

## Chapter Ten

**Kevin** drifted in and out of consciousness, delirious from a full week of nonstop trials and tribulations. The back of his head flopped hard against the back cab window, the snug seat belt held his exhausted torso upright. A loud clatter from the worn passenger door brought him to a moment of reality. "Where are you taking me?"

"You need rest and some fixing up on those feet. I'm taking you to our cabin just down this forest road a bit."

Kevin was in no shape to argue. His head fell against the work truck's door post. The next flash of reality was an A frame cabin, then being helped up some stairs to a loft. Ken helped him into the bottom bunk and threw a sleeping bag over him.

"There's firewood on the deck if you get cold," were the last words Kevin heard. Followed by footsteps, a door opened and slammed shut, then the sound of a loud diesel motor fading into the distance. A musty cool air filled the bunk room up in the loft. Kevin started coughing and then shaking uncontrollably. He pulled the sleeping bag up over his head and then felt how damp his clothes were. His teeth started to chatter he curled up into a ball and the shaking intensified. *I need to build a fire to warm up.*

In an almost delirious and uncontrollable shiver; Kevin found the firewood on the deck. There were matches on the mantle and dry paper on the hearth. The warmth from the burning paper felt good but the three logs wouldn't burn. Kevin waded up more paper and placed it against the three stacked logs, but they wouldn't take off. When all the paper was gone the cold chill and shivering returned. *I need to find another sleeping bag or something to help me warm up.*

Back in the bunk and now under two sleeping bags, the coughing and uncontrollable shaking was the first stage of hypothermia. *Maybe if I can sleep, I'll warm up,* were Kevin's incorrect thoughts. Just, the opposite of what he learned in mountaineering school and what he knew about early Roman history, when exposure to the cold to kill unwanted children was accepted. Thankfully, Kevin wasn't naked lying on a dung pile or thrown into a dump to die from the elements.

Kevin's mind drifted to more pleasant thoughts of being in a hospital bed and a tall nurse tending to his ravaged, sore feet. Next, the goddess like nurse was pulling off his wet clothes and also stripping off hers; she lifted the blankets and crawled in bed next to him. She pulled herself against his back—they were as close as two spoons lying in a drawer. Her silk smooth skin was transferring warmth into his back from head to toe. Her long arms were rubbing his chest down to his stomach and back.

The scent of baby powder or maybe the smell of baby oil lingered from under the warm blankets... Kevin's mind could no longer hold on this pleasurable surreal moment. Abruptly, it was like a heavy trap door or the lid of a coffin dropping and shutting out even the faintest ray of light.

*Spoon Tucker spoon*, nonsensical words lingered into Kevin's altered state. The darkness now had a smothering weight to it; the sweet baby smell had turned sour. The damp air now felt more like a dry heat. In some loft, in some cabin, in the middle of no place Kevin felt pinned by a big black beast. He sank into a deep sleep.

After many hours of deep rest, Kevin awoke to a strange feeling in his thrashed feet. It was a strange wetness on the bottom and around his toes. His immediate reaction was to pull them up and back under the sleeping bags. A big black dog came around to the side of the bunk and licked Kevin across the face. "I remember you. You're Tucker." Kevin stuck his arm out from under the sleeping bag and rubbed the Labradors' head.

Tucker pulled the sleeping bags off the bunk. Kevin was bewildered to find out that he was completely naked. *I thought that I was a dreaming last night about a nurse spooning with me in this bunk?*

Kevin rolled his legs over the side of the bunk and sat up. Small French Pane windows came to a peak at the top of the front cabin wall. Out through the glass was an old snag silhouetted by the rising sun. The wood planking felt warm on his still swollen feet. Kevin stood and gingerly made it to the railing and looked down into the cabin. There was a stone fireplace with an old rifle hanging above the mantle. Pushed up against the thirty foot bank of glass panes was an old green pine table with a whiskey bottle and some papers on top.

