

Chapter Ten

Sam spent the morning cleaning the shop and getting ready for both his reopening and the second of the month sale. He was a supporter of Every Second Matters movement that encourages people to open-carry on the second of every month to remind people that gun ownership is a right and not a privilege provided by the government. Sam had a stainless-steel Wilson Combat 1911 on his hip. The gun had Every 2nd Matters engraved along the slide with burlled maple grips. Like everything else in the store, the gun was for sale. As he polished the glass counter, there was a knock at the door, *“sorry folks but we don't open for another hour.”* The person knocked again. Sam wanted to say fuck off, but a sale is a sale. He opened the door to find his nephew Owen and a beautiful young girl. Owen asked, *“we saw you were reopening and wondered if you could use some help?”* Sam hugged Owen then he said, *“I can use family more than help.”* After a second of thinking about what he said, Sam said, *“wait that doesn't sound right.”*

Sam gave them two mugs of coffee and went on saying, *“I made it to Vegas and was there for about a day when I won a motorcycle. I decided to take that as a sign and take a long trip along the California coast.”* Owen replied, *“the trip did you some good.... I mean you look like a different man.”* Sam smiled saying, *“I don't know if it was the sun or the ride, but I feel like a different man and one that's ready for something new.”* Sam slid his keys over to Owen who asked, *“do you want me to open?”* Sam looked at the keys and said, *“well yes, but I also want you to have the keys.”* Owen held up the Ford key up asking, *“do you want your truck key?”* Sam replied, *“I don't want an employee I want you to be my partner.”* Sam took the keys and showed Owen a key with a red cap on it. He said, *“the apartment above is empty, and if you two want it then it's yours.”* Sam looked at the keys again and said, *“oh.... I need that third key.”* Ana put her hand on Owen's shoulder and whispered into his ear, *“say thank you, uncle.”* Sam tried not to laugh as Owen apologized saying, *“yes..... I want to do that..... that whole partnership thing.... yes.”*

Owen handed Ana an apron with a name tag that had Alfred printed on it. Ana asked, “*so do I look like an Alfred to you?*” Owen said, “*it’s the only one we have…… it was my fathers.*” Owen walked over to the counter and came back with some tape and a sharpie. He took the tag off and helped her put on the apron. He then put a piece of tape over her heart and wrote on the tape, Ana. She smiled as she slid her hand down the front of his shirt to his pants. From the counter, Sam said, “*the store isn’t going to open its self.*” The two seemed to wake up as Ana walked over to the door with the keys and Owen turned to Sam and said, “*yeah but wouldn’t that be cool.*” Owen had a 357-magnum Chiappa White Rhino 30DS with the special finish and black and white grips while Ana had a pink Glock 19. Owen was worried about her wearing the gun, but Ana was adamant that she wanted to wear one. she said, “*my mom was born in Texas, and she made sure to have me in the states so I could have that citizenship if I wanted it, so don’t worry.*”

The first four or five customers came and went without any problem, then three men came in wearing desert camo with AR-15s on their backs and a strange logo on their shoulders. The logo was the Minuteman, the original logo for the New England Patriots a man in a red white and blue uniform bent over a football. Owen wondered if the team knew that these guys were using their logo. One of the men walked over to the counter to Ana and asked, “*do you have any 223 Remington?*” Ana pointed to a shelf in an aisle with a sign saying, “*Everything AR.*” One of the other men turned to her and said, “*hey bitch didn’t you hear him or should he ask in Mexican.*” The man walked over showing his over six-foot-tall stature over the shorter Ana. The other man at the counter said, “*back off Jed, she was helping me.*” Jed replied, “*if she wanted to help, she should get her wetback taco munching ass back to Mexico.*” Owen put his hand on the grip of his revolver as he slowly made his way around and behind the men. The third man walked out of the store. Without any hint of an accent Ana said, “*I’m from Flagstaff asshole.*” Owen said, “*I think you can find somewhere else to buy your ammo, so get the fuck out of our store.*”

