they approach the back of Cello's vehicle. "Stop the fucking car!" Anticipation fills her and she quickly opens the door and runs out – she looks around outside of the car. Kenny parks right behind Cello's vehicle. Clove looks around the area while making her way to Cello's car. Gray and Cello both exit their car and approach Clove as she quickly walks to them, "Where the fuck is he?"

"We don't know," Gray replies.

"What we do know is that that's not one of our unmarked cars..." Cello points to the police car in the distance.

Kenny grabs a gun from his glovebox and exits, walking towards the group.

The female officer sits in her car as the male officer looks to the lifeless body lying upon the cold street through his rearview mirror, staring in a daze – blood and a spidered windshield blur their view to what's ahead (at least on his side) – the female officer knows who's in the distance and begins to hyperventilate, nerves flood her which jeopardize her



previous heartless character state. She grabs the police radio, “We have a police officer firing at us while in pursuit – a pedestrian was accidentally ran down during the gun fire due to lack of visibility,” the male officer breaks his daze and stares to her theatrical performance, “we need backup and ambulances now! Please!” She then opens the door and fires at the cop car in the distance.

A bullet implodes Cello’s side-view mirror shattering shards of frigid plastic and glass. Cello draws his gun as does Gray and they duck for cover with Clove following their lead. Kenny jumps behind his own car and squats down. “What the fuck?” Cello nervously yells.

Inside of the state officer’s car the radio still goes off:

*Radio: What’s your location?*

The male dispatcher says – waiting a beat.

*Radio: Officer Barley. I repeat: we need your location.*

The two state officers stand outside of their vehicles. Her partner listens into the radio from outside and looks to her. “Tell them...?” he nervously asks.

She ignores him, “They opened fire on us while in pursuit and we hit this man due to lack of visibility,” while cocking her gun, “we need to clean up this mess,” she adamantly says. She opens fire on Cello’s car in the distance. Her counterpart looks to her with

his gun drawn towards the action but he's hesitant to pull the trigger. "Shoot!" she screams to him.

The group all remains hidden behind their vehicles as bullets fly. "Kid, open fire when she goes to reload..." Gray sternly says to Cello while pulling a gun from the passenger door, "Clove," he tosses the handgun to her. She looks to it and then quickly runs to Kenny's car behind them while squatting down.

Kenny's been hit in his leg, it looks like a grazing but it is a rather deep lesion.

"Are you okay?" Clove looks to his leg.

Kenny groans, "Yeah." Clove hears barking in the distance, a sensor light in the backyard of a home goes on. Incentive fills her – she looks to Kenny and he looks up to her, "Go."

"Put pressure on it," Clove endearingly says – despite her urge to flee she remembers the savior that this man once was but this doesn't stop her – she quickly runs off.

The female state officer unclips and begins to reload, "Cover me." Her partner stares to her in fright.

Gray briefly looks off to see Clove running in the distance. The gunshots become silent. Gray turns to Cello, "Shoot!" The two then both rise and shoot at her – Ken then quickly army crawls over and begins to open fire as well. Cello leans over the top of the car

and fires – BANG! BANG! He gets hit in the left shoulder and grimaces.

The female officer now nears them and unloads her new clip while running to hide behind a parked car alongside of the road. The houses within this chaotic street are lit as some people now gawk out their windows. An older woman hobbles out her door while holding a fluffy orange cat and looks to the female officer. “What’s going on here?” she cluelessly asks while petting the furry feline.

“Get inside! Now!” the female officer screams.

The old woman nervously hobbles inside with her cat and slams the door.

Clove runs through the backyard of a random home. There’s a clothesline holding a large sheet-like canvas with an array of colors splattered upon it – the ambience of the yard is that of an artist’s home: peace signs and colorful décor flood the backyard. She nears the canvas and sees a large silhouette and quickly opens fire – the canvas splits apart. Nothing is behind it but an artsy scarecrow stitched together with an array of colors and patches but now with its head blown off. Lights go on inside the home along with concerned voices. Clove frantically looks around attempting to spot this murderer, her son’s killer. She then sees, in the distance, for the first time since the night of the murders, the trench coat man – he walks into the woods and into the darkness. She valiantly pursues without fear.

The female officer uncomfortably squats down behind another car – she watches Cello and Gray in the distance. Her partner silently stands at their vehicle about 50 feet away. Kenny appears and fires at her – BANG! She looks down to her foot and sees blood gushing from her boot; the top of her boot sings from a bullet wound during the shootout. She grunts in pain while clenching her teeth. “Shit!” She fires back at Kenny.

He gets hit in the hand and drops his gun to the ground. Cello and Gray patiently watch, debating their next decision.

The female officer takes off her boot – the steel toe singed her wound from the heat of the bullet. “Where’s my fucking backup?! She angrily yells while whacking her boot against the side of the car that she hides behind – the alarm begins to sound. Her partner hides behind their car door and nervously observes the chaos.

In the woods, Clove walks through the murky and frigid water. This is all-too similar to her dream and she knows it. The air is crisp and cold and only the moonlight shimmers atop the shallow riverbed between the tall dead trees with scattered greenery that thrives in even the coldest of seasons. She ferociously aims her gun as she looks around the dark woods. Gentle splashing is heard from her movement – the water is up to her knees at this point. The sound of silence and her cold breath as she slowly trenches through the freezing water foot after foot. A shadow moves in the distance and she astutely notices – BANG! BANG! She opens fire and

lights up the whole area with the flashing gunshots. Nothing is seen but towering trees. No one is there.

At the cop showdown bullets echo from the woods. Gray looks up to the blood moon. Cello looks to Kenny as he holds his hand in pain. The bullets stop once again – “She’s out...” Gray turns to Cello, “Cover me...”

“But the other one’s not...” Cello looks to Gray rising from behind the car. Gray ignores him and Cello instantaneously rises to cover him regardless – he watches Gray approach the bullet-riddled car that the female officer hides behind.

The female officer notices his steps from underneath the car, she hears them as well. Looking to her barrel she notices it’s empty. “Come out with your hands up!” Gray sternly says.

Cello nervously watches with his gun drawn in the distance; nervous sweat drips from his forehead despite the brisk cold.

Clove continues to walk through the cold water – thin ice floats atop. Snot runs down her face but she will not stop aiming the gun. “Where are you, mother fucker?!” she frantically shouts while looking around the desolate woods. “I know you’re here...” Water splashes – she quickly turns to see – it’s the white crane – it had just landed. As if this scenario hadn’t been familiar enough to Clove, it has just become déjà vu. She begins drawn to the crane and slowly walks to it in a trance.

Gray nears the car provoking the hurt and bootless officer to crawl out. “Hands up!” he aims the gun down to her.

She crawls backwards on her ass. “Okay – okay...” she groans while crawling.

Cello stares to the action and turns to Kenny, “Can you cover me?” He looks to his Kenny’s bleeding hand.

“I only got one good shot...” Kenny holds his hand in pain. “The kickback’s too tough with one hand...”

Cello looks off with unsure eyes.

Gray continues to near the hurt state officer. “Hands up!” he gets even more aggressive.

Something’s not right; the female officer awkwardly moves. She reaches down by her leg where she had been injured and grabs it in pain. “My foot,” she cries – then deceptively reaching to a hidden holstered gun. Gray holds his finger on the trigger while he watches her struggle – she quickly turns – BANG! The two fire simultaneously. His head cocks back – Cello sees Gray’s head get knocked back. She holds her chest in pain – Gray drops to the ground. *Thump!*

“No!” Cello growls and runs out to the action and fires at the state officer’s vehicle for safe measures and then fires to her as well – hitting her in the neck – she drops her gun and grabs her neck while blood squirts out of it immediately; an artery has been hit. He stares to their vehicle ahead – it’s silent. The

partner seemingly doesn't want anything to do with this war... or he's been shot. Cello runs to his partner and bends down to hold his head up – there's a lot of blood coming from his right temple. Gray looks up to him with frantic eyes. “Kid – Kid – it's – okay...” he says barely coherent and sheds a delirious smile. Blood begins to flow from his mouth – life quickly leaves him.

Cello barely can speak. “No – you can't leave me – you can't...” his eyes quickly become an oceanic harbor. “Fuck!” he screams. Anger immediately fills him – he's startled by the female officer choking on her own blood as she leans against the car still holding her neck as she attempts to survive. He gently rests Gray's body down and rises, walking over to her. She looks up to him and chuckles while choking on her own blood. Cello lavishes in her suffering and knows there's no coming back from her wounds. He kicks the gun away from her side and stares to her for a moment as she looks up to him with her bloodshot eyes – a tear falls down his face and he then walks away.

“Out of the car!” Cello aims his gun and approaches the front of their vehicle.

The young male officer partially rises from behind the car door with tears in his eyes, “I'm sorry...”

“Hands up!” Cello furiously screams – his rage is frightening yet it resonates with the scorched souls of those who have been *truly* destroyed.

“I didn’t want to do any of this...” he pleads. “I swear to god – none of this,” the young man hysterically cries.

The man’s still not putting his hands up for some reason. “Put your hands up!” Tension fills the air as Cello’s finger rocks the trigger.

The young officer slowly begins to move away from the door – he reveals the gun in hand as he quickly raises it to his own head...

“No!” Cello fires at his bulletproof vested chest to stop him – BANG! The state officer fires his gun BANG! He takes his own life and blows off the side of his face – blood splatters upon their already cracked and blood-covered windshield. Cello anxiously stands and keeps the gun aimed while walking towards his body.

Clove is very close to the crane and still entranced – she lowers the gun and reaches out to slowly touch it. There’s a naturalistic bond between the two as the crane’s graceful presence signifies her son. In the black eyes of the crane she sees a reflection – a shadow deflects the moonlit glow upon the two of them – Clove quickly leans back and aims the gun – BANG! BANG! The monstrous man grabs her by her hair as she fires behind her head aimlessly, kicking up the water and muck – the crane quickly flies away with its angelic wings.

Cello hears the gunshots – he looks to the fragmented head of the male officer as blood pools on the ground around him. He quickly turns to run off.



Kenny lies on the other side of his car – Cello jumps and slides over the hood. “Help’s on the way...” He continues to run off to the sound of Clove’s gunshots. Kenny tries to get up but between his hand and leg he’s knows he’s no help.

BANG! Clove wrestles this frighteningly tall monster as he drags her through the frigid waters. She keeps firing the gun – emptying the clip. She drops the gun into the murky water. She sees the sickle in his belt as she drags her through the ice-covered waterway – Clove grabs it and slashes him in the leg. He grunts and lets her go as they both splash in the murky water. She holds his weapon in her hand and looks to him as he faintly stumbles. He’s so frighteningly tall compared to her; his hair covers his whole face and with the night’s shadow it’s like gazing into an abyss. Clove stares to him sickened and then fearlessly runs after him with the sickle; she raises her hand high and swings at his head – he grabs her hand, stopping her – he lifts her up and then swings her into a tree. *Thud!* She submerges and time has stopped – through the moonlit muck she sees the face of her son. She resiliently rises and looks up to see the beast approaching her – he quickly takes her head and submerges it back under, holding it down as she frantically splashes and kicks. She tries to rise but even his one hand is the strength of several men – he takes his sickle and raises it to decapitate her.

BANG! BANG! Cello stands and opens fire as the bullets light the way as he treks through the knee deep water while getting deeper and deeper – thigh

height. He unloads his whole clip into the monstrous man and he finally falls back and plunges into the frigid water. Cello quickly approaches Clove as she rises on her own and frantically looks around for the monster – she grabs Cello’s gun and aims it while searching in every direction – even Cello is frightened of her as he nervously places his hands up. “He’s dead, Clove. I got him...” he reassuringly says.

She still methodically searches with her frantic eyes around the desolate woods with sheer determination. “I need to see him...” Clove holds that gun up as Cello lowers his hands. Police and ambulance sirens are heard and the lights gently flicker red and blue throughout the woods where Cello and Clove stand.

“It’s over...” Cello looks to her compassionately.

Other officers flood the woods with their flashlights and guns drawn. “Drop the weapon!” the female leader of the officers screams.

Clove ignores her and continues to scout the area.

Cello intervenes, “I’m a cop...” He raises his arms, “I’m a fuckin’ cop and she’s with me...”