Every step down the stairs pulled on the blistered skin on the back of both of Kevin's heels. Draped on the bottom railing were his clothes neatly hung so to dry out. Kevin grabbed his clothes and moved next to the orange dwindling logs in the fireplace. The radiant heat and dry clothes felt so comforting in comparison from where he laid less than twelve hours ago. Tucker was sitting at the door and wagging his tail. Kevin opened the door and Tucker exploded off the deck out into the dawn of a new day.

The old wooden chair creaked as Kevin sat down. The rising sun felt good coming through the windows at the back of the cabin. There was a cold draft blowing on Kevin's right shoulder from a broken out window pane. Kevin moved to the opposite chair away from the brisk incoming morning air. The paper under the empty whiskey bottle was now the right side up. The official looking letter with the State of Oregon seal and the big red letters stamped 'DENIED' across the page was an enticement to read. The name Kenneth Saxton sort of clicked. Kevin went on reading the letter and then stopped. *What am I doing this isn't my business.* Kevin flipped the letter over and slid it back under the whiskey bottle.

The chair creaked again as Kevin twisted around looking and taking mental notes. Every wall displayed at least one rack from a deer or elk. An old rifle hanging above the mantle on the stone fireplace caught his attention. His bare feet felt the grit and dirt on the wood plank floor as he moved toward the rifle. Kevin's right hands felt the cold steel of the barrel as he lifted it from the resting hooks; the smell of gun powder was strong. Guns were something not on display at the Trask's mansion. He turned the gun around and put the butt up against his shoulder and looked down through the scope and out through the broken window.

Everything was brought in close and was brighter than the early dawn. Suddenly, in the cross hairs and out of nowhere a huge bird landed in the old gray snag out in front of the cabin. Kevin stared through the scope at the bird for the longest time. Tucker was now scratching at the door. Kevin slowly opened the heavy wood door and the giant bird did not flinch. Kevin warily stepped out on to the front deck and put the rifle back up to his shoulder. In the cross hairs he could now see that the bird had a white crown and an orange eye. Kevin's heart raced as looked at the bird through the scope. *That's a Bald Eagle. I never saw one before in the wild. What an awesome looking creature...*

The sound of a diesel motor in the distance caused the giant bird to turn it head. *Wow that eagle is blind in one eye.* The eagle spread open it wings. *Wow that bird must have a six foot wing span.* With one small bounce the Eagle flew off from the top of the old snag and was gone.

Kevin lowered the rifle and listened. The sound was getting louder. From the higher vantage point Kevin looked down the old gravel road until the huge Douglas fir tree bows blocked his view. To the right and far down across a small clearing he got a glimpse of an orange pickup truck winding its way up the mountain. The truck disappeared into the trees, Kevin listened, the truck was getting closer. He put the rifle back up to his shoulder and scanned ahead to the next clearing. The truck came out of the tress and finally he could see into the cab. *That looks like the fishing guide, Lilly. That's the old truck I rode in last night.* Kevin sighted her head into the cross-hairs; the scope magnified Lilly's head, shoulders and pony tail. The old truck disappeared behind the trees and then reappeared back in the open. Kevin scanned ahead to the next clearing. In less than a minute the truck windshield popped back into a clearing. Lilly's entire head was now in the cross-hairs... *What striking dark blue eyes... I wonder why she never got her teeth straightened?* The truck stopped.

Kevin lowered the rifle and watched Lilly jump down out of the cab. She tucked some of her blond shoulder length hair behind her right ear and stomped toward the deck. "You bastard! Why were you pointing that rifle at me?"

"I was just using the scope to look through... Like binoculars."

Lilly climbed up the stairs onto the old weathered deck and tore the gun from Kevin hands. She pointed the barrel at Kevin's chest! "How do you like it?"

Kevin stepped back. "I was just looking through the scope. I didn't even have my finger on the trigger."