An hour later and Wendy, Scott, Darrel, and Cathy showed up with a truck loaded with furniture. They met and hugged. Wendy said, “*Sam told us about his plan and the apartment. He*

also said there was no furniture so be brought you something to use until you are able to buy new.” Owen hugged Wendy while whispering into her ear, *“we didn’t do anything on any of that did we?”* Wendy whispered back, *“maybe.”* Scott, Darrel, and Owen carried the furniture up while the others talked about what was on sale. Most of the furniture was mid-century modern with clean lines and plenty of wood. Along with all the furniture was a new foam mattress in a box. When placed on the bed the mattress springs back into place making what Cathy called, *“a pillow of wonderful dreams.”* Cathy held the nickel-plated P7M13 in her hand. She had asked Sam to find one for her. She liked the look of the gun from Die Hard. He had paid nearly four-thousand dollars for the gun then another three hundred to have it refurbished. Wendy shook her head at what she called her overpriced toy as she checked the action of the Desert Tech SRS A1 chambered in 308 Winchester. The barrel was suppressor ready, but she would have to wait until she got permission to use one on the rifle.

Part Two

The shop was closed with a good day in sales. Ana went out back to put some trash in a dumpster when something struck her from behind. The lights went dim as pain exploded in her head. She could see flashes of light and what could have been people. She could feel someone taping her hands behind her and carrying her over what had to be a man’s shoulder. As the world came back into focus, she could see desert camo. The third man from that morning said, *“hold on she’s starting to wake.”* He struck her across the face putting her lights out. At first, all she could do was take in the scent of body odor, chewing tobacco, beer and some sort of rot. There was also an unbelievable pain. Her hands were taped to some sort of rail. Her face throbbed, and she felt cold as she was raped by the man called Jeb. He whispered into her ear, *“who’s the asshole now spick.”* His breath was worse than the foulest nastiest vomit covered bathrooms from when she was a maid in her father’s hotel. Jeb spasmed then came inside her. One of the others said, *“we’ll need to bury her deep so no one will find her and all that DNA.”* Ana’s vision slowly returned, and she saw she was naked and covered in something whitish and sticky. Off in the distance, she could hear someone digging in the sand and packed earth. The third man said, *“my turn then we plant her.”* Jeb asked her, *“I wonder what will grow when we plant you?”*

When the third man was finished, Jeb cut the tape and struck Ana across the face again. She felt something break. He picked her up and put her in a hole about three feet deep. The second man said, *“no asshole I said deep.”* Jeb turned with an angry look on his face and said, *“then you dig the whole motherfucker.”* Jeb unhooked his fly and pissed into the makeshift grave onto Ana. He pulled out her pink Glock and fired the gun dry into the hole. At first, she didn't feel a thing but almost all at once she felt like she had been punched all over. The third man started to dump dirt into the hole. Ana tried to cover her mouth to keep the sand and soil out. The men took turns with the shovel until the hole was a human-shaped mound. Jed turned to the second man and said, *“we should back the truck over her to level the dirt.”* The second man replied, *“no we need to get the fuck out of here.”* The third man packed the shovel saying, *“we planted a lot of these illegal wetbacks in the last couple of months. Why does this one bother you?”* Jed replied, *“I didn't like the way she spoke to me. Bitch needed to learn her place.”*

When Ana didn't come back in from the trash, Owen went out and saw she was gone. He found some blood and the empty cardboard roll from a roll of duct tape. Within the hour everyone was out looking for her as well as three men in desert camo in a pickup truck. They soon found out that looking for the men was like looking for a needle in a haystack or an individual redneck at a NASCAR event. The only thing they had to go on was the fact that the guys they were looking for had made their own logos and were unaffiliated with the large Minuteman group. One man in something akin to a Russian desert uniform said, *“yeah those guys don't get why we are here. They think it's about keeping out darkies but what we want is safety for our children.”* Later Cathy sarcastically whispered to Wendy, *“no that guy wasn't racist at all. Nope, that was one upstanding American hero.”* Wendy didn't answer, she turned up the police scanner and drove on. About 9am a call went across the scanner for an ambulance along the highway. Someone found a woman near death.

