

His name was Gregory Shaw and he sat across the table from me, staring at my father and twitching in his chair, beads of sweat dribbling down his temples on the already steaming early September morning. His eyes were glazed pools of blue, pleading for a reaction, having just uttered the three words that changed everything.

“She’s dead, Ray,” Gregory Shaw repeated, his eyes locked on Ray, doing all he could to avoid catching mine. He was young for a cop, barely twenty-four, but sharp and ambitious. Until that day I had liked him a lot. Almost everyone did. He was one of the few people in Cheshire I could call a friend, even though he was ten years older.

Ray stood motionless behind the kitchen counter, saying nothing, an unlit cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth. He had hardly moved a muscle since he’d first seen Shaw’s car speed up the long dirt driveway of the farm, lights flashing.

“Did you hear me?” Shaw said. “She’s—”

“I heard you fine, Greg,” Ray said. He rubbed the scratch of beard, hand shaking.

“She must have fallen asleep at the wheel. There was a collision...a fire...” Shaw said, his voice weakening with each syllable. He cleared his throat. “I’m sorry.”

Ray remained silent, staring past Shaw through the window.

Shaw looked at me. He was handsome, with those bright eyes, thick brow and wide Polish nose. “You understand Ivy, don’t you?”

I felt my head move up and down.

Shaw forced a smile. “Good. Now can I have a few moments alone with your father?”

“No,” I said.

“Pardon me?”

“I said no. Whatever you have to say to him, you can say to me.”