Lilly lowered the rifle, pulled back the bolt and an empty shell casing ejected then bounced across the deck. She pointed the rifle away from the cabin sighted down the hill at a stump. A small *click* sound emitted from the chamber when she pulled on the trigger. Next she used her thumb to push the gun safety on.

Kevin in a pleading voice said, "I didn't know how to check if it was loaded...But I didn't have my finger on the trigger."

Lilly shook her head in disgust, walked right by Kevin and mumbled, "Stupid rich kid." Inside the cabin she put the rifle back onto its place above the mantle. She walked back out on to the porch and said, "Let's go. I'm going to drive you back up Timberline Lodge to your car."

"I need to get my shoes," Kevin quickly went back inside the cabin.

Lilly watched Kevin through the front window. She noticed glass on the deck and that the one window pane was shot out from inside. Now her eyes locked on the white paper under the whiskey bottle behind the glass. Lilly went into the cabin and picked up the letter from the State of Oregon. *Dad never came home a week ago Friday because he was up here.*

"I'm ready," Kevin said at the cabin door with his cut-up boots in his grip.

Lilly looked over at Kevin. "A... Okay. I'm going to close up the cabin. I'll be right there."

The passenger door on the four wheel drive pickup had a big round emblem displaying the words **Saxton Logging**. Kevin vaguely remembered the emblem from last night. After jumping up into the truck Kevin had to slam the door twice to get it to close. Lilly was now out on the deck looking at the broken glass for the longest time. She finally came down off the deck. She put her finger and thumb into her mouth and whistled. Then yelled, "Tucker let's go!"

The big black Labrador came lumbering from around the back of the cabin, ran to the driver's door and sat. Lilly opened the door, Tucker jumped in and walked across the bench seat and crawled halfway into Kevin's lap. Lilly pulled herself up into the tall four wheel drive using the steering wheel. "Tucker likes you."

The old truck rattled and bounced as Lilly drove down the forest road. Kevin noticed a washed out bridge ahead and was just about to yell out a warning when Lilly grabbed a shifter in the center of the cab and pushed it forward. The old truck bogged down and she steered to the left and went off the road. The truck bounced over two big rocks and water splashed over the hood as it dived head first into the stream. Lilly pushed down hard on the gas pedal; the truck spun all four tires as it

crawled up the other side of the stream.

"The environmentalists would love to see you drive," Kevin said in a keyed up excited voice. The first words he spoke since leaving the cabin.

"Screw the environmentalists!" Lilly replied as she steered the truck back onto the road and pulled back on the four-wheel shift lever. "I usually stop at the bridge and walk but with the condition of your feet and all."

"Thanks for that." Kevin looked down at his feet resting in all the dirt on the floor of the old truck. "I hardly remember anything last night."

"No problem! City folk are pretty tender; that's why we call you'll Tenderfoot's." Lilly looked over at Kevin and forced a smile. "One other piece of advice. When you try to build a fire, don't lay all the logs together like they're spooning."

Kevin glanced over at Lilly who now had her head straight forward. *Maybe I wasn't dreaming last night...*

"You need to leave some space between the logs for air and use some kindling." Lilly added as she steered the old truck.

"One thing that I do recall from last night," Kevin chided and wanting to know if what he had dreamed actually happened, "Last night under those sleeping bags. I remember a pleasant sweet smell that turned to the smell of a dog."

Lilly reached over and started rubbing Tucker's back. "You're just lucky Tucker didn't go for a swim yesterday; he really stinks then..."

The old gravel road came out to a paved road; Lilly didn't even stop nor put on the turn signal. The old pickup felt as though it was going to roll as she shot out onto the highway and turned left. Kevin pulled and tightened up his seatbelt. The yellow sign indicated curves for the next 6 miles up to Timberline Lodge. The mud/snow tires on old four wheel drive howled on the pavement and the high center of gravity felt unsafe. Lilly navigated the curves at a high rate of speed. About two miles up the road Kevin spoke for the second time. "I'll pay your family for letting me stay in that cabin and for the transportation and all... That is, if we get there!"