Ana didn't know how long it had been since the three left. It could have been four hours or four days. She started to lose all the feeling of pain. She also knew that this was a bad sign. When Jeb tossed her clothing at her, he hit her in the chest with her jeans not knowing she had a small folding knife in her pocket. Using the knife and her hands she dug her way out of her

shallow grave. As she dug, she could feel the pain returning. Her jeans had been cut away along with her shirt. She did her best to cover herself with the ripped and cut clothing. The sun was coming up, and Ana knew she had to find help, so she tried to stand when the world spun and nearly faded. The pain went from unbearable to the worse pain she had ever felt. Looking herself over she found a hole in her lower left leg and possibly a broken leg. She had another hole in her pelvis and another in her upper left thigh. She tried to laugh about how he emptied her gun at her only hitting her three times. She rolled over and saw the road. As she did a flash about what happened that night and what they did to her. The view of the road changed as she went back down to the ground. Lying on her side, she saw something coming and thought they were coming back. On the top of the oncoming vehicle were red and blue flashing lights.

Part Three

Three days later after another surgery to rebuild her lower left leg, Ana sat in her hospital room half high on pain medication wondering if she could make her way through all that was to come. In the chair next to her bed was Owen who had not left her side since she was found in the desert. Between moments of clarity, Ana described her assailants and using footage from the store the police were able to set out an arrest warrant for the men. The sheriff told his men in person away from the feds and any reporters that, *"I don't want to see these guys walk into a courtroom as much as carried into the morgue."* Sheriff Harrold James wasn't just the county sheriff he was Sam's brother and Owen's uncle. All the deputy sheriffs knew Owen and wanted to bring more than justice for Ana. While the sheriff's department ran their search, Wendy and the others did their own.

Jacob "Jeb" Wilkens sat in the bed of his truck watching out into the desert waiting for a new thing to play with. His brother Andrew was behind the wheel sleep and his cousin Ricky Davie was near a tree pissing. Together they had killed and buried nearly twenty people out in the open land between the border and civilization. Jeb pulled a beer out of a cooler sitting next to him. He checked the cooler and saw they were nearly out of ice and worst of all beer. He tapped on the glass in the back of the cab and waited for Andrew to answer. When he didn't, Jeb opened

the sliding window, and with a red plastic cup he scooped up some of the cold ice water from the cooler and dumped it on Andrew who jumped hitting the horn. Ricky leaned into the truck and said, *“keep it down asshole, or you’ll tell every wetback in Mexico we are here.”* Andrew glowered at Jeb who just smiled saying, *“we need to make an ice and beer run.”* Andrew while trying to see into the cooler from the cab asked, *“any left?”* Ricky opened the cooler and pulled a beer. He closed the cooler saying, *“nope.”* He opened the beer and downed it in one go. Andrew flipped off Ricky. Jed watched the desert while drinking his beer. He slowly put the empty can down and said, *“I think we need to do another run.”* Ricky asked, *“knocking on doors?”*

Cathy left the hospital determined not to cry. She wanted to drive to Mexico and kill, but she wasn't going to break down. Before she could start the car, she was in tears. She had spent the morning trying to help Ana connect with her father back in Mexico only to have him tell her he didn't care and as far as he was concerned, she was dead to him. This call came just after she was told they would have to amputate her left leg below the knee. The damage done to Ana's face along with the surgeries kept her from crying, but it couldn't keep her from feeling the loss of her family. Cathy checked her phone and found ten messages from Wendy detailing the search for what she was calling, *“grave fillers.”* She thought about joining Wendy, but another part of her just wanted to crawl into bed and let the world spin around without her for a while.