Clove sees the tall man’s body floating – she walks over to it as the police bicker with Cello.

“Don’t shoot her...” Cello argues.

“Drop the gun!” the alpha officer screams again.

The voices are faint within Clove's mind as she gawks to the long black hair spread amidst the cold surface of the water – the tall man's body barely floats beneath it as he lays face down. She lowers her gun as tears fall from her pale face. The adrenaline begins to whereof and she shivers with relief. Cello nervously watches as the other officers close in on her – tension leaves her body as the freezing cold temperature now truly sets in. The police grab the gun from her and then pull her away out of the murky swamplands of the riverbed – other officers shine their lights upon the monstrous man submerged beneath the water.

Police and ambulance flood the streets – Kenny is on a stretcher and getting placed into an ambulance. Clove walks with an officer to an ambulance as well while being cuffed. The officers now patrolling the scenes look at the chaos that ensued: dead state officers, a random pedestrian ran over by a car, the broken glass and fragmented and bullet-riddled cars. Even Cello sits in the back of a police car and locks eyes with Clove as she sits at the back of an ambulance while the EMT checks her wounds – he watches Gray's body get carried away. His only father-figure to exist, his only family to exist, is now deceased. For the first time in as long as he could remember Cello is truly on his own – the fear of this hasn't even set in due to the immense numbness, the lack of reality in the conscious mind because of this abrupt tragedy; it seems unreal, and to him it is. Once grief sets in and reality strikes, all will appear lost and in that moment all is truly lost – but it's never the end we just tend to make it seem that way.

Clove begins to cry while getting checked by the female EMT. She has received redemption but the realization has set in that it will never fill the hole within her soul. Vengeance has passively driven her, along with the means to provide for the family since she had accidentally taken their father away but now what? She can continue to provide for the family, if they're to even accept the money, or she can recreate herself, find purpose in her suffering, maybe help others – or do things that she's always desired to do. This task is difficult once we're in the face of tragedy, this is why numbing vices like alcohol and drugs are the conscious and even unconscious choice but, the ability to make peace with the tragedy is within us despite there never truly being “peace” but more so a conscious choice to live a fulfilled life with whatever scars, holes or tears, that we have within our heart and spirit – this is difficult but it is attainable. Life is about constantly finding meaning in our suffering and without meaning all is lost – but if one relentlessly seeks then one will eventually always be found.

# **CHAPTER 8:**

## **The Hawthorne's**

A young, preteen lanky boy with messy black hair wears a *Members Only* jacket and Air Jordan's; he plays with an Atari while seated in a nicely decorated room – it is the 80's. A *Fast Times At Ridgemont High* poster hangs upon the wall.

A woman with blonde permed hair and a hefty pearl necklace stands outside of the vented doorway to the boy's room – the boy remains immersed in his video game while the mother unlocks the door; it's a very heavy lock. She opens the door, "Honey – we have someone new to play with you today..." She scooches the young Spanish boy around the same age into the room, "Consuela gave her son permission to see you whenever she comes here to clean..." The mother wears a luxurious red dress – she looks to her son as the little Spanish boy appears lost. "I got the movie you wanted," she pleasantly says, "*A Nightmare on Elm Street...*" The young boy immediately stops playing his game – even just watching him from behind in a seated position he's oddly tall. "Let's go watch it in the movie theater with..." she looks to the Spanish boy...

He nervously says, "Jose."

"...with Jose – your new friend..." His loving mother says with a smile.

Moments later they walk through a large concrete hall – it looks like an underground bunker of some sort with several doorways and oil lamps lighting the way. The mother holds the hands of the two boys as they walk down the long stone hallway

to a large wooden door – she opens the door to their own personal theater.

The two boys sit with popcorn as they watch Freddy Kruger on screen – they’re both enamored as they share the popcorn. “Here you boys go,” the tall boy’s mother enters with two decadent ice cream sundaes and two large shining silver spoons sticking out of them, slathered in hot fudge, whipped cream and cherries. Jose is in awe and smiles to the mother as she walks off – the tall boy looks but quickly turns the other way as Jose turns to him – as if he’s hiding something.

On the screen, a woman levitates from her bed and gets sliced up – the two share a laugh and the tall boy turns his face more towards the light of the film and the Spanish boy grimaces – he has a deformity on the side of his face, the projection light shimmers upon his cleft lip and Jose gets frightened by it. The tall boy notices and shyly turns back to the movie – a scorned look fills him. Jose nervously eats his ice cream. The tall boy looks to his glimmering spoon. He watches the stabbing on screen and begins to breathe heavier – he takes the back of the spoon and begins to STAB Jose in the eye and all over his face – his mother quickly runs from the back, “Baby, no!”

Her son keeps stabbing Jose as he cries and screams in pain – one of his eyes hangs out by the optic nerve, just dangling as he attempts to defend himself while his mother pulls her son off of him – her other son runs in wearing a suit and is around

the same age – he helps his mother and then stares to the bloodied young boy in shock.

The eyes open of Governor Hawthorne – he rests in the back of a curtained room as press stands outside and waits for him to address the incidences. Cameras shutter and chattering grows loudly as the hungry press salivates for a story.

The Governor takes the stage and stands behind a podium; he looks out to a sea of reporters. “Governor, what gives you the permission to neglect telling the people about escaped patients from your mental ward?” a studious glasses-wearing journalist howls out with his little note pad in hand.

The Governor reassuringly says, “It was a state matter and I had inside officers on the case...”

A second female reporter blurts out, “There have been several deaths – I believe 9 in total,” while reading from her notes, “including other escaped patients from the asylum...”

“It’s a tragedy...” The Governor compassionately retorts.

“Brought on by you,” a random man shouts.

“The Merderton police were ill-informed by the State Officers that I had working on the case – it is in their neglect that they are dead...” The Governor says. “You have to understand that in order to prevent mass chaos the gathering of these patients had to be done discretely...”



“How do you feel about all of this coming up right before the election?” the female reporter inquires.

“Was the guard’s death at your facility even a real accident?” the first reporter says accusingly.

Boisterousness fills the press room and journalists all rabble over one and other; the Governor grabs the podium tightly while angrily gazing out to sea of chatter mixed with cameras and recorders aimed up at him.

Moments later the Governor angrily gets into his car as press floods his Rolls-Royce – some even have the nerve to bang and tap on the windows while local police attempt to get them away. His bearded driver, around the same age (50’s), lovingly says, “These things never go the way we want them to go – the press are fucking assholes,” while pulling off.

“Have all the patients been captured?” the Governor gazes out the window.

A stern beat passes. “All but one,” the driver says. But he’s gotta be dead from hypothermia or something at this point. It’s too cold to survive through the nights...” The governor stares out the window and glowers to the old and Historic Hawthorne House in the middle of town.

Across town at Gray’s home, Cello sits with a picture of the two of them in his hands – he wears his uniform in remembrance of his mentor and father-figure. The sun peeks in from the windows. His eyes are glazed over from crying – he stares into

a void – there’s a perplexed notion that somehow this is all just a dream. He falsely wishes this to prolong the visitation to reality – he falsely attempts to be somewhere else in time because the present is just too fearful. Grief is one of the most treacherous emotions of humanity – but what’s worse is seeing the person you love murdered in front of you; this painting will hang forever within the conscious and subconscious of Cello’s mind. How he will choose to live with it is up to him.

Clouds have taken over the sky as the sun begins to become smothered, shedding its last bit of glow before becoming grey.

Later that day a group of officers stand saluting the fallen retired officer. Cello stares to the flag-covered coffin being carried from the hearse. Gray’s daughter sobs and quickly wipes her nose upon her long black pea coat – she stands directly across from Cello and briefly looks up to him. Her boyfriend Tucker stands near her side, crutches and all, and conspicuously looks to his phone and then quickly putting it into his pocket. Cello subtly stares daggers through him.

Clove is there as well, not dressed up, but she made it regardless. She wears dark sunglasses, black pants, and a heavy and long black coat along with her worn black combat boots. Kenny stands near her side on crutches despite barely using them – his leg is wrapped as well as his hand.

This bond that these people hold from the 1992 massacre, this perpetual purgatory, it is

blatant within the crisp air; this silent obligation of camaraderie is fundamental to their way of life whether they like it or not – just as the individualist’s art ties together tragedy in a mutually collective bond, their bond is by an immediate act experienced by one and other simultaneously and within the same proximity, the same time, the same date – this solidarity is built upon blood akin to soldiers that have experienced war.

The guns begin to fire off as they salute Gray.

Shiny black leather shoes walk down the white tiled hall of the town’s morgue.

The Governor stands with a mortician, a pale male in his 30’s and very hipster-ish; he opens the large freezer that lies upon the ground. “We couldn’t fit him in the standard size so we had to rush order this one...” The murderous man lies inside the large box. The Governor stares to him with a painful gaze as a cloud of chilled air exudes from the freezer-like coffin – he quickly turns and walks off. The mortician watches briefly and then closes the freezer, too walking off. The steel freezer sits quietly within the bone-chilling stainless steel room – the exam tables are empty with trays by their side for embalming and primping.

Later at the repass from outside of the home laughter and cheer is heard from inside of Gray's house. Cello stands outside and leans upon his car. Clove approaches, not from the party but from her car parked across the street. Silence sits between the two of them. She compassionately looks to Cello, "He's all you had, huh?" He looks up to her and then quickly turns away as a tear streams down his face – his cheeks twitch as his jaw clenches. Clove studies him; she feels his pain – it is all-too-familiar for her. She wipes the tear from the side of his face – he looks up to her. They both stare into each other's eyes while bonding over shared tragedy.

Clove throws her shirt off as she straddles Cello in her bed – she's fully in control. He kisses her soft lips as she holds his hands down by his side – he quickly snaps his arms out of her arms and pulls her close to him, dragging her breasts against his toned olive-colored torso. The two passionately kiss as he she rides him closely; his left hand caresses her voluptuous ass as his right makes its way between her legs – Clove is instantly triggered and begins to be on the verge of climaxing.

In bed after the emotionally passionate sex, Cello lays silently and alone. Clove appears and walks over with her toned and scarred naked body with just a handle of vodka in one hand and two glasses in the other. She climbs into bed and opens the bottle, pouring them both glasses. Cello, from his

dead gaze, notices the crackle of the ice from the cool vodka as he turns to her from staring at the ceiling. “I’m okay. Thank you...” he politely says. Clove stares to him slightly puzzled – she places the other glass upon the nightstand before pouring it – empty. “I just want to feel it,” Cello sincerely says, “I don’t want to numb it – otherwise it’ll just sit inside me and eat at me...”

“Alcohol was created to not feel that shit...” Clove raises her glass. “Fuck the human condition.” She gulps down her vodka.

Silence fills the room.

“What are you gonna do now?” Cello curiously asks. “Now that he’s dead...”

“I don’t know,” Clove deeply contemplates, “but it scares the shit out of me.” She then gazes off with pain in her eyes. “Seeing his body – laying there in the water that night – it wasn’t enough, so I went to the morgue. And once I saw that *monster* laying there. Dead. I thought I’d feel better... but I didn’t. There’s still this rage, this pain, and before, I had a direction to put it. Now, I don’t know where this pain is gonna go...” Clove deeply says and then pours herself more alcohol, emptying the bottle.

Cello watches on with concern in his eyes. “Whatever you do – just – don’t give up...”

Clove stares off and then rises, walking towards the kitchen and grabbing another bottle of alcohol, opening it, “We need to do something about the Governor,” she utters while pouring bourbon.

“Just let it go...” Cello sits up.

“Let it go?” Clove replies perplexed.

“He’s not gonna get reelected, for a guy like that – that’s punishment enough.” Cello stands naked with his thick legs and V-shaped torso leading to his adequate appendage – he puts on his pants as Clove stares to him bothered.

“But all of the money he has...” she nears the bed.

“It doesn’t matter,” Cello buttons his pants, “the secret’s out – people know about the asylum lie and all the deaths – he fucked himself...” Clove walks to the window with her bare body and stares outside to the sky as the clouds begin to part and the sun peeks through – she contemplates Cello’s words. He approaches her from behind and places his hand gently upon one of her distinct scars on her shoulder. She subtly embraces his touch with her eyes but remains off-looking out the window. “Do something of purpose – for yourself – you’re free now...” Cello persuasively says.