With both hands on the steering wheel and staring straight ahead Lilly replied, "Pay for staying in our old cabin."

"Yes, I owe you for that. And I owe your Dad for helping me off the mountain last night."

"You don't owe us anything for staying in the family cabin. I just need to get the ice ax and ice-spikes back. My Father was pretty upset that I sold the stuff."

"Kevin mind flashed back, still fresh in his mind he could visualize the one crampon

bouncing down the mountain and coming to rest at the base of Crater Rock. "I lost one crampon but I still have one of them. And, I do have the ice ax.

Lilly paused for the longest time. "That old equipment wasn't worth all the money you paid. It was my brother's equipment... Mom and Dad wanted to hang on to it for personal reasons."

"I know where the other crampon is. It got wedged at the base of a thirty foot rock outcropping on the rim of the crater," Kevin said in a quick response. "With a hundred foot rope you could climb down and get it."

Lilly didn't respond; she pushed the gas pedal down and drove even more carelessly. "Stupid rich kid," were words she mumbled to herself.

Kevin could feel the tension in the cab. The old four wheel drive felt as though it was going to roll on every corner. Finally they made it to the parking lot of Timberline Lodge. "My car is over there!" Kevin anxiously pointed.

Lilly didn't say a word. She threw the long black metal shifter forward and headed right toward the Mercedes and a white State Police car parked in front.

"Damn it! Looks like I'm getting a ticket," Kevin said, looking at how his car was blocked in and policeman bent over looking at the license plate.

Lilly increased her speed and headed right toward the two parked cars.

"You better slow down!" Kevin yelled and then grabbed Tucker with both arms.

Ten feet from the officer Lilly came to a swift stop! The state patrolman spun around; his long black ponytail flipped across his right shoulder and the dark skin on his face wrinkled as he frowned. Next his white teeth broke a big smile. The Native American walked around to the driver's window of the old pickup. "What are you doing big Sister? Trying to run me down?"

"Bull, nobody could run you down. You're just too mean."

"Too mean? I'm a gentle giant," replied the Native American patrolman.

"Gentle, yeah right. Tell that to all those defensive linemen you used to mow over. Dad still says you were the meanest runner he ever watched."

The smile on the Officer grew as he reminisced. "How is your Father?"

"He's having a bad week. His unemployment ran out. Then he went up on the mountain last night to get this guy." Lilly pointed at Kevin.

"I bet that was hard. Is that the first time he's been up here since Billy's accident?"

Lilly's hands tightened on the steering wheel. She turned away from Bull and stared

through the windshield, glaring at Mount Hood. "Yeah, it's his first time up past the tree line... Dad's taking it hard."

"Is he still drinking a lot?"

"Yeah, he drank last night after he picked up Kevin." Lilly nodded her head toward Kevin.

"Kevin? You don't mean Kevin Trask do you?" Bulled asked in a quip.

"Yeah, I do." Lilly leaned back in the seat so the Bull could see across the cab."

"You're the guy I'm looking for. There's a state to state APB out for you."

"A state to state, APB what's that?" asked Kevin's with a knot growing in his throat."

"It's an all points bulletin from California to Oregon," Bull looked down at his note pad. "It was sent out by the Redding Police department."

Kevin's hand found the door latch. He carefully lowered himself down out of the truck. Tucker followed.

Officer Bull quickly moved around to the other side of the truck, preparing to give chase if needed. "You're not going to run, are you?" Bull asked positioning himself in front of Kevin.

"Run... Why would I do that?" Kevin rubbed his hand on his forehead. "Redding Police? I gave them all the information about that boy I gave a ride in my car."

"I need you to take a seat in the back of the patrol car, so that I can call this in." Bull took a hold of Kevin by the arm.

"Call it in? What's this all about?" Kevin tried to pull from Bull's grip.