Nancy Cassio sat in her kitchen reading her daughter Jessica's paper on Brexit wondering if they should reduce the amount of computer time, they give her or just maybe increase it. Five years ago, Jessica's fourth-grade teacher suggested she needed to be medicated for attention deficit disorder or ADHD and despite the lack of evidence she was told by the school she could either take the drug or take her out of school. Nancy and her husband Juan decided to homeschool not just Jessica but their younger son Logan who was in the first grade and their youngest Dana who wasn't in preschool yet. Five years later and Jessica was running her own blog and writing at a college level making it difficult for Nancy to understand her daughter's work. Juan bought Jessica a special camera, so she could turn her blog into a video blog and post it on YouTube, but Nancy didn't like the idea that anyone could follow her. Juan had said, *“you know she will just find a way to do this with us or without us, and when it's with us we can*

control the content.” She knew that this was just his way to give in to whatever she wanted and that someday it would bite them in the ass.

Juan had the day off and wanted to take the kids to the zoo, but Jessica wanted to work on her first YouTube video, so Nancy stayed home. Nancy used this time to grade papers and just maybe send a few of Jessica’s articles to a friend she had in the admissions department for the University of New Mexico. If she were accepted, then they would move the family but that was the future, and she liked to say she lived in the now. Nancy could hear Jessica talking to her camera. She could also hear something just outside. The near silence was broken with a thundering knock. As she went for the door, she thought she saw something move around the house. She opened the door and saw a large dark shape just before a sharp pain and black. She woke to see two white men in her house with the sound of Jessica screaming. She felt something strange as a shape bounced on her. She saw a strange man on her saying something, but she couldn’t make it out. The whole world seemed just out of tune. Soon it became clear that a third man was raping her in front of her daughter. The man holding Jessica had his arms around her with his right hand on her chest and his left down her jeans.

Andrew pulled onto a different part of the desert away from most of the people. They had just raided a house and took two women to have fun with along with all the booze they could find. Jeb and Ricky were happy to find what they called their Dos Equis door knock, but Andrew didn’t like what he found. The newspaper had their description from the last girl they thought they had killed. He knew that she was covered in DNA. They scouted this place out finding an abandoned mobile home that would work nicely as a place to party with the women. Jeb had forced a couple of Valiums into the younger woman’s mouth and held her until she stopped fighting while Ricky worked on what had to be the mother. After finishing another beer, Ricky was using the bottle to sodomize Nancy. For her part, Nancy had stopped screaming. Her face felt like it was on fire and deathly cold after repeated beatings. Jeb sat with Jessica in his lap fondling her whispering into her ear, “*when I’m done you will thank me for making you a woman.*”

Nancy woke to find she was outside. It was night, and she could see a million stars out. off in the distance she could hear a strange thump sound. She turned her head and saw two of the white men digging a hole. The men worked quietly as they dug deep. When they were finished the one called Jeb got out and picked her up. He tossed her in the hole with her arms taped behind her. The force of the fall broke her left forearm. The pain radiated up her arm. Then the smell of something both strange and sort of familiar. She realized it was gasoline. The man named Andrew said, *"no DNA."* He tossed a lit match into the hole, and it did nothing. He tossed another with the same result. The man named Jeb came into view with a bottle that had a rag shoved into the opening. He said, *"a party like this should start off with a cocktail."* He lit the rag and tossed the bottle into the hole. Nancy felt the flames immediately as she caught fire. She would eventually suffocate from the flames consuming all the oxygen before she burned to death. In those last seconds, she saw the beginning of time and everything that came after.

Part Four

Jessica could smell the smoke as her mother's body smoldered as Andrew and Ricky filled the hole with dirt. She was in Jeb's lap as he stroked her hair and naked chest. He had done almost everything short of penetration, but Jessica knew that was coming. Her mother died not knowing she was screaming as the flames consumed her, but the sound rang in Jessica's ears. Ricky walked in staring at Jessica asked, *"well are you going to go or what..... I want to get my taste."* Jeb slowly lifted his head trying to look menacing. He said, *"ain't no way you're getting any of this. This little peach is all mine."* Ricky looked at Jessica's naked chest then back to the stern determined angry Jeb and asked, *"what the fuck? What the fuck? Since when do we not share in the strange?"* Jeb licked Jessica's neck causing her to shiver. He said, *"this here is my crew, and you do who and what I say. If you don't like it, then we can talk outside."* Jeb leaned in and whispered to Jessica, *"you are my little underripe peach, and I am going to eat you whole."*

The local news talked about the kidnapping and how the FBI was taking over the search for what they were calling unknown subjects, and the press was calling the Alt-Right Guard.