The cornfields blow in the wind as the rust-colored sun glistens upon the dried husks. Several crows circle up above but are warily kept away by scarecrows decorated throughout the fields – they all wear trench coats. At the end of a field sits a large home – a rebuilt yet traditional farmhouse with a

wraparound porch but now modernized with stone and slate rather than wood. This is the Governor's other home besides his luxurious beach house. This home was moved into after their quick prosperity upon colonization of the town thus leaving the old landmark home and taking refuge in the new Hawthorne House which has been remodeled throughout the years.

Inside the Governor's mahogany-floored home, he sits in a luxurious red chair as he stares out the large window to the field and deeply ponders with his caramel-colored scotch in hand. He holds a picture in his hand of that first Hawthorne house previously mentioned upon the 1870 establishment of Merderton; his family in the picture is his long-mustached great-grandfather, great-grandmother and their two children, a tall young boy and a tall young girl both being around the age 6 – the family frigidly stares to the camera.

His son (the burley jock that Cello arrested at the parade) appears, "Hey dad, people are gonna be coming soon – so..."

His father places the picture down next to his empty scotch glass and rises. "So, I'll leave my own fucking house?" he angrily utters, causing his son to look down ashamed like a scorned dog. The Governor quickly places his hand upon his son's shoulder, "I'm kidding..." His son looks up to him. "Of course, I'll be out of your hair. You and your friends can do whatever you want. I just stocked the liquor cabinet..." His son's face lights up as his father looks

to his watch, “The car should be here soon to pick me up. I’ll be at the other house if you need me.”

His father grins to him.

“Thanks, dad.” his son says in awe.

His father playfully touches his face, “Just don’t give them the good shit,” and walks off. His son then touches his own face where the father’s hand was with an odd smile from the affirmative words in which he hungers for but rarely ever come. The doorbell rings.

The Governor’s son opens the door, “Hey, man. You guys are early...” Tucker and Sarah stand in the doorway. “Come in...” Sarah shyly enters first. The Governor’s son mouths, “She’s fucking hot, dude,” to Tucker, producing a mutual grin as he hobbles in on his crutches. The door shuts and the family crest sits upon it: *a sickle with a couple stalks of wheat*

The historic Hawthorne house sits in a lonesome part of town and it too bears the family’s emblem. The chain wrapped around that iron gates in front of the home that’s been the primary mediocre protection from stragglers and vagrants alike has been ripped down; it gently swings open and squeaks in the cold breeze.



# **CHAPTER 9:**

## **Living Dead Man**

Cello drives around the town patrolling on his regular route. There's no vigor within him – he looks to the empty passenger seat beholding nothingness and then gravely turns back to the road. He passes a familiar lit apartment up above on the busy avenue; he glances up towards it.

Clove cleans dishes in her sink and places them on a rack. She turns to see her packed suitcases on the couch and then looks to the silent police radio. She contemplates her freedom, her new purpose, which is a mystery to her. The doorbell rings. She walks over to the door and opens it to see Kenny standing and carrying a heavy cloud of regret within his demeanor. “You okay?” she asks puzzled.

“I need to talk to you,” he sternly says.

Back at the Governor's home, teens and college-aged kids flood the area of the extravagant living room. Green liquid has already fallen upon a white fur rug. They drink and smoke weed, some do cocaine and others pop pills into their mouths while chugging from red plastic cups. Tucker's crutches rest upon the arms of the couch as he does a large line of cocaine from an elegant mirror – he looks up to the Governor's son with his coke-mustache. “This is fucking awesome...” Tucker's eyes bulge out of his head – Sarah looks on uneasy.

“I told you the new shit was good!” the Governor's son cheerfully says. He then turns to

Sarah and places his hand upon her leg, “Are you sure you don’t want any?”

“I don’t do that stuff.” Sarah uncomfortably pulls her leg away.

“Her dad’s a cop,” Tucker then quickly corrects himself; “her dad *was* a cop.”

Sarah stares to him in anguish and utter disgust. She quickly rises and walks off. Tucker could care less and begins to sift more cocaine. The Governor’s son stares to Sarah walking off – he looks to Tucker slightly bothered and shakes his head in regards to his lack of disrespect.

Clove stands over Kenny as the two are in the living room, her standing and him sitting; he sits with a cast on his hand and his leg still wrapped. “You’ve been sitting here for 5 fucking minutes and you haven’t said shit!” she angrily says.

A grumbly resentful, “That man...” Kenny painfully voices.

“That monster,” Clove sternly retorts.

Words struggle to leave Kenny’s palate while off-looking. “That monster,” he peers up to her, “I looked after him for so long... there were times when I just wanted to sneak him something, take him out for you, for everyone that suffered...”

She interrupts him, “You’ve told me this before.”

“No. No, I haven’t...” Kenny’s inner-conflict contorts his face as he drags his none-casted hand against it nervously. “He spoke to me, Clove...”

Clove scrunches her forehead in befuddlement. She inquisitively then sits down on the coffee table in front of him, “What do you mean he spoke to you?”

“He ah – he told me why – he told me why he did what he did... he told me who he was...” Kenny nervously watches as Clove botheredly rises to her feet.

“And you’re just telling me this now?” Clove paces in place and then kicks the coffee table with her hard thudding boots, “After all of these fucking years!?”

Kenny reassuringly replies, “I didn’t know if it was true but now it makes so much sense...”

“What did he say?” Clove stares to him.

Kenny looks up to her with tears in his eyes.

The mortician stares at two naked corpses; a male and a female, both in their early 30’s. They lay opposite of each other upon the stainless steel exam tables. He gently grazes the breast of the woman with

a sharp scissor-like tool used for cutting through flaps of muscle and skin. He quickly turns around to shut the blinds that overlook the hallway.

The large chest freezer that houses the now extinct monster of a man quietly sits in the room.

He turns excitedly and looks to the naked bodies and then grabbing from his drawer a tube lubricant. Eagerness fills his face as he looks to the two cadavers while applying chap-stick and then licks his lips. He walks to the doorway, opening it and then looking outside to the desolate halls. He then locks the door and walks over to a stereo in the room turning it on. *Nine Inch Nails*' *'Animal'* plays and he infectiously begins to dance, taking in the subtle drums as the song builds – his dance is beyond creepy. Buffalo Bill most definitely has competition.

He strolls over to the male body and flips him over and then quickly dances to the music and kicks the chest freezer to the beat while twirling like a starving stripper. He turns back to the male body as the chest freezer slightly opens from the impact.

The mortician's glasses fog up from his heavy breathing despite the chilled air and he takes them off and places them down on a table nearby. He takes the lubricant and pours it upon the man's bare ass. He looks to his right to see the breast of the woman and he begins to masturbate – behind him the freezer door opens vertically even more. The sadistic mortician begins mounting the male corpse and reaches to grab the crouch of the female nearby.

The trench coat man abruptly sits up from the freezer as this man passionately rapes these dead and unwilling victims. The mortician is fully immersed as he kisses the back of the dead man's ear only to see large stitches from the embalming – he licks them as this tantalizes him. He takes his fingers away from the crotch of the woman and places them into his mouth – and then quickly placing his wet fingers against her breast and sliding them up to her lock-jawed lips.

The scissors are missing from the table nearby as is the monstrous body previously sitting up in the chest freezer. The mortician begins to mount faster and faster as his loud music comes to a climax as does he, and SPLAT! The mortician's eyes grow large as he stares off, twitching, convulsing, but they become engorged with a pool of blood. Through the other side of his ear the scissors stand impaled. The tall and monstrous man stands over him briefly as blood squirts out of his ear upon the body of the woman – the mortician continues to twitch and convulse as he slowly begins to visit the life beyond to greet his diseased friends (I'm sure they'll have a word for him – wherever they are). The trench coat man is bare as he walks to the door, slowly unlocking and walking out of the room leaving the mortician laying upon his cold partners and slowly becoming cold himself – though wasn't he already?

A hearse sits outside in the morgue's lot with a flickering Edison bulb in the street light above it. The door opens from the morgue and the monstrous man exits in the nude with his bullet-riddled and

stitched body – he’s back from the dead. His bare and scarred Neanderthal-like feet stop at the door of the vehicle – he opens the door and enters. The hearse starts right up and he backs up and drives off.

Back at the Governor’s home, Sarah stands inside a historical room within the Hawthorne house; she looks to artifacts spread throughout as well as paintings of the family. A sickle is encased in glass and mounted on the wall; it catches her eye and she begins to stare. “My family was agriculturists,” the Governor’s son says while standing in the doorway. “That’s how we made so much money,” he slowly walks the room, “when they first came here wheat was the ideal crop to grow and the highest in demand. But it only grew on this land and nowhere else. It was like a sign from god that this was going to be the family’s line of work.” Sarah looks off and doesn’t bother to make eye contact with him as he slowly paces around the room. “Now we can barely grow corn. And the shit is genetically modified and it won’t even grow,” he casually says while leaning upon a chair. “That’s how you know you’re fucking up the planet – when GMOs won’t even grow...” He raises his beer and swigs it.

“If I drove I wouldn’t be here right now...”  
Sarah says off-looking.

“I’m sorry about your dad. What Tucker said – he didn’t mean it. He’s just stupid sometimes...” Sarah let’s down her guard a bit and glances to the burly jock. “I can give you a ride if you want...” he politely says.

“You’re high,” Sarah accusingly retorts.

With a big grin, “You are the daughter of a cop, huh?” They both begin to infectiously chuckle. “I don’t partake – I only sell,” he rises and casually moves towards Sarah. “I only drank one beer thus far...”

“Thus?” she mockingly inquires.

“My dad makes me read a lot...” The two shed another quaint laugh – he places his beer down upon a burgundy-stained hardwood table; condensation drips down the glass as he nears her even more. “Do you want a ride?” He says while squaring up to her – then leaning in and kissing her; she kisses back but quickly pushes him off of her. He turns her around and presses her against the wall. She immediately becomes frozen in time – fright supersedes her as he rips down her jeans and light pink underwear.

“I don’t....” she barely mumbles as she attempts to turn around.

He leans into her ear, “It’s all good. It’ll be the best you ever had...”

The door bursts open – Tucker and two other promiscuous girls walk in blasting music on a portable stereo. “I told you she’d be down,” Tucker



excitedly says. The two girls place the tray of cocaine down upon the wooden table. Tucker leans his crutches against the wall and the girls get undressed as they dance to the music – it outweighs Sarah’s confused and pleading demeanor. She stares to the sickle on the wall as she’s unwillingly mounted.

Cello leans on the hood of his car in the House of Pies parking lot while gazing to the busy street. The eatery is well lit and robust with customers as usual.

Clove continues pacing in her apartment and is absolutely baffled by their prior conversation. “I think you...” Kenny attempts to speak.

“This changes everything. You know that?!” Clove frantically yells, “You fucking know that, right?!”

Kenny rises to his feet, “What happened already happened...”

“He was a prisoner – he was kept locked up against his will by his own family. They tortured him and made him a monster...” Clove frenziedly stares to him and then rapidly turns to gather her things as well as the police scanner. She walks to a cookie jar and reaches in taking out a gun.

“What are you doing?” Kenny nervously asks.

“We’re going to the Governor’s...” Clove grabs her jacket.

“There’s nothing for you to do...” Kenny hobbles towards her.

Clove grabs a handheld recorder, “We can get him to confess...”

“To what..? I don’t know if he was telling the truth,” Kenny lightly paces following Clove’s frantic trot as she gets her things in order, “it was his father and grandfather who locked him away...”

Clove opens her door and exits. Kenny stares for a moment and quickly follows.

The Governor gazes out the window in a daze as his driver checks to his mood through a glance in the rearview mirror, “The heat okay, Sir?”

“It’s fine, thank you.” He continues to stare to the dark woods alongside the road and a slew of lights appear as the approach a strip mall with a large golf ball exuding a neon hue. “Fuck me! I forgot my 9 iron,” the Governor says frustrated. “Turn around please?”

The car quickly cuts across the road and makes a U-turn and zip by the closed but well-lit row of stores.

The cornfields sit amongst the moonlight as the loud party music plays. A specific scarecrow wearing a trench coat looks over the field. Drunken kids hang out upon the vibrantly lit porch as they stand on nice wicker furniture and cushions, chasing one and other and just being foolish. On the side of the porch near a large red tool shed kids play beer pong.