Bull was two inches shorter than Kevin but had a stockier build. When Bull felt Kevin try to resist, his reaction was swift and skilled. Bull quickly moved his hand down Kevin's arm to his wrist, then bent Kevin's arm up behind his back. Kevin's natural reflex was to try to twist free. Bull reacted by shoving Kevin face first down on to the front fender of the old truck. Next Bull reached for the handcuffs and slapped one side onto Kevin's wrist. "Give me your other hand!" Bulled ordered.

Kevin was still resisting. "I didn't do anything!"

Bull raised up on the arm that was handcuffed and behind Kevin's back. "Let me have your other arm!" Kevin groaned out in pain and quickly let Bull have his other arm. Everything happened in less than ten seconds.

Lilly had a good vantage point from behind the steering wheel. She was now watching Bull force Kevin into the back seat of the police car. Practically in shock,

Lilly jumped out of the truck and rushed over to Bull who had just reached in the car for the two way radio. With the coiled cord streaming from his hand Bull pushed in on the red button on the side of the microphone. "This is officer Bull Whitefoot. I just apprehended Kevin Trask. There is an APB out for him from Redding, California. Please call and advise me on further instructions. Over..." Bull put the microphone back on a clip in the center of the dash.

Lilly was now standing on the opposite side of the open driver door. "What's the hell is going on? Is this guy Kevin Trask wanted for murder or something? "

"I don't know Lilly. The APB flashed up this morning on the computer, saying to look out for a Mercedes SL 600 concept car registered to Chinese Import Business."

"You think he killed someone or something?"

"Don't know Lilly. But they usually warn us if the suspect is armed or dangerous. It could be an outstanding warrant or ..." Bull hesitated. "Lilly, I shouldn't be telling you any of this. Please don't repeat anything I just told you!"

"I understand, Bull." Lilly ducked down and looked at Kevin through the back window of the patrol car. When they made eye contact she immediately stood up.

"Lilly, how are you parents really doing?" Bull asked, so not to have to offer any more confidential information about Kevin Trask.

"Well, last night really got to Dad. The logging shut down is also hurting our family."

"What's it been, two year now since Billy's accident? Bull asked.

"Two years this July 5<sup>th</sup>," answered Lilly. "Mom is doing a lot better than Dad; except for her hip."

Kevin listened from the back seat.

"What about you Lilly? How are you doing with the loss of your younger brother?"

"Bull, I'm okay. But... This whole problem with shutting down all the logging because of the Spotted Owl is really destroying family and friends."

"Lilly, I told your Dad to send me a proposal to do some tree falling on the reservation. All he needs to do is post is a hundred thousand dollar insurance bond. I can get him the work." Bull said confidently.

"Officer 378 this is dispatch." Blared out of the two-way radio speaker.

Bull reached back in the driver's door for the microphone "This is Officer Whitefoot, badge number 378, over."

"Officer Whitefoot, I just spoke with the Redding police department. The APB is to

have Mr. Kevin Trask call home; nothing else. There is no need to apprehend, and especially don't arrest. He has Senator Byron Sherpard in his back pocket."

"What!" Bull yelled into the microphone. "Are you sure?"

"Yes...Don't arrest. Don't apprehend. Just tell subject to call home. This should have been a courtesy request from the Redding State police not an APB."

"Great!" Bull tossed the microphone onto the front seat. Lilly stepped back as Bull hurriedly opened the rear door then carefully helped Kevin out. "I'm sorry Mr. Trask. It's my mistake. Please turn around and I'll take the handcuffs off. I hope you understand... I was just doing my job! I thought it was an APB. I hope you understand." Officer Bull quickly took the handcuffs off.

From over Bulls shoulder Lilly said, "Bull, I'll talk to you later. It looks like you got a long report to make out." Lilly walked back to the idling truck. "Let's go Tucker!"

She threw the heavy steel lever into reverse backed up about five feet then put the truck into first gear. The smell of diesel mixed with the cinder dust of the parking lot as she pulled by Bull and Kevin.