What all this really meant was with the FBI involved the call for blood would end as well as any search for the three by Wendy and the others. In a call from Sam, he said, *"I don't know just how much my brother knows about your operation, but he called me and said how the feds were asking around about all the deaths in the desert and about you."* Wendy stared at the phone and said, *"I never had any kind of conversation with him, but he did sell and give me a few guns that were a little less than legal."* Wendy spun around and stared at the AK47 on her office wall. Sam replied, *"get rid of them, but do it without being seen."* He hung up before Wendy could say a word. Before putting the ancient desk phone's receiver down, she said, *"I hope they do come."*

Cathy rolled over in bed to check the time. She had to be up and at the construction site by 9am to meet with the contractor and have him start the demolition. It was midnight and Wendy wasn't in bed. Cathy slipped out of bed and went into the common room then Wendy's office where she found her with a glass of something that gave off a strong odor of alcohol. Wendy looked at Cathy and said in a drunken slur, *"I let three motherfucking redneck ass fucks hurt our family, and now I can't do anything about it."* Cathy took the unlabeled bottle away from the desk and Wendy. She said, *"this wasn't your fault. This wasn't Sam's fault or Owen or Ana's fault. This is the fault of those motherfucking redneck ass fucks and no one else.....well maybe Trump."* Wendy opened a drawer and pulled out a bottle of Skyy Blue vodka pouring some into a glass. Cathy put her hand over the glass while taking the bottle off the desk. She took the glass and drank the vodka choking after she down the booze saying, *"that tastes like soap."*

Cathy led Wendy out of the office and into their bedroom and through to their bathroom. She undressed Wendy while starting a hot shower. When she was done, Cathy undressed and joined her. Cathy took a dab of soap and made a lather rubbing it down Wendy's back as the hot water sprayed down Wendy's chest. Wendy stepped forward letting the water hit her face. She shivered then bolted to the toilet losing the contents of her stomach across the closed lid. Cathy said, *"maybe we should keep the seat up."* Wendy lifted the lid and continued to vomit. When she was done, she crawled back into the shower and stayed on the floor letting the water hit her legs. Cathy sat down next to Wendy putting her arm around her. She said, *"so I guess I'm cleaning that up."* Wendy started to cry, *"what are we doing?"* Cathy replied, *"well I was trying*

to get you sober and maybe in the mood. I think you were trying to see just how nasty drinking can be.” Wendy put her head on Cathy’s shoulder and said, “I’ll try and clean that up. It’s my mess.” Cathy said, “you still don’t get it. This is all our mess..... except for that out there all over the toilet..... That is your mess, but I will clean it up, just go to bed and sleep this off.” Wendy went to kiss Cathy, but she stopped her saying, “hell no, I can smell your breath, and it isn’t anywhere near fresh.”

With the American FBI searching the desert, Luis and Jorge decided to find a place to lay low until they could strike again. In their search, they saw what looked like an old maybe abandoned mobile home trailer. All around the trailer was a strange smell of something like pork. A truck was inside a closed garage. In what had to be the living room they saw one man cleaning an AR-15 with two other rifles next to him as well as an absurdly large revolver on his hip. A second man was in the kitchen counting beer bottles. There was a room in the back, but the windows were covered. They could hear someone crying and another sound like a clapping motion. A man’s voice said, *“stop crying, this is for your own good.”* The sound picked up as the man started to say, *“oh fuck..... you are so tight..... my little peach..... you are going to be mine forever.”* The thumping stopped, and the man said, *“now you see that wasn’t nearly as bad. I’m usually not into ass-play, but your butt is worth the time.”* They heard the man leaving the room and a gentle crying broken by a plea, *“mommy.”*