Two stoners, a dude and a chick, look to the field in the distance and gaze towards that very scarecrow. The dude takes a large hit of the joint, “Look at that – is something there?” He exhales.

“It’s a scarecrow,” she replies while snagging the joint from him.

“They should be called scare-people because they freak me the fuck out, man...”

“I’ll race you to it,” she excitedly says.

He takes a big hit and nods, “You’re slow as molasses...”

“Fuck you – I’m fast...” She takes the joint from his mouth and runs off.

“Hey!” he screams as he follows her with smoke exuding from his mouth with each cough.

The chick puts the joint into her mouth as she runs to the field and gazes to the scarecrow in the far distance.

# **CHAPTER 10: Revenge**

Sarah sits huddled on the ground – all is just a daze to her. The others are all still naked and doing blow but are barely coherent and the electronic music is deafening; as if the coke isn't enough to give heart palpitations that “BPM” of the nauseating base definitely will quadruple that. She looks to pants laying on the ground and keys sticking out of them nearby.

Sarah drives off and speeds down the long driveway of the Hawthorne's – in the tall cornfield shuffling is heard.

The dude and the chick run through the fields behind one and other as the brush begins to get thicker. “You better not finish that J!” he screams.

While playfully turning around, “Unlike you I don't finish fast,” she wittedly replies.

“That's not fair, Sadie. Once you started Kegeling it was a game changer...” He slows down and holds his chest while out of breath. “Where are you?!”

The chick now sees the scarecrow but he's now undressed and within a short distance in front of her. “Here!” she yells as the dude attempts to walk towards her voice.

On the front porch, a group of hipsters converse as they hear the faintly echoing voices of the playful dude and chick in the field. “This grapefruit vape-juice is so good,” one of the bearded hipsters says.

A fedora wearing hipster replies, “There’s no bitterness – it’s just sweet like a perfectly ripe grapefruit in every puff,” while exhaling a dragon-like cloud of smoke.

The chick makes it through the field as she blindly approaches the naked scarecrow while placing her hand out. “I win!” she yells back while coming to halt. Breathing is heard but not from her THC-induced lungs; she looks up to see that her hand’s not placed upon a scarecrow but on the chest of the frightening trench coat man who now wears the clothes of the scarecrow. She looks up to his frightful eyes as a shadow casts upon his face. She opens her mouth to scream, “Ah-h-h-h-h-h-h-h,” and SWOOSH – blood splashes upon the naked scarecrow. *Thud* – her head rolls on the hay-covered ground and her eyes shed a quick blink before permanently remaining wide open.

Dude nervously looks around from the echoing scream, “Sadie?”

The hipsters on the porch look to the field, “You hear that?”

Another hipster on the porch approaches with a briefcase and opens it up to reveal all of the vape apparatuses. “The party is here, bitches!” he playfully screams as his handlebar mustache gently springs.

“Fuck me, is that Jolly-Rancher?” one of the dopes excitedly look to the case.

Dude nervously looks around in the field as the wind gently tilts the stalks. “Stop fucking with me, Sadie!” he screams while looking towards the sky – briefly an object blocks out the hue of the moon and THUMP! A head rolls on the ground towards him. He looks to it and locks eyes with Sadie’s petrified face. “Oh my god!” he turns to run off.

The joint lays on the ground in front of the naked scarecrow near Sadie’s decapitated body. As the wind blows it builds the ember of the “J” and a piece of hay ignites.

Dude nervously looks around and attempts to find his way out – he glances down to his phone as he calls 911. He sees smoke and fire in the nearby distance.

*Female Operator: 911 – What’s your emergency?*

He listens to the kids yelling from the party as he tries to follow their voices, turning around and then running directly into the monstrous man – he drops his phone to the ground and falls backwards. He looks up to the shadowy beast and quickly rises to his feet. The leering man lunges forward and steps onto the dude’s phone while slashing at him with his sickle and crushing the LED screen but missing dude as he slips out of the way like a wet noodle. He then runs the opposite way.

Dude bolts through the field as he looks over his shoulder in fear. The field begins to smoke more



and more as it becomes engulfed with flames from the joint.

The hipsters watch from the porch. Mustache says, “Yo, look at that...”

“This is gonna look dope on my story,” Fedora says while holding his phone up. “Hashtag Climate Change.”

“That’s going to be a popcorn field soon,” another hipster declaratively chimes in.

Cello pulls into the parking lot of a pharmacy. He parks his car and looks to the side of him to see Sarah with her head down on the steering wheel of Tucker’s car. He exits his vehicle and worriedly walks toward her, knocking on the window. “Sarah...” She looks up to him through the window of the car and even more tears fall down her face watering the already salt trailed paths upon her rosy cheeks. She barely opens the door but he quickly pulls it open, bending to her. “What’s wrong?” he empathetically asks. She cries hysterically. Cello observes her, looking to her ripped jeans with the button torn off and bruises upon her wrists. “Sarah, look at me,” he calmly says, “everything’s okay – I’m here...” She looks to him in pure pain and frigidly raises her arms to hug him.

Clove and Kenny drive her car down the desolate road; farm land and dilapidated houses only lit by the moon's hue frequent their view. "Turn here," Kenny points. They unknowingly pass something in the brush on the side of the road as they make a wide right. The hearse sits parked midst the brush.

The dude still continues to make his way through the corn and towards the street. He runs to a low fence and goes to hop over it, grabbing it and getting zapped – then flipping over onto the other side. "Fuck me! I knew I should've stayed home tonight!" he messily cries out. Dude hears something in the brush – he looks over his shoulder. "Craig is so fucking persuasive!" he utters and continues to quickly walk down the road.

Cello enters into Tucker's stolen car and hands a bag and a bottle of water to Sarah. She looks up to him with her swollen red eyes. "Thank you..." she utters.

They sit for a moment in silence – Cello searches for words, "I can arrest him..."

"No." Sarah gently shakes her head while staring off in a daze.

“You’re gonna do what you want to and that’s fine,” Cello calmly says, “but so am I – for you and your father...” Sarah gazes to him with endless tear-filled eyes. “There’s nothing to be ashamed of and there’s definitely nothing wrong with you. The only one that should be ashamed is the piece of shit that did this to you...” She apprehensively looks to him – she breathes deeper and begins to move closer to Cello, resting her head upon his shoulder. He gently caresses her hair. She looks up to him – he looks to her. She moves in and kisses him and then hopping over the center console, straddling Cello in the passenger seat. She takes his hand and shoves it down her already opened pants. Sarah moans as the two breathe heavily, fogging the windows of the car.

*Radio: Someone called in a large fire at the Governor’s house on Bayview.*

The two stop kissing and look to one and other forehead to forehead while listening to the radio. Sarah slowly climbs off of him while the two take in the information – Cello grabs his radio.

*Radio: Fire trucks are tied up with a large house fire at the historic Hawthorne House. Quite a coincidence if you ask me. Over.*

Officer Cello grabs the door about to exit, “I gotta go. Get home. I’ll be over later to check on you...”

“I’m coming with you...” Sarah sternly replies.

“You’re not. Please...”

“I was just there,” she justifies.

“So, you don’t need to go back there...”

“I’ll show you the guys that raped me...”

Pain and befuddlement fill Cello’s face.

“Guys?” he painfully asks.

Sarah bravely stares to him and opens her door. “Let’s go...” she sternly says with determination and exits. Anger consumes Cello and he too follows.

The hipsters inhale their cancerous liquid as they gaze to the burning field, “That’s so bad for global warming...”

Inside the historical Hawthorne room that is filled with the coked out group of rapist all lying scattered throughout the floor, Tucker hobbles up to his feet and looks to the burning field. “Woah...” The power then goes out – the room becomes black.

The power goes out on the front porch and the chatter of bothered teens and college kids is now the only form of unmelodic music.

Clove and Kenny approach the Governor’s home and see the field on fire as well as the flickering lights from the large house. “What the fuck is going on there?” she says, while Kenny nervously looks on.

The Governor makes his way into town but is abruptly stopped by traffic down the main avenue. Ahead of the cars are police and firetrucks. He notices that his family's historic home is burning in the distance – he quickly exits the car.

The Governor walks down the sidewalk and sees the large embers from the scowling heat of the fire as the firetrucks spray their powerful hoses. “What the hell happened?” he sternly asks a fireman.

“Governor, I'm sorry. We think it's a gas line...” the firefighter replies.

With a scrunched forehead, “There's no gas connected – nor water...” The firefighter hears his team yelling for him and he quickly runs off. Governor Hawthorne stands alone and stares to the family's oldest historic home burning to the ground – the home that began their family's legacy.

Cello and Sarah now drive down a wooded road towards the Hawthorne house – they see ‘dude’ barely running down the street with a shambling limp. “What the fuck?” Cello squints to him.

“That kid goes to my college...” Sarah says.

The dude notices their headlights and turns to them frantically waving them down, “Help! Help!!!” Cello stops the car, pulling over on the side of the road and rolls down his window. Dude leans into his

car out of breath. “Fucking guy – the monster!” he frantically cries. “He’s here – he threw a,” dude apprehensively rambles, “fucking head – Sadie’s head!”

“Get in the car.” Cello sternly says.

“You’ll take me home...?” dude pleadingly asks.

“We have to go to the Governor’s...”

Dude’s face becomes frozen, “You can’t – you can’t...”

“Come with me and you’ll be safe,” Cello reassuringly replies.

“No way fucking way!” he yells highly pitched as he runs off down the road. “I’m not going back there!”

Cello turns to Sarah, “If that man is here, you can’t be here.”

“I’m not leaving you...” she quickly replies.

“Sarah, you’re going to drop me off and you’re going to take this car and drive to the station,” he firmly says. She stubbornly looks to him as he drives off towards the dark house in the distance that is now only lit by the moonlight.

Clove and Kenny walk through the dark and college-filled doorway of the home with their weapons concealed – they look to the sea of cellphone lights attempting to light up the room but it is really more blinding rather than helpful. “Do you feel that?” Clove gazes around.

“Feel what?” Kenny replies. A glimpse of light from one of the phones project a tall shadow within the backroom behind him – Clove turns with her flashlight in hand and looks to the doorway – it has quickly disappeared; and beyond that is just a conventional college couple making out but irked by Clove’s light. “Clove, what are we doing? – There are just kids here...”

“We collect evidence,” she adamantly replies while walking off.

In the historical room of the home Tucker attempts to wake up the Governor’s son, shaking him, but he’s too strung out to even move. “Dude, I can’t find my fucking keys...” He barely groans from Tucker’s poor attempt to wake him up – “The power’s out, man. Where’s the breaker?”

The Governor’s son groggily turns to him bothered by the cellphone light in his eyes, “In the basement,” he barely mumbles.

Cello looks to Sarah from outside of the car, “It’s going to be a while before backup gets here because of that fire so just get right to the station...” He turns to walk off.

“It was the Governor’s son – and Tucker,” Sarah hesitantly says, “there were two other girls too...” Cello stoically nods to her and begins walking up the long driveway with his gun in hand.



# **CHAPTER 11:**

## **He's Here**

Inside of a luxurious pearl white bathroom turned slightly blue from the hue of the moon through the large skylight, the two girls from the coke and rape party heavily kiss each other atop the sink as they messily shine their cellphone lights periodically to the bags of cocaine that lie upon the sink; they take them and cram them into their bags. “Do you think he’ll notice,” the slightly paranoid blonde asks.

The bad-ass brunette looks up to her. “They’re so fucking rich – he won’t notice shit...” They the passionately tongue one and other; the brunette kisses her girlfriend’s neck.

“What was that?” blondie nervously asks as her girlfriend ignores her and continues to sloppily lick her neck. “Andrea, stop...” The brunette lifts her head up bothered. “Look – someone’s in here...” the blonde says while peering to the shower curtain in the distance.

Turning her head, “Fucking perverts,” the brunette botherdly says.

Downstairs, Cello walks up the steps to the porch and the group of kids utter, “Po-Po, 5-0...” while scattering and nervously hiding.