Kevin examined the red indentation on his wrist. "I've never been handcuffed before. That's an experience I never want to go through again."

"Sorry Mr. Trask. I hope they weren't too tight."

"The handcuffs were okay. . . But I think you did something to my shoulder when you twisted my arm up when it was behind my back." Kevin massaged at his shoulder.

"I can run you in to the hospital if you need," offered Bull.

"No, that's okay. I'll be fine, but you could be a little gentler."

"You're a strong looking guy, Mr. Trask and I could tell that you're in great shape. We're trained to get the jump on our suspects."

"Strong! What are you talking about? You look like you could stop a freight train."

"Mr. Trask, you're taller than me," replied patrolman Bull Whitefoot, still wanting to defend his actions.

"Yeah, maybe by in inch. By the way, I'm Kevin." Kevin held his hand out. "Please don't call me Mr. Trask."

"I'm sorry about the mix-up," Bull replied when he shook Kevin's hand. "Most times we get an APB; the person is a wanted criminal." Bull let loose of Kevin's hand. "Never got an APB to tell somebody to call home." Bull paused. "You must be an important person to have a Senator come bail you out."

"Oh, it's not me. It's my Father; he's a good friend of the governor of California."

"Is your Father the CEO of Trask Trailers?"

"Yeah," Kevin quickly quipped. "It was actually my Grandfather that started the company."

"Wow, I read about your Father back when I was in college wrapping up my business degree. He was CEO of the year or something."

"My Dad has won many awards... But it was my Grandfather that founded the company and laid all the important groundwork."

"What a family." replied Bull. "So you all live in Redding, California?"

"No," Kevin said scratching at his head. "You did say that the APB came from the Redding Police?"

"Yes it did. Would you like to see it?"

"Sure." Kevin watched Bull retrieve a clipboard from the dash.

There were several pieces of computer fanfold paper on the clip board. Bull flipped over a few pages than handed the clipboard to Kevin.

Kevin looked over the computer print out:

**ABP California State Police <Redding office>**

**Silver Mercedes 600 SL Concept model**

**California Plate# <6588 CJJL>**

**Registered to: <Chinese LLC>**

**Possibly Headed North to Oregon**

**Call Sherriff Wilson at 555-402-4321**

Kevin handed back the clipboard. "I wonder why my car is registered to a Chinese LLC."

"That's the reason's I cuffed you so fast. I saw the out of country registration and I thought money laundering headed for the Indian Head Casino."

"There's a Casino way up here?" Kevin asked.

"Not up here. Our Casino is on the Rez..."

"Rez?" Kevin questioned Bull again.

"The Warm Springs Reservation." Bull said. "East on Highway 26 about forty miles from here."

"That's strange. they didn't even say nothing about the little boy Danny." Kevin was talking out loud to himself.

"Mr. Trask, you might want to call that Sherriff Wilson. Maybe he can shed some light on why he put out this APB yesterday?" Bull interrupting Kevin's thoughts. "But I need to know if your arm is okay. I hope you don't file a harassment suit."

"No, don't worry about my arm." Kevin rubbed his shoulder again. "I'd like that phone number. I want to see if there is any information about Danny."

Officer Bull pulled the fan folded computer paper from his clip board and tore out one section. "Here, you can have the whole printout."

"Thanks," Kevin took the piece of paper. "Do mobile car phones work up here?"

"I don't know. It is touch and go with my two-way radio." Bull answered. "Sometimes I have to move around the parking lot to get through to dispatch."

"Thanks?" Kevin noticed the old orange Saxton pickup truck coming back across the parking lot.

Bull noticed too. "Lilly must have forgotten something."

Kevin was focused on Tucker sitting straight up in the passenger side. "That is one big dog."

Lilly rolled down the window and held out a piece of paper for Kevin. "Here is the advertisement you left on the counter at our store the other day. It had some tape with finger prints on the back and a poem. I thought it might be important."