Part Five

Jessica heard something to her left near a hole that was closed with duct tape and cardboard. In that hole was one of the most handsome Hispanic men she had ever seen. He said something in Spanish, but she didn’t know the language. Using her knees and elbows, Jessica fought her way to the hole. The man said something else in Spanish putting his hand through the hole and cupping her cheek. He saw she didn’t understand so he said in English, *“if things were different then we would help, but we are here to kill Americans.”* He pulled his hand back and placed a rapid-release folding knife and a Ruger 22/45 semiautomatic handgun into the hole and said, *“show them who you are.”* Jessica’s father had this same gun, and he showed her how to

shoot. She checked the gun finding ten rounds of copper plated hollow point 22s. She got to her feet despite the pain in her head and the pain from what he was doing to her. Her shirt was gone, and her pants and underwear were stained with blood. She put the gun at her side and the knife in her left hand and waited for them to come to her.

Ricky watched Jeb walk out of the room then the trailer. They had always shared in the women and girls they took or what they call the strange. Now, this girl was getting in the way. Jeb went to the truck giving Ricky his chance to take what he saw as his right. He said, *"it's better to say sorry than ask for permission."* He unhooked his belt and went to the door. He found the girl standing near a table. Her shirt was gone. Ricky stared at her young breasts with the bruises and bite marks from Jeb as well as something in her hand. Jessica brought up her hand and fired twice. The first round struck Ricky in the cheek then the second went through his eye. He smiled then fell to the floor twitching. Jeb heard the rounds but just stopped and waited to hear if there were any other sounds. Andrew ran into the room and two rounds right to his forehead. He fell back onto the door jamb as his bowels let go giving off a foul smell. He fell away as Jeb came back into the trailer. Jessica dropped the 22 and picked up Andrew's 9mm High Point. Jeb went for his gun on the table when Jessica said, *"stop."*

Wendy sat in her office drinking a cup of detox tea while reading the news feeds trying to find out what happened last night. She could remember opening the bottle of agave moonshine then something about a shower, but the rest was a blur. The news talked about the search as well as a new presence on the border. Her phone rang with a picture from the front was of a police car and a black SUV. Wendy turned to the AK47 on her wall and smiled. A knock at the door was the sheriff and two men in dark suits. Wendy opened the door. She was wearing an open robe with a pair of short pajama bottoms and no top with the robe just covering her breasts. The sheriff smiled as the FBI agents backed away a little. *"Wendy, these agents want to see that AK I sold you,"* the sheriff said while trying to fight the urge to laugh. One of the agents said, *"yes but if you need to get dressed, we can wait."* Wendy put her hand on her hip showing a little more of her left breast and said, *"gentlemen I don't have all day so lets just cut to the chase and show you the gun."*

On the walk to her office, the sheriff asked, “*so when was the last time you fired the gun?*” Wendy fought back a smile and said, “*I never fired the gun.*” One of the agents said, “*we need to take it for testing.*” The sheriff shook his head and said, “*they don't have a warrant but.*” Wendy put up her hand interrupting him and said, “*not an issue. I just think any ballistic testing will be difficult.*” On her wall was a replica of the join or die flag made from wood with the eight parts of the snake represented by the AK47 chopped into eight pieces of the gun with the stock as the tail and the first three inches of barrel as the head. Wendy said, “*I chopped up every gun I came across..... well almost. I did keep this little 38 as well as a few I bought.*” One other agent stepped out of the office and looked around finding more artwork made from gun parts. The first agent said, “*we won't take any more of your chest.*” The other agent said, “*time.... He meant time.*” The sheriff turned to Wendy, smiled and said, “*it's always a delight.*” At the door a call went out on the sheriff's radio, “*sheriff they found her.*”

Part Six

“*Just stop,*” Jessica said while she held the gun on Jeb and tried to back into the bedroom. Jeb saw the gun then his brother's body. He smiled and said, “*my brother didn't trust the gun, so he never kept a round chambered.*” Jeb turned and went for his Colt Python revolver on the table. He heard Jessica rack the slide then fire the gun. Blood sprayed across the table and his prize pistol. His left arm went numb. The gun had bucked in Jessica's hand, and she almost dropped it. Jeb picked up the revolver as Jessica ran the High Point until it was empty. She dropped the gun and picked up the 22/45. Jeb turned around dropping his gun. She wasn't sure if she hit him six or seven times, but he was still standing. He said, “*no fucking High Point is going to fucking kill me, peach.*” He saw the look in her eyes change and knew he said the wrong thing. Jessica emptied the Ruger into his face. Jeb fell to the floor. Jessica dropped her gun and locked the knife open stabbing him until he was a ruin of blood and flesh.