Cello powerfully yells, “Everyone get the fuck out of her,” and fires his gun into the air. *Bang!*

Inside the Governor’s office Clove holds her flashlight in her mouth while digging through a desk drawer – Kenny stands at the doorway guarding. “Did you hear that?” he anxiously says as the

gunshot echoes. Clove looks up to the sound of gunfire as well.

The lesbian lovers stand in the same places alongside the sink while staring to the shower curtain. “Come out, pervert...” the brunette angrily says.

Her girlfriend looks out of the tall window to the far grounds below, fearful of the echoing gunshot, “What was that?”

“You’re paranoid from the fucking coke!” her girlfriend retorts fed up and turns back to the shower. “Come out! Now, man!” The brunette quickly walks to the shower and opens up the curtain while blondie frighteningly watches from afar – upon pulling open the shower her face drops and she immediately shuffles a few inches back, cowering and covering her mouth. A college kid hangs dead; his mouth remains frozen and open as if he had been attempting to take his last breath.

Tucker finagles with the breaker in the basement of the home. “Got it!” he excitedly says. The lights go on and he begins to flip more buttons – behind him, in the corner of the room, an odd and roundly shaped, hairless-mole-looking mental patient stares with an irksome and bloodstained-grimace.

Clove looks up as the lights go on – Kenny looks back to her wondering what the fuck is going on while they rummage through the office.

The college kids scatter from the living-room. “I’m black and unarmed!” a black college kid warily yells. “I’m black and unarmed!” he gently shuffles passed Cello as he stands in the now lit living-room surrounded by stragglng drunken college kids.

Blondie screams as brunette looks to the hanging body in horror – and as the lights turn on, holding up the rope to the hanging body in one hand is the trench coat man – the girls are frozen with fear! He lifts his sickle and slits the throat of the hanging kid and blood squirts upon the brunette’s face as she frozenly backpedals.

In the basement Tucker pours out some cocaine on the breaker box and does a line – WHACK! The mental patient takes his crutch and hits him in the head – he grabs Tucker’s face to look him in the eyes as he drools over him; as he sheds a sadistic grin his fanged teeth stained with plaque protrude – his eyes are deep pockets to a black hole of nothingness yet his vigor for violence tantalizes his tainted soul. “Please – no...” Tucker begs as blood drips from the side of his head. The patient growls and lunges in – biting his nose off and spitting it into his face – as Tucker screams bloody murder the patient takes his head and smashes it against the breaker box over and over causing the lights to go off and on and off and on.

The brunette continues to slowly back herself away and looks to the door nearby – she bolts to it leaving her blonde girlfriend behind. The lights go out in the bathroom again. “Andrea, what the fuck?!” blondie frantically yells as she leans against the

window – outside of the window the lights of a car pull into the driveway. The tall man drops the hanging body – THUMP. He takes a bone-chilling step out from the shower with his blood-covered boots; his hair-wrapped mask is beyond uncomfortable to look at – it’s as if the furious eyes hide behind freshly tilled soil prior to the body being buried alive and filled with scorching vengeance.

The brunette runs down the long stairwell towards the living-room.

Outside of the home the Governor and his driver sit in the car and look to his house as the lights flicker and his son’s friends all leaving in a hurry. “Looks like Conner’s having a good time,” his driver playfully says as he looks to the flustered brunette running down the front steps of porch. SHATTER! A body hurls out from a window on the top floor – the blonde girl flails through the air and approaches the grounded brunette – THUD – she lands directly on top of her. The Governor and his driver look on in awe to the two girls bloodied in the driveway. The Governor quickly exits – his driver opens the glove box and takes out a gun thus following.

Clove walks around the Governor’s office with the lights out. Kenny aims the flashlight. She takes down paintings – knocks on walls. Upon rummaging she moves a loose brick over the fireplace but doesn’t notice nor think anything of it. The main door suddenly opens and they quickly draw their guns to it – Officer Cello stands with his gun drawn as well. “What are you doing here?” Clove asks surprised.

“What are you both doing here?” Cello retorts.

Inside the living room the Governor furiously screams as he looks to the rest of the clueless inebriated stragglers, “Get the fuck out of my house!”

His son stands atop the steps, looking down, “Dad?”

He looks to his son as he shines his cellphone light – his driver types in a code on the security pad mounted on the wall nearby; secondary flood lights turn on with a red hue. “Conner, let’s go...” the governor yells to his son. Behind his son stands the monstrous man leering over him, “Conner! Now!” Conner runs down the steps – his driver looks to the Governor for affirmation and his superior does. BANG! BANG! The monstrous man’s body subtly jolts as he’s hit in the shoulder but continues slowly stepping down the steps. The drunken lingering partiers now truly scatter efficiently. “We need to get to the labyrinth!” yells the Governor. The group runs off – the trench coat man continues to calmly follow – slow and steady usually wins the race...

Back in town at the police station Sarah defeatedly takes the keys out of the ignition. She sees a picture of her father on the dash with a birthday cake in front of him; emotions flood her.

An inner-conflict rages within her to do what she feels is necessary – this is one of the

fundamental principles of life: choice. There is no *right* or *wrong* – there is only the lesson learned after – but in this case *after* may not come.

“Sorry, dad.” She starts the car and drives off – reversing out of the parking lot, peeling out and leaving a cloud of exhaust fumes.

Clove, Kenny, and Cello cluelessly stand together in the office. “Why wouldn’t you call me and tell me all of this shit?” Cello pushily asks.

“I could ask you the same thing.” Clove passively says.

“We’re both here for *very* different reasons but now,” Cello stares to the two of them with eyes of seriousness, “we are here for the same reason – that thing’s still alive...”

Clove’s face immediately drops. “What are you talking about? I saw his body. He’s dead...”

“He cut off some girl’s head. He’s here somewhere. And obviously after what you just told me,” Cello painfully states, “he’s here for revenge...”

“Just like what he tried to do the night of Kill Feast...” Kenny stares at the painted family portrait that hovers in the middle of the room as the focal point: the present Governor (as a young boy), his father, his mother and his baby sister. His eyes focus upon the baby sister.

The door opens once again to the office – the Governor, his driver and his son all enter quickly and slam the door shut – locking it. The diverse group peers to one and other confused as they all aim their weapons towards each other; Cello, Clove and Kenny aim to the doorway as the Governor’s driver aims back to them. “What are you all doing in my house?” Governor Hawthorne asks perplexed.

“They know, Glen. They know everything...”  
Kenny dismally replies.

Cello locks eyes on the Governor’s nervous son as he wipes his nose. “You...” Cello bum-rushes him and pistol-whips him in the face – dropping him to the ground. The driver quickly aims his gun towards Cello’s head.

“Get off my son!” the Governor sternly yells.

Cello presses the barrel of his gun against his son’s cheek as blood drips down the top of his head.

“Drop it...” the driver calmly says.

Clove holds her aim at the driver. Kenny aims to the driver as well. “Your son’s a fucking rapist!”  
Cello ferociously growls.

THUD! A noise comes from the locked door.  
“We don’t have much time!” the Governor screams.  
“He’ll kill us all!”

“He wants you...” Clove knowingly retorts.

“And then he will take everyone he can,” the Governor says obstinately, “just like your son...”



Clove stares to him with wrath but before she can even get the words out – THUD! The whole wall shakes from the sheer velocity. They all look to the doorway and then to one and other – Cello nods to Clove despite his rage as well – he presses the barrel of his gun in the son’s face out of furious spite before lowering it. The Governor walks over to the fireplace and pulls a brick, unlocking a secret doorway to a concrete stairwell. “What is that?” Cello stares.

The Governor shrewdly looks back to him, “A place he won’t want to go...”

The door THUDS even louder – “Dad. What’s going on?” his son nervously asks. His father walks down the secret passageway beyond the fireplace and all follow, closing the corridor behind them while the main door to the office pounds from the impact of the monstrous beast.

# **CHAPTER 13:**

## **The Labyrinth**

Police cars, ambulances and firetrucks all pull up amidst the chaos as some of the stragglers walk down the dark and desolate road – some throw up on the side of the path from being overly drunk and seeing the two bodies of the “coke girls” splattered and pancaked upon the driveway. The field is just embers at this point, still glowing from the fire like golden fireflies.

The dysfunctional group enters the underground labyrinth – thick concrete walls surround them on both sides. “Why did you build this?” Cello says while looking to the long daunting pathways that lie before them.

The Governor guides them through the intricate maze, “The tunnels were here long before our family. They were created by Native Americans – they were just dirt tunnels but we decided to use them...” He continues to walk and suspiciously look around the area. “It was World War II and my grandfather didn’t know what was to happen...”

Clove stops and shines her light into the cobwebbed room – it was that young and oddly tall boy’s room. “You locked him down here – didn’t you?”

The Governor shamefully replies, “Yes. We have to keep moving.” He continues to walk off; his driver and son follow. Cello, Kenny and Clove briefly glance to one and other and then follow as well.

“Why? Why did you do it?” Clove angrily asks.

“My brother was – he was severely deformed and my grandfather felt that my father could never achieve anything if we had him by our side...” The Governor continues peering around as they shine their flashlights despite the red hue from the floodlights. “Although, in this era a deformed child would only help a political campaign...”

Kenny replies, “So you chose to lock him up for his whole life...”

“They did! I kept him alive. That night of 1992 – he escaped and they wanted to kill him. We rebuilt Hawthorne Asylum for him.” Governor Hawthorne justifies, “It was my idea to keep my brother alive...”

“You should’ve let him die – it’s because of your family that my son’s dead!” Clove aims her gun towards him – the driver aims his gun back up to her.

“We don’t have time for this....” the Governor frustratingly says. “There’s another door in the breaker room that leads here. I don’t know if he knows about it but we have to lock it from inside of here...”

His son nosily wandered in front of him and stands at an open door. “Dad...?” he nervously utters while looking to see a dead woman lying on the ground; she wears a maid uniform and a tray of food that she was delivering is scattered in front of her. Scattered broccoli and peas mixed with some chicken cordon bleu.

The group quickly flocks to the son and makes their way around the body – her neck is snapped and completely kinked. Different from a traditional maid, she wears a belt with pepper spray and even has a stun gun. “Who else are you keeping down here, Hawthorne?” Cello nervously asks.

Governor Hawthorn stares to the empty room in shock – the pastel colors within the room and stuffed animals would give the observation that it belonged to girl, a woman. “We need to get out of here. There’s another way out through the storage room...”

Their plan quickly changes. Footsteps echo behind them. They all turn with their guns aimed. “Who else did you lock down here?” Clove angrily reiterates.

His son impatiently looks to him, “Dad?”

“My sister...” he disappointedly says.

Clove stares to him, “Your sister died that night at the fair. She was one of the bodies found cut up in the bathroom...”

“No – she freed my brother that night. We couldn’t trust her after that – my father didn’t want anything to happen to our family or her so he locked her away too,” the Governor utters, “with Franklin, my brother...”

His son looks to him dumbfounded, “How could you do that?”

“Coming from the rapist...” Cello sarcastically replies.

“I didn’t rape her, man!”

Clove intervenes, “Your family is beyond fucked up...”

The driver notices something in the distance and slowly walks away from the yammering group; though with the echoing walls there is no getting away from the noise, it only enhances it – he sees someone at the end of the hallway – it’s the fang-toothed mental patient – he’s facing the wall, his back to him. The driver scrunches his forehead befuddled. The patient turns around towards the group while gnawing on an arm. “Hey!” The driver briefly turns to the group and yells – SWOOSH – he gets pulled into a crevice from something else. BANG! BANG! His gunshots light the dimly lit tunnel as he disappears.

The group looks down the hall to see the patient dropping the arm to the ground and walking towards them with a sadistic grin – his son slowly backpedals in shock. The patient begins running to them and they all immediately open fire – lights blow above his head from stray bullets as he charges at them. The Governor watches on in fright; him and his son are the only one without guns.

His son continues walking backwards and THUD – he comes to a stop. He timidly turns around to look up – the trench coat man hovers over him with his long hair draped over his mysteriously hole-

less eyes, creating a mask of darkness. “Dad...” he says frightened.

The mental patient drops to the ground from being lit up with bullets – with blood-craving vigor he continues to crawl, dragging himself with one arm. “Dad!” his son again yells with a faint voice.

His father turns to see his son being dragged off by the monstrous man, his brother, the boy’s uncle – the trench coat man. “Conner!”

