

Prologue

New Jersey, 1980

“Get in.”

She got in the car. She was nervous, but she didn't think he would hurt her. They drove through the deserted town, pulled onto a dark road, and sped off at forty mph.

She asked, “Where we going?”

“What do you care, you little nigger whore?”

She turned her head away from him so that he wouldn't recognize her fear. Through the window, nothing but a dim moon illuminated the trees rushing by.

The man asked, “So, how's your new boyfriend?”

“Who? What boyfriend?”

“Don't give me that crap. You know who.”

He reached over and grabbed her knee. The speedometer climbed to sixty as he squeezed her leg and watched the road. She gently tried to push his hand off her leg, but he held it firmly and squeezed harder. He asked, “You been whoring around in the family?”

The girl understood now. He was talking about his father. She didn't know how he knew about that. For six months, she had tried not to think about what happened, but the awful events of that night now seared her memory like a branding iron.

“I didn't do it. I didn't want to do it. It was him. He made me.”

Molly struggled against his hand, now drifting up toward her private parts. She held her legs closed and pushed on his hand to prevent it from getting any farther up. The speedometer soared to seventy.

“What do you want from me?”

“I want you to stop screwing everybody in the family, and you will, God damn you.”

Molly was terrified now. "Slow down. I'll do whatever you want. Slow down, please."

"Not yet." He accepted Molly's restraint of his hand and withdrew it, but slapped her hard on her stomach. "Getting a little heavy in the gut, there, ain't you, Molly?"

She winced at the shock and folded her arms across her abdomen, which protruded beyond her normally sleek figure. Molly was pregnant.

The man shouted, "I never touched you, and then I find out you're making mongrel babies with my old man."

"He forced me. I swear. I didn't want to."

The man moved his hand off of her body, never taking his eyes off the road. He reached across her and opened the passenger door. It was hard to do against the wind, but he was strong and young. Still, the wind against the door made it difficult to push against. With his left hand on the steering wheel and his right arm outstretched toward the open door, restraining Molly in her seat, he gave up, steadied the car with both hands on the wheel, and stomped on the brake. The door flew open, almost coming off its hinges, and then slammed shut. Molly plunged into the dashboard. A reach to his right, a click of the handle, and the man turned his body toward her. He kicked her into the door with his right foot. The door flew open again at sixty mph.

Molly clutched at the door handle as it swung farther out. He delivered another kick, and another at fifty. The car was at forty now, not much resistance on the door, and easier to keep open. Molly was half in, half out of the car.

The man pushed on her legs and twisted the steering wheel with his left hand to keep from crashing. Molly fell out, but she clutched the slippery door handle with her left hand. Her right hand frantically grasped the top of the doorframe as her legs dangled onto the road, scraping the asphalt painfully. She reached for the top of the door with both hands, desperately trying to get back into the car.

A last look at the road, and a last kick with his foot put Molly onto the road at thirty mph. Her leg and hip slipped under the wheels of the car, which veered to the left from the bump. Molly's head and face were shattered with uncountable mortal wounds and her body and baby were flattened under the tires.

The man turned the wheel against colliding with the trees to the left and right, the car eventually ending up facing in Molly's direction after two spins. The engine had stopped from the violent turn, but he quickly restarted it and crept the car back to where Molly should be. He got out and looked around for the body. She wasn't hard to find. He examined Molly's mangled remains, dragged her deeper into the woods, and laid some branches and leaves over her casually, careful to make sure he could find her the next day, but nobody else could.

"Shouldn't mix races, Molly. It ain't right. Mongrel coloreds. Not any more." The man walked back to his car and drove off.