Jessica searched the trailer until she found some clothing that wasn't covered in body odor and what smelled like piss and shit. She got dressed trying to take care with all her sore

spots. She took Jeb's keys, but she couldn't get the truck started. Jeb had a kill switch that acted as a security device. Barefoot, she stepped out of the truck and went down the road. As she walked, the sun started to rise. Soon it would be too hot to be out in her condition. A horn honked, and a voice came out of a dark purple Dodge Caravan asking, "*are you alright?*" Jessica turned to see a woman in her mid to late thirties with two small children in the back and a teenager in the front. The woman saw Jessica was barefoot. The teenager in the front said, "*mom that's the girl the police are looking for.*" Her first thought was the police found the dead men, and she was going to jail then she thought about her mother and father. She wondered if her father would be ashamed of her. The woman helped her into the back of the van. She put down a blanket to as she said, "*keep the blood off my seats.*" The two smaller children, as well as the teenager, stared at Jessica, the entire trip to the sheriff's office.

Wendy went into the bedroom and carefully took the robe off peeling the double-stick tape she used to hold the robe open while keeping it from showing too much. She hoped her near nakedness would throw the feds off their intimidation game. She heard Cathy in the bathroom showering, and for a second, she thought about joining her than the thought of last night came and the need to vomit came back. She suppressed the vomit and went back to getting dressed. The news was talking about the three dead men in the trailer and the found girl. By noon the news was talking about charging the girl with murder. The national media was talking about gun control and the deaths of three men trying to protect the border. Around six in the evening, the FBI released a report linking the three men to multiple deaths across the border. By seven the national media was vilifying the Minutemen, ICE, the border patrol and the feds. Wendy knew that what this meant was the feds were leaving.

Ana sat in her room waiting for the doctor to come back and tell her how the latest surgery went. She sent Owen home to shower and sleep, but now she wished he was there. Her door opened, and a teenage girl walked in. Her face was battered and bruised with the look of something that put up a fight and just maybe lost. Jessica said, "*I know you don't know me. My name is Jessica Cassio, and I think we have something in common and just maybe I could help you.*" Ana looked at the place where her left foot was and back to Jessica without saying a word.

Jessica said, *“I was taken by the same men, and they wanted to bury me in the desert. They killed my mother.”* Ana stared at Jessica who went on saying, *“I got a hold of a gun and I..... I..... I killed all three of them.”* Ana just stared as Jessica came closer to the bed. Jessica tried to fight back the tears saying, *“the tall one when I ran out of bullets I.”* She mimed a stabbing motion. Ana grabbed Jessica and pulled her close. Soon the two women were hugging and crying. Ana whispered, *“I’m sorry about your mother.”* Jessica whispered back, *“I’m sorry they didn’t suffer more.”*

An hour after Jessica killed Jeb and made her way out to the highway, Andrew woke and opened his eyes. He couldn’t see much, and he couldn’t move his head. Something felt wrong with his head feeling like broken glass and something wet on his crotch. A thick brown foul-smelling liquid was running across the floor and hitting his face. He tried to move, but the shattered pieces of his skull made that movement torcher. He wasn’t sure why he was there and what they were doing. He could see someone else on the floor, and he knew he knew this person, but he couldn’t remember his name. The room started to go dark. He started to feel cold, and his breath became shallow. A small voice in the back of his head said, *“your dying and you need help.”* Andrew tried to stand, but he couldn’t get up. He passed out, and when he woke again, he felt like he was floating in a pool of stagnant water. He rolled over and felt the last pain of his life as a shard of bone cut into his brain. A voice said to him, *“sucks to be you.”*