Cello walks over to the sadistic patient as he now barely crawls – BANG! He shoots him in the head. Governor Hawthorne looks off in shock – frantic eyes determine no plan and just pure frustration.

“He told me he was going to kill you and your family.” Kenny calmly voices. “He said he was going to make you suffer...”

The disappeared driver makes an appearance and stumbles from out of a crevice – he turns to them, “Governor...” While turning a long object sticks out of the side of his head – he drops to his knees as the group looks on – a hairbrush sticks out of his ear – he wobbles and falls over onto his side – THUMP!

Officer Cello moves closer with his gun aimed while the group lingers behind. He looks to the corner where he appeared from – it’s just a wall, nothing’s there. “There’s no walkway over here...” Cello questioningly says.

“There’s secrete doorways...” Hawthorne replies.

Cello looks to the bloody handprint upon the wall – he presses it and consequently it opens, leading to another hall. “Ya fuckin’ kidding me...?” Cello says in awe. “You could’ve told us that to begin with...” They make their way towards Cello and stand around the driver’s body. “There’s a fuckin’ hairbrush sticking out his head. A hairbrush...” Cello shines his light around his body, “And his gun is gone...” He angrily turns to the Governor, “You took us down here for what?!” he angrily yells. “For what...? I don’t know!” Cello’s rage begins to cloud him.

“I didn’t think he would come down here...” Hawthorne bashfully replies.

“And you didn’t know your imprisoned sister would be loose too...” Cello wittedly says. “Now, how the fuck do we get out of here?”

“I’m not leaving my son.”

“I’m not leaving either.” Clove echoingly says behind the Governor’s defiant tone.

Cello walks over to Clove confused, “Clove – this is family business now. This is *fucked up* family business...”

“My son’s still dead – did you forget that?” Clove replies to Cello then turning to the Governor, “I’m going to help you get your kid, if he isn’t already dead yet...”



“He’s not,” the Governor reassures himself, “he wants me – this is his bait...”

“I don’t care...” Clove sternly walks to him, “And after this is done you will go to jail for being an accessory to kidnapping and murder and whatever fucked up shit this family has been up to...” She nears his face, “And so will your rapist son...” Clove determinedly walks off down the hidden hall and leads the group.

Cello watches and looks behind them checking the grounds. “Don’t forget the sister is still here – and judging by the hairbrush I’d imagine she’s not too happy about being locked up for 30 years,” he wittedly reminds the group.

Sarah pulls up to the grounds of the Governor’s home; she parks Cello’s car and exits, then approaching the police officers along with all of the commotion. “Is Officer Cello inside?” she asks a thin and stubbly faced officer.

“Sarah Gray? What are you doing here?” he puzzledly asks.

“Is he inside?”

“Cello...? No – you need to get out of here – things went down that you don’t want to see...” The officer looks to the bodies being carried out by coroners.

“Cello is in there. I’m telling you.” Sarah pleads. “You have to find him – I dropped him off here. I have his car...”

The officer looks to the police car, “You’re driving a police vehicle? That’s highly illegal...”

Another officer runs over and disturbs their conversation. ‘Sir, you need to see this – it’s...” he immediately throws up in disgust. He wipes his mouth. “Follow me...” the shaken up officer quickly walks off.

“Sarah, go to my SUV – It’s number 13 and wait there for me...” the thin officer says as he follows the other officer. Little does he know what’s going on beneath his feet – Sarah watches him walk off and looks to the front porch at all of the officers as they stand collecting evidence and taking pictures. She turns around and begins to walk back to the car – she sees barn doors that go down to the basement. She runs to Cello’s car. Sarah opens the trunk to see the shotgun that she knew would be there, grabbing it and then running off to those doors that lead down below.

The thin officer stands and stares in awe – outside of the large barn on the side of the house where the kids were once playing beer pong, is now a corpse factory – they shine their flashlights into the trees to see 10 college kids crucified with barn tools: hedge clippers, screwdrivers, broken shovels, a hoe and a shovel. This is an explainable reason why the officer puked up his lemon meringue pie – the beer pong table is flipped over with cups and alcohol scattered amidst the blood. The cops all stare sick to their stomachs.

Back inside the labyrinth the group finally makes it to the large storage room – canned food along with the fermented food fills the wood shelving. “If anyone wants to leave there’s an exit behind that shelf,” the Governor points, “if you press on the wall it’ll lead out to the fireplace in the living room...”

The group stands still and no one seems to want to leave. “I’m low on rounds...” Cello looks to his gun.

“Me too...” Clove echoes.

Kenny looks to them with unsure eyes while he observes Officer Cello looking around for weapons of any kind between the shelves of fermented foods and canned goods. Clove approaches him, “Kenny, you can leave...”

Kenny sternly looks to her, “I couldn’t save your boy that night and I’m not about to let anything happen to you – I messed up lying to you. The thing is – the more I spent time with him, the more I felt his pain – and I hate myself for that,” remorse fills him, “because of what he did to you, to the innocent people of our town. He’s a murderer, yes, but he’s also just a man in pain beyond reason...”

Clove gazes into Kenny’s guilt-housed eyes, “I can assure you that I’ve been face to face with that thing, and there is no human being whatsoever left in there. He’s empty; he’s a black hole – and whatever he told you, it was only to get the revenge that he’s getting now. It’s not your past that defines you but what you choose to become of it that creates

you...” Kenny stares to Clove knowing what her past has made of her, he’s aware that she’s still very much living in the chaos and misery; even in this dire moment for survival her survival is only to avenge the past.

“If you stare long enough into an abyss, the abyss will eventually stare back at you,” the Governor nonchalantly says while sifting through drawers of medical equipment, “it’ll become your reflection – and it seems, Clove – my brother has become your mirror...” He looks up to her, “You’ve let him define you.” Clove stares to Hawthorne with a scorned face while he walks over to her and hands her a syringe – he then turns and tosses one to Kenny who catches it in his good hand.

Cello finds a large chef’s knife in the drawer and takes it, wrapping it in a cloth and putting it into his pocket. “So, what’s the plan?”

Sarah slowly walks down into the basement with the shotgun aimed – she holds it like a cop’s daughter would hold it. The lights flicker while she looks to a trail of blood leading to the wall. Large footprints are scattered throughout the floor. She follows it with her eyes, guiding her to see Tucker’s torn apart body; his neck is ripped apart along with his nose and right arm missing. She drops the gun sickened and covers her mouth in disgust – a burst of anger suddenly comes over her and she lunges over to the body and kicks him in the ribs. “You piece of shit!” she furiously screams. She continues kicking him until she’s out of breath and then begins sobbing on the floor – this isn’t the revenge she had

wished for but decapitated or not she's still going to get her retaliation. Though violence traded for violence is an endless circle, Sarah mistakes her tarnished soul for the overbearing voice of the angered ego; nothing can ever undue what had happened and she very well knows this but rage is a powerful blinding force and easier to our conditioning rather than the acceptance of and liberation to follow – this is hopefully learned with time in order to alleviate the 'shamed victim complex' which no one *truly* is. She frantically looks around the area and sees yet another trail of blood leading to the wall and stopping.

The Governor, Cello, Clove and Kenny, wander the labyrinth – their footsteps echo the desolately hollow halls. All of a sudden – music echoes. They all look to one and other and follow it. Behind them a mysterious woman lurks in the shadows – they're clueless to this. Cello feels something behind them and quickly turns and aims his flashlight – nothing – the silhouette of the woman is gone.

"Dad!" the Governor's son's voice reverberates through the halls.

"It's coming from the cinema room!" Hawthorne quickly runs down the hall and the group follows.

Sarah enters into the labyrinth down below; she apprehensively walks down the final few concrete steps. She too hears the noise echoing from the underground theater.

The dysfunctional looks to see a large, burgundy wooden door in the distance. “Why do you have a movie room?” Cello says confused.

“Just because we kept them down here doesn’t mean we didn’t treat them well...” Hawthorne justifies the family’s means while continuing to walk to the doorway. “There’s a gym, a pool...”

Cello utters, “It’s just like the fuckin’ 4 Seasons...” The music grows louder, uncomfortably loud. The bass is skin rattling. The melody is that of a soft lullaby played at a very loud volume.

The Governor opens the large wooden doors to the cinema room; it’s filled with rows of seats and is literally the size of a small movie theater and it’s been updated since the last visit. His son is tied up to a metal pushcart apparatus while the movie *A Nightmare on Elm Street* plays in the background. “Dad – please help me...” his son cries.

Officer Cello nervously looks around the dark theater. Clove looks to the doorway and sees the shadow of a woman zip by and slam the heavy door, “Shit!” Clove runs to the door but it’s been locked.

The projection of the picture plays upon the face of his son while the Governor attempts to untie the rope that vices him. Infectious goosebumps hatch by the means of the tall silhouette behind the screen that hangs over the father and son; it raises its sickle and stabs through the screen just as Freddy Kruger slashes up a teen girl – he slices his

son's back causing him to scream and whimper in pain.

“Get down!” Cello yells. The father unties his son and they quickly crawl off. BANG! BANG! Cello shoots at the monster's silhouette, piercing through the screen – BANG! BANG! *Click... Click...* His gun's now empty.

Sarah hears the gunshots and quickly follows down the red hued hall.

Clove runs back behind the screen and sees no one's there. Kenny looks up to the projector above their heads which is in a separate room and notices a hand dropping a flame down to the seats, fueling the cotton filaments to quickly ignite – he fires a bullet up there but only one because he knows he has none to spare. The fire quickly grows larger. Cello and Kenny anxiously look around. Clove comes out from behind the screen and looks to the commotion. The Governor and his son stand on the opposite end of the theater as the flames create a distorted line of fire. “I found it – let's go...” he hurriedly voices to his son – they both quickly disappear and leave the group behind.

The original doors in which they came abruptly open up – Sarah stands with her shotgun. Cello briefly stares to her in utter confusion and then turns to Clove, “Let's go!” They run to their shotgun wielding savior.

Outside in a different part of the labyrinth the father and son duo venture. The Governor feels

around the wall and – pop! He opens a hidden doorway. “We’re home free...” he says in relief. The father turns to his son and sees him frozen – he coughs up blood and then falls to the ground – his father quickly catches him and then feels the sickle in his son’s back. Fear and confusion fill the Governor – the monstrous man, his imprisoned brother appears. He stares down to his oppressor and the Governor looks up to him – he pulls his sickle from his nephew’s back – the sound of grinding cartilage and bone is nauseating. The scorned father looks on in horror as he slowly grabs the syringe from his pocket – a gun then presses against his temple.

His sister appears from the shadows and sadistically stares to him, “It’s a family reunion...”

He drops the syringe to the ground – his son lies on his back and coughs up more blood, gurgling in pain. “Please just let him go,” he frantically pleads, “he’s both your fucking nephew!”

His shadowy brother lifts his blood-stained boots and stomps on his nephew’s throat – CRUNCH!

“No! God! No!” his father hysterically cries.

Governor Hawthorne cowers on the ground while his sister looks to him with eyes of isolation, panic and freedom, all simultaneously consuming her. “All of these years – you took my life away – I don’t even know whether this is real or not...” Her brother looks up to her as tears flood his eyes.



“Where did dad put mom?” she inquisitively asks.  
“When she stopped visiting us where did she go?”

The Governor looks up to the both of them,  
“He said she took his money and left...”

“We both know that’s not true. All this money and power have truly blinded you, huh brother...?” she slowly paces around her immensely tall other brother. “Your ego runs you – but now I’ll give you the ultimate power...” she drops a gun onto the floor – the two formerly imprisoned siblings look down to their brother and then walk off; his sister leaves first and then the monstrous man follows behind her. The Governor dishearteningly watches them and then looks to the gun lying next to his crushed son’s neck.

Clove, Kenny, Cello and Sarah run from the heavy smoke and flames as the elegantly designed underground prison maze begins to burn – the fire has spread and the electrical wiring alongside the walls begin to combust along with the red flood lights. Sarah approaches a wall, “It was over here!” She frantically looks around, as does the group. Cello holds his shirt over his mouth as he coughs from the smoke – he grabs a light hanging from the wall and a door opens. They all quickly run through it, Cello being the last to go – BANG! He hears a gunshot echo in the distance – he briefly looks back to the heavy flames exuding from the cinema room and then quickly exits; the Governor seems to have taken his sister’s suggestion.

