



"District 10"

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"District 10"

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DISTRICT 10. UNLIKE ANY ONE OF THEM, SHE WAS SELDOM TRUANT. AT HOME WITH NO ONE OR ANYONE IN CHARGE, SHE FELT LIKE ONE OF THE SETTLEMENT DOGS. FIFTY STRONG, THEY SWUNG BETWEEN SHORT CHAINS AND UNFETTERED ROAMING. BETWEEN FIGHTS AND MEALS THEY SLEPT LASHED TO TREES OR CURLED NEAR A DOOR. LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES, HOUNDS MATED WITH SHEPHERDS, COLLIES WITH LABRADOR. BY 1975 WHEN JUNIOR WAS BORN, THEY WERE AN ODD, ORIGINAL, ASTONISHINGLY HANDSOME BREED INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE, TO FOLKS WHO KNEW, AS A SETTLEMENT DOG—ADEPT AT KEEPING OUTSIDERS OUT, BUT AT THEIR BRILLIANT BEST WHEN HUNTING.

DURING YEARS OF YEARNING FOR HER FATHER, SHE BEGGED RELENTLESSLY TO VISIT HIM.

"WILL YOU HUSH UP?" WAS ALL VIVIAN SAID UNTIL ONE DAY SHE ANSWERED
"ARMY. THAT'S WHAT I HEARD."

"WHEN'S HE COMING BACK?"

"OH HE WEREN'T NOTHING, BABY. NOTHING AT ALL. GO PLAY NOW."

SHE WAS ELEVEN WHEN SHE RAN AWAY AND WONDERED FOR DAYS
WITHOUT ATTENTION BEING PAID. THEN SUDDENLY NOTICED WHEN SHE STOLE A
G.I. JOE DOLL FROM AN "EVERYTHING FOR A DOLLAR" STORE; TAKEN INTO
CUSTODY WHEN SHE WOULDN'T GIVE IT BACK, TRANSFERRED TO A SHELTER WHEN
SHE BIT THE WOMAN WHO YANKED IT FROM HER; REMANDED TO CORRECTIONAL
WHEN SHE REFUSED TO PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION OTHER THAN HER FIRST
NAME. JUNIOR DOE THEY WROTE AND JUNIOR DOE SHE REAMAINED UNTIL THE
STATE LET HER GO AND SHE RECLAIMED HER TRUE NAME WITH AN 'E' ADDED FOR
STYLE.

SOME OF THE EDUCATION AT CORRECTIONAL WAS ACADEMIC; MOST OF IT
WAS NOT. BOTH KINDS HONED THE CUNNING NEEDED TO SECURE A PLACE IN A
BIG, FANCY HOUSE ON POST ROAD WHERE THERE WAS NO UNIFORMED WOMAN
PACING IN THE HALF LIGHT OF A CORRIDOR OR OPENING DOORS TO CHECK;
WHERE THE SLEEP THRUM OF BODIES CLOSE BY SIPHONED THE AIR. THIS WAS THE
RIGHT PLACE AND THERE HE WAS. LETTING HER KNOW IN EVERY WAY IT HAD BEEN

HE WAS CAPABLE OF IT. OF HAVING SCORED SO MANY TIMES HE COULD CHOOSE ANY WOMAN AND IN PAIRS, THEO, IN PAIRS.

"THEY TELL YOU THAT?"

"NO. BUT I BET THEY THINK ABOUT IT."

"YOU RELATED TO THEM??

"NO WAY. I WORK HERE NOW."

"DOING WHAT?"

"THIS AND THAT."

"WHAT KINDA THIS? WHAT KINDA THAT?"

JUNIOR CIRCLED HER GIFT. SHE LOOKED AT THE SHOVEL IN HIS HANDS.

THEN HIS CROTCH; THE ^NHIS FACE. "THEY GOT ROOMS THEY NEVER GO IN. WITH SOFAS AND EVERYTHING."

"YEAH?"