# **CHAPTER 14:**

# **Petrified Carvings**

An underground door opens to an old cemetery – the house is in the way distance along with the police and ambulance lights; it’s almost a mile away. Sarah, Clove, Kenny and Cello exit while they all cough from the heavy smoke that exudes. Clove looks up and locks her eyes on the monstrous man in the distance as he walks with his sister towards the woods. She quickly runs after them – Cello notices and turns to Kenny on Sarah’s behalf, “Get her somewhere safe!” Cello runs off with the shotgun in hand – Kenny gently pulls Sarah with him, making their way to the lights – though it appears that Sarah’s more help than Kenny with his worn body. She assists him while trekking to the hue of the high moon.

Kenny reaches into his pocket and remembers he has a syringe, “Shit!”

“He’ll be fine...” Sarah reassures him and continues to walk off. “I don’t even want him getting that close...” Kenny drops the syringe to the ground and they both hobble off.

An axe sits in a large stump and wood is split throughout the area. There’s a field of tree carvings amongst the pine and woodchip covered floor. Hawks, lions, dogs, bears, families and artistic creations that are incredibly irksome (especially by the light of the moon) all flock the area making an elaborate maze of tree carvings. Even Edvard Munch’s *Scream* is beautifully carved into a live and rooted tree; though most of the carvings are just large cuts of lumber, freestanding and balancing on their own regard.

Clove furiously runs through the maze of carvings – she hears crunching in the distance and quickly rises upon a stump to give her the height to see; and in the distance are the beast and his sister walking down a path towards the dark forest. She fires – BANG! Cello quickly appears behind her as she shoots – Clove sees the sister drop to the ground in the distance. “Fuck!” she bitterly says. She quickly fires again but she’s empty – she throws the gun down. Cello hops up atop the stump with her.

The monster of man stares down to his sister while holding her in his arms – a wound from her stomach leaks blood. He carries her and places his sister behind a tall fallen tree – its roots are still caked with packed dirt and vibrant green moss. “It’s okay. It’s going to be fine – just let them be...” she peacefully says while looking up to the shadowy beast and gazing to the moon and stars beyond him for the first time in as long as she could remember; completely enamored by nature.

Clove hops down from the stump and grabs an axe nearby. Cello stands and aims his shotgun to the culprits. “Shoot him!” Clove angrily says.

“We’re far away and there’s not enough bullets to risk the shot,” Cello stares ahead, “walk to the next stump and when you get there I’ll come to you – we cannot take our eyes off them.”

Clove runs through an array of wooden cutouts scarred throughout the area with her axe in hand – she zips past a creepy tree with a frightened face etched into it and then quickly hops upon the

next stump. Cello sees her from his stump and then notices the scorned man rising from kneeling over his sister in the distance – the sister isn't visible but he knows she's there and he also knows her beastly brother is pissed. He hops off of the stump and runs to Clove and to the next stump, "We've lost eyes on the sister," he yells while running.

"That's because I shot her..." an owl hoots in a tree above Clove and she briefly looks, startled and then looks back up to see she's lost her target. "He's gone!"

Cello dips in and out of the cutouts. "What do you mean he's gone?" he hops upon the stump with her. "Weren't you watching?" he botherdly says.

"I was fucking watching – I heard an owl above me and I looked for a split second!" Clove screams frustrated.

"It's a fucking owl!" nerves fill Cello. "You know what it sounds like – why look?"

They anxiously look around amongst the tall wooden cutouts. THUD! One falls over – Clove and Cello quickly turn their heads; no one's there other than the woodcarving lying upon the pine-covered grounds. "You shot his sister – I don't think he likes that..." the two circle around the tall stump back to back.

"Whatever happens here – you have to promise me that I will get to see him die..."  
SWOOSH! A flying blade comes towards them and impales Clove in the arm and knocks her down from

the stump. Cello nervously watches on and looks around for the menacing man. Cello sees him as he walks behind a massive wooden bear – he shoots! The wood splinters – he yells back while turning his head, “You okay?”

Clove looks to the mini tomahawk lodged into her arm – she attempts to pull it out and screams – there is no giving up – she pulls and pulls as blood gushes.

Sarah and Kenny run to the officers that are left still investigating the scene – some quickly draw their weapons. “Lower your weapons!” the thin stubbly cop orders. “That’s Sarah Gray!”

Sarah determinedly runs ahead of Kenny, “Cello – he’s back there. That thing is in the woods and they went after it!”

“Get every officer on site right now and call backup from neighboring towns...” the officer demands to the other nearby officers.

Clove finally rips the small axe from her arm, dropping it to the ground – she rips a piece of her shirt and wraps her arm tightly while grimacing in pain. She reaches into her pocket and feels the syringe is broke – the needle is missing and the fluid leaked out. “Fuck...” she utters and tosses it away. Cello continues to circle upon the stump frantically looking for the angry and scorned man. Menacing long arms appear out of the shadows from behind Clove while she attempts to rise to her feet – they pull her back, smacking into the hard wooden

carving in which they hide behind – she reaches for the axe that lies on the ground but it’s a miss – she barely grasps its handle.

Cello looks on in fright but can’t get a clear shot as her body and the stump in which he hides behind blocks this monstrous man while he chokes the life out of Clove – Cello has no shots to risk losing. He thinks fast and looks down to see his large boot sticking out – BANG! He fires and it goes right through the angry brother’s boot – Clove bites one of his hands and he immediately releases Clove’s neck and drops her to the ground. Cello fires again – he’s empty! “Fuck!” he screams and tosses the shotgun and hops down from the stump.

Clove grabs the axe from the ground and swings it at the monster as he appears from the shadows. She slashes at him and slices him over and over while swinging with pure rage – Clove is out for blood! She finally connects and impales the large axe into his ribs. Cello reaches from his pocket and takes out the chef’s knife (that he smuggled from the labyrinth’s pantry). The monstrous man stares down to Clove as he struggles to remove the axe – Cello appears behind him and jumps onto his back, stabbing and stabbing away – impaling his shoulder, chest and back – despite the ferociousness of this beastly man it is disturbing to watch and hear the sound of piercing flesh regardless of his calloused murderous heart. The tall man reverses into a wooden carving of a roaring lion – THUMP! Cello whiplashes and falls to the ground dropping the knife – the wooden lion teeters and falls backwards

and makes a domino effect. Clove still tries to catch her breath and regain her composure from the adrenaline while kneeling – she looks to the knife lying on the ground along with Cello concussed and then gazes back up – he’s gone – the beast is gone.

The officers walk through the lumber yard with their guns drawn – the domino effect reaches them and the wooden carvings fall and CRUSH 1 out of the 10 officers; he screams in pain while his torso sticks out from the heavy woodcarving – his legs are crushed. The officers all attempt to lift it off of him – they quickly succeed, rolling it off. “Stay with him,” the thin officer says, “and the rest of you spread out!” All of the officers spread throughout the wood carved maze with their guns and flashlights aimed.

Cello rolls on the ground in pain while beginning to come to his senses; he feels the back of his head and looks to his bloody fingertips. Clove exhaustedly rises to her feet – she looks to the axe on the ground – WHACK! The sickle wraps into her ribs, hitting her bone – she slowly and painfully turns around to see the monstrous man standing over her. Cello groggily watches from the ground as he makes it to his feet stumbling. Clove continues to turn around as he turns the blade inside of her ribs, rubbing against her bone inflicting pain with infectious screams and growls – she looks beyond his hair-like mask and into his ferocious dead eyes – digging her fingers into his wound within his ribs and then stomps onto his bullet-holed foot. He grunts and releases her, throwing her off of him – she falls to the ground with the sickle still wrapped



around her torso. The crunching of flesh, the scraping of blade on bone – she pulls it out and screams, “Ah-h-h-h-h-h!” Adrenaline fuels her as she hungrily rises to her feet. He approaches her but she slashes at him with his own weapon and keeps him at bay.

The two circle one and other – he brazenly moves forward and she charges him and swings the sickle into his open-wounded rib while he instantaneously grabs her by the throat, lifting her from the ground; but she still holds onto the sickle and as he lifts she drags it against his bones causing him to squeeze her neck even harder but then quickly throws her away from the immense pain. He stumbles back and holds onto a large carving of a crocodile; its mouth is wielded large sharp teeth – for the first time this beast shows some vulnerability, a slight and wary weakness as his off-guardedness leads to Cello appearing with the knife and stabbing it through his other foot. He quickly crawls out of the way – Clove takes the axe from the ground and runs at him, swinging it – he attempts to deflect but it impales the left side of him between his neck and shoulder.

She falls to the ground after her last burst of energy and watches him struggle as he attempts to pull it out. He throws the bloody axe onto the ground and then rips the knife from his boot; he menacingly approaches Clove. She’s all out of gas but stares to him with ferocious eyes; the pleasure she receives from his suffering is the upmost existential score for her. As he nears her, her eyes grow more intense,

“Die, you fucking monster...” From behind the beast, the wooden carving of the Greek Titan Atlas holding the earth slowly tilts over the monstrous man as it begins to slowly teeter and fall – Clove grins and surprisingly stabs the mini tomahawk into his foot and rolls out of the way – THUMP! He gets crushed by the massive sculpture – the world has fallen atop of him. Cello stands behind it – he used his last amount of energy to push it over as he stumbles and is still clearly concussed.

Clove rises and grabs the axe from the ground; how she’s still moving it beyond baffling. One can say: never underestimate a scorned mother. She hobbles over to the crushed beast and raises the bloody axe high – WHACK – she chops off his hand and screams in relief while doing so – she pants and then takes a deep breath and raises it yet again – WHACK – she cuts off the other hand that holds the sickle. She wheezes like a rabid dog and lets out a cathartic scream akin to a warrior freeing his tribe from tyranny, her oppressed soul sings in the name of vengeance, whether this justification of false humanity is valued or not, in this moment, her soul finally mends as she drops to the ground, releasing the axe and begins to sob – the freedom of retaliated violence lasts only so long only before realizing that when all is said and done it is still self-imprisonment.

The officers finally arrive to the scene – the thin officer is one of the first. “They’re over here!” he yells to his men. Officers flood the area to help Clove up and Cello as well.

The officers look to see the body of the monstrous man's sister lying midst the forest – her stomach is soaked with blood and her skin is pale white offsetting her stained eggshell blue dress.

Sarah anxiously stands from outside of the police cars and notices the officers carrying Clove – they put her onto a stretcher. She's lost a lot of blood and her wounds are stomach-turning – white bone and pink tendons are visible. Kenny approaches her – she groggily looks up to him in a daze and touches his face showing faint concern. He doesn't even know if she'll make it... “Sir, you have to move...” an EMT sternly says while pushing Clove towards the ambulance.

The sister of the murderer and the Governor appears and gets carried to an ambulance as well – her arms droop off the side of the stretcher as the officers and EMTs lay her down. Sarah eagerly watches to see Cello anywhere but he's not there; the smoky haze from the labyrinth fire along with the embering pieces of the field glowing like sparkled dust paints a picture of chaos, tragedy and beauty within the town Merderton. Sarah notices something beyond the haze – Cello finally rises from the dark and dreary woods, groggily stumbling, cut and bruised. Sarah runs to him in relief – hugging him. He cowers in pain – she then wraps her arms around him and assists him to the ambulances and EMTs. Sarah gawks at his blood-covered face and his wounds, “You need to go to the hospital...”

Cello immediately replies, “No...” He proceeds to walk to their car, gently pulling away from Sarah's

assistance – she watches him hobble and follows alongside him. They approach their car and Cello walks to the passenger side door and opens it – he knows well enough that he has no desire to drive. Sarah opens her door and enters into the car – Cello grunts in pain as he crouches into the seat.

A moment passes while the two gaze out the window: the burnt field, the bodies that still haven't been bagged and tagged, the burning home and the lingering fire and smoke as well as the firefighters attempting to extinguish it as they're stationed throughout the property. Sarah turns to Cello and gently says, "Where do you want go?"

Cello stares for a moment as the hue of the chaos reflects upon his pupils. "To your father's..." he says without a doubt in his mind. Sarah starts the car and begins to slowly drive off. Cello notices the body of the murderer being carried away; his long and handless arms hang off of the gurney carried by several officers and coroners – his boot has a large hole in it from the shotgun wound. While slowly driving around the area and making their way out, Cello then looks to see Clove lying down inside the back of an open ambulance with the EMTs and police surrounding her. He partially rolls down his window, "Take care of her..." he firmly says.

The thin and stubbly officer quickly turns to the moving car, "Cello, we need you for questioning..."

Sarah quickly drives off, ignoring the officer causing him to nod his head and shrug his bothered shoulders.

Clove groggily sits inside the ambulance while an IV drips into her arm; she is completely out of it despite an ingrained grin consuming her – this euphorically blissful grin is either the morphine or the revenge or the combination of both. A faint chuckle sings from her dry and bloodied lips.

A frail male EMT approaches a female EMT with Clove and the thin officer, “Our truck won’t start – we need to move her...” he urgently says.

The officer nods and gives approval to the EMT. “Let’s get her in...” she helps him take the body into the ambulance, pushing the formerly imprisoned Hawthorne sister towards the back of the ambulance in which Clove inhabits. They adjust Clove’s gurney over and bring the handcuffed sister into the vehicle placing her next to her – there is no precaution to be wasted despite her comatose state. Clove and the Hawthorne sister lie side by side in the ambulance as the EMTs both shut the doors; the two former foes are now side by side and barely coherent.

What’s left of the many scarecrows scattered throughout the field burns amidst the lingering chaos as oxygen begins to become dense. One of the existing scarecrows still wearing a tethered trench coat gently burns from the bottom edges of its coat, just beginning to ignite; how it was spared of fire is baffling being that the whole field has burnt – a thick spray of water extinguishes the growing ember.

Firefighters stand with their hose as they extinguish what's left and in the process saving the life of this faceless scarecrow. Ambulances drive off as do some of the police and their bright lights flicker upon the field and what's left of the home.

The moon sits tall as the trench coat wearing scarecrow wetly stands mounted while the water quickly turns cold amidst the frigid air; the field becomes encased with glass and is crystalized in time. The scarecrow's hay-like skin sheds an ambient glow of vigor due to the glistening moon's hue.

# **CHAPTER 14:**

## **When It's Over...**

Planes take off from a runway – cars zip by at the crowded terminals. A sign reading *Welcome to Florida* calmly sits above the flat highway.

At a very prestigious elderly community decorated with Spanish style rooves and beautiful green foliage; a man gazes from his vine-covered balcony to a beautiful view which includes a saltwater pool and quite a few old men and women sitting around it – some of the men wear Floridian bellybutton-high swim trunks and most of the women are in their vibrantly-colored full-body swimsuits.

Inside of the gazing man's room sits a gavel encased in glass upon his heavy wooden desk with his nameplate *Thomas Hawthorne*. Throughout his room are his earned accolades scattered and framed throughout the wall as well as pictures with other political royalty. Hawthorne Sr. sits in his wheelchair gazing out the window; he's now in his 80's and the only thing he's kept from the 90's is his well-to-do style – he remains incredibly dapper in his dark blue opened suit with a white button-up shirt beneath it showing off his freckled chest and small gold necklace of the Virgin Mary. A nurse enters, “Governor Hawthorne – we're ready for your midday stroll...” The nurse stands with reddish hair and is seen as a blurred reflection within the window. He turns his chair around and looks to his gold watch with the Hawthorne family crest as the background, that infamous wheat-harvesting sickle.



The nurse pushes the old man down a lengthy sidewalk alongside a valiantly green golf course. “Where’s Roberta?” he ponderously asks.

“She had off today...” the nurse’s nails are a vibrant cherry red; there’s a distinct scar on her hand between her thumb and pointer finger.

“I’ve never seen you,” the old man utters.

“I’m new...”

He turns his head to look up to her. “You’re beautiful, that’s why you are...” he suavely says while she pushes him with a flattered grin.

She looks down to him with her large sunglasses, “Thank you.” She removes them and hinges them upon her white scrub top revealing that it’s Clove; her newly died hair and cadence strongly could’ve have fooled anyone who had previously known her. She pushes him down a willow tree covered path passed a sign reading *Alligators: Use Extreme Caution*

The old man nervously looks around the area to the large alligators and crocodiles spread throughout the murky swamp waters, “Where are you taking me?”

“A short cut...” Clove says while staring straight ahead.

“But we have nowhere to go...”

She approaches a slight incline leading down to the muddy waters, then turning him around as he

squints up towards her; the sun shimmers through the trees and creates an aura around Clove's red hair while it subtly peeks midst her silhouette and hits his frail eyes. The hungry reptiles are too close for comfort and gently breach the surface revealing their fierce eyes. Clove looks the old man in the eyes. "I know you don't know me – but you created a massive chain of events in my life when you decided to do what you did..." she calmly says.

"What are you talking about?" he defiantly replies.

"I checked your file," Clove stares down to him with a halo-like hue from the sun, "your mind is perfectly fine – so don't play dumb..."

"Take me back," he anxiously says while attempting to wheel off – Clove stops him and bends down to his level.

"You locked your son away. He's the reason why the massacre happened; he's the reason why my son is dead," she righteously attests, "but you know that because you partially caused it..."

"My daughter let him loose!" he justifies. "It's her fault!"

"You locked him away and made him a monster. Do you really think she knew what he would do? She was just a teenager, a little girl..." Clove bitterly replies.

"We treated him well – the both of them!"

“Here’s what you can do,” Clove rises from crouching, “you can either turn yourself into the police or let nature take its course...”

“I won’t turn myself in for anything – I’m guilty of nothing!” spit flies from his mouth and is reminiscent to a hungry gator jumping from the water, startling him.

Clove subtly glowers down to him. “Okay...” she gently says, then turning around and walking away. Out from the sun comes his daughter – looks like she made it through her close encounter with death. It seems as if their time in the ambulance created a mutual partnership of suffering, despite their comas a synergistic bond occurred greater than the conscious force of the human psyche, beyond it, resonating with nature and more importantly synonymous with the hungry reptilian ego.

He looks to up to his daughter in awe as she blocks out the sun thus unclouding his vision. “Sadie?” Pure surprise fills him.

“You’d think I’d have more to say after all of these years but – not so much...” she nonchalantly peers down to her father. “Goodbye, dad...” she grabs the arms of the wheelchair and begins to push him backwards towards the hungry reptiles.

“No! Sadie!” he attempts to stop her as he turns his head to see where she’s pushing him to. She grins and takes delight in his frantic demeanor – SPLASH! He crashes into the water and flips backwards. “No-o-o-o!” he screams while spinning

over. The alligators and crocodiles leap and grasp onto his head and then his body – more swarm and grab his legs; his yells are muddled by the splashing of the water and are quickly halted once his head becomes severed – these sounds are blood-curdling to say the least. Sadie numbingly watches on from the sidelines and is now the one and only Hawthorne left alive and standing (that we know of); a tear penetrates her callused demeanor and runs down her face while relief becomes her primary emotion.

This relief doesn't come from vengeance or murder – this relief is built upon the fact that she is free and her oppressor could never imprison her again. There was no *fear* of her father while imprisoned just resentment – but once freed bitterness and the fear of isolation fueled her to create herself over again, to become who she's destined to be; in order to do this she had to destroy her maker – she had to abolish the puppet master.

A cheerful lizard quickly walks by on the hot sidewalk. Clove stands near a sheltering palm tree and awaits an approaching yellow taxi – it pulls over and she enters with no baggage whatsoever.

“Hello miss – where to?” the Jamaican cab driver asks with his vibrantly colored dreads.

“Just drive...” Clove says with slight relief.

He nods with a large smile and drives off.  
“Have you been to Florida?”

Clove gazes out the window to the blue ocean,  
“My husband and I took our honeymoon here...”

“That’s nice,” he happily replies. “Why is he not here with you then? You are meeting him?”

She casually replies, “He died on one of the nights of honeymoon – the third night actually – car accident...”

Silence fills the small cab. Clove’s small scars spread throughout her body now make sense – tragedy after tragedy. Not only did she lose the father of her child before their son was even born but she then later lost Michael – the desolation can be better understood, as well as her actions; they can be agreed with but vengeance is never truly justified – the ultimate “punishment” is in the evocation of compassion, it is within the Self in which the ultimate and most painful truth is felt – it is in this that rebirths humanity.

“I’m very sorry,” the driver sincerely replies. Clove stares off mesmerized by the view of the crystal waters – they’re calm and clear akin to her mind judging by her newly obtained demeanor. The cab driver looks to her in the rearview mirror and awkwardly attempts to break the silence, “So – are you here for business or pleasure?”

Clove continues gazing out the window in a mesmeric daze. “Both,” she utters while looking to a family playing upon the beach. A mother, father and

young son, chase one and other along the gentle wake of the water while splashing each other. A tear falls from her left eye as they pass by the family. She slowly turns away from the window and looks forward to the driver. “How long have you been driving for...?” Clove interestedly says. And for the first time her eyes behold an utter complete presence.

It is the twilight hour and the blue hue sets the contrast from the deeply dark river bed as its vigorous currents thrash on by. A black boot splashes into the water at the river’s edge. Crime tape stretches from tree to tree – police officers stand around. A police vehicle with the town of *Righteous* written in cursive on the side of it sits parked on the rocky road; a black undercover car pulls up. Officer Cello exits from this car wearing a grey suit, no tie, and a black undershirt that is loosely buttoned. He walks under the yellow tape and is greeted by a heavysset cop with is tag reading *Officer Burg*. “Detective...” he looks to Cello (who has obviously now been promoted). The two walk to the riverbed and a black bag sits at the edge. Cello still has cuts and scrapes upon his face from the battle but they’re healing nicely, he even shaved off his mustache and bears just a little bit of stubble. “The body’s been hollowed out, it’s free of organs, there’s barely any blood. It was weighed down but this recent flood we had dragged it up and out to here – it’s fresh...” Burg knowingly says.

Inside the black bag is the body of a child, it's a young girl, around 11 or so; she lies with massive stitches going from her naval up to her collarbones – who or whatever did this stitched her back up very well. Her skin is almost a deep blue from both the frigid water and her lack of innards. Detective Cello looks down to the body with saddened disgust. “So, why report this to my station?” he asks befuddled.

“It's on the boarder of our towns – we want nothing to do with this case. The most criminal thing we've had to deal with is an unpaid parking ticket. We'd like to keep it that way...” Burg calmly declares.

“For someone who's not accustomed to crime you sure handle murder pretty well...” Cello inquisitively retorts.

“I did 5 tours in Iraq. I've seen more dead children than you can imagine – and many of which were due to the neglect of our own country,” Burg says with pride, “but I'd die for it regardless...”

Cello stares down to the body. “Why die for a country that promotes death?” he utters.

“What?” Burg scrunches his forehead confused while Cello kneels down to the body. “We fight for God and one Nation under God – sometimes God fucks up...”

“God doesn't fuck up,” he rises, “but man does – and if you haven't noticed,” Cello looks to Burg's shirt-pocket and takes quickly takes his pen, “man created the *one* nation under the *one* god...” Cello

squats back down and moves the wet and frigid hair of the young girl.

“Detective,” he laughingly replies, “with all due respect I didn’t call you here for a philosophical lecture on nationalism or monotheism...”

Cello rises once again and insouciantly utters, “Nationalism is your problem...” An observation quickly intervenes, “There’s puncture marks in her neck...”

Burg looks to the body, “Huh... I didn’t see those...” Cello places the pen back into Burg’s front pocket and he looks to it with disgust. “Good luck...” he begins to walk off. “You can always call the state police...” Burg voices while waddling away – he sees a coroner putting on gloves and takes them from him, removing his corpse-tainted pen from his pocket and tossing it onto the ground. Cello stands alone with the poor little girl’s body – he looks up to the amber, cotton-candy colored skies hanging over the riverbed like a synergistically beautiful yet gloomy painting – all forces of the universe naturally working together; and the only thing working against the it is humanity – this can be blatantly seen in the stitching and hollow eyes of the young girl lying on the riverbed; black like an abyss – drained of all spirit and life.

The End: ∞



When the pulse stops beating  
And the worms start eating;  
This is when new life has just begun –  
A newborn child,  
Please stay a while,  
As precious memories crave  
To become one.

The Trench Coat Man  
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