Kevin took the tri-fold paper. "Thanks" Kevin glanced at the fishing guide advertisement. "I do plan to be back to catch some steelhead."

"Before you do come back make sure that you call first to see if the Steelhead are running." Lilly looked at Bull. "Bull how much would it cost to post that hundred-thousand dollar bond."

"I'm not sure Lilly; I think it would probably depend on the Saxton Logging credit and accident history. Your Dad should call his insurance agent to find out."

A noticeable gloom took over Lilly's cheerful expression. "We don't even have health insurance right now. But I'll let Dad know."

"The contract is for cutting firewood for the guest rooms at the Indian Head Casino.

The pay would be more than just hauling logs to the mill."

"How many cords of firewood the Tribe Council looking for?" Lilly asked.

"At least seventy-five before this fall. We need someone to get on it right away."

"You're running out of time if you want that firewood seasoned for next winter."

"That's true but the contract is for Juniper. That stuff burns a month after you cut it."

"Oh..." Lilly frowned. "My Dad hates cutting Juniper. You got to sharpen your saw all the time?"

"I know. The Tribe Council has been hearing that complaint. We're now willing to pay one hundred dollars a cord." Bull frowned, "It's hard work, but good pay."

"Why, can't you cut the big Yellow Belly Ponderosas? You only need to sharpen the blade twice a day." Kevin injected into the conversation, wanting to not seem like a city boy.

Lilly twitched behind the steering wheel and then looked over at Kevin. "Wow... Sounds like you know about the logging industry."

"A little," Kevin replied. "I know cutting the big yellow belly pines is easier on your blade than the tall Douglas firs."

Bull smiled at Lilly and waited. "I never have heard of a chainsaw blade, I think you mean sharpen the chain."

Bull couldn't help it. He laughed out loud. Kevin wished he would have kept his mouth shut.

"Bull, maybe Davey Crocket can give you a lesson in fire building after he shows you how to sharpen that chainsaw blade."

Bull joined in with the lighthearted gibing. "Whiteman can't build fire. He uses fire starter or turns on a propane camp stove."

Lilly noticed how red Kevin's face was turning. "Well at least you learned not to spoon you firewood." Lilly winked at Kevin and forced a tight lip smile, hoping to not show her crooked teeth.

Embarrassed and with the ABP printout and fishing brochure in hand, Kevin walked over and opened the passenger door on the SL600 and got into the mobile phone-GPS pack.

"Redding police department," came out from the handset. "This Is Kevin Trask I'm looking for Sherriff Wilson. I was told to call him."

"One moment, Mr. Trask. I'll see if he's at his desk."

"Detective Wilson here," came out of the handset.

"This is Kevin Trask, a police officer in Oregon just notified me to call you."

"Mr. Trask, you are to call Trask Corporate, ASAP," barked out Sherriff Wilson.

"Your family must have friends in high places to get an APB out on you."

Kevin felt the discontent through the phone. "Sherriff Wilson, did they find out any more about that young boy that died at Shasta Lake?"

"I ordered an autopsy and a sexual assault check. Don't think this is going away. I told you to stay in California and on that same day you got a speeding ticket in Oregon. I got..." The signal bars went to one bar on the mobile phone and the call dropped. Kevin tried to call back and watched in the side mirror as the orange pickup drove off.

Officer Bull approached. "Did you get through to the Redding PD?"

"Yeah, but the signal is weak and the call dropped out."

"Would you like me to patch you through on my two-way radio?" Officer Bull stood up and did some additional writing on his clip board.

"I'll call back later. I did get the important part to call the Trask office." Kevin replied.

Kevin got out of the car and stood next to Officer Bull and immediately heard the sound of water. On the edge of the parking lot was a gray stream flowing. The cold gray waters flowed toward a big canyon. In the distance fifty miles or so, juxtaposition in the center of the huge glacier cut canyon was another snow capped mountain peak.

Bull noticed Kevin listening. "You're hearing life flowing from the mountain. The snow falls, the sun melts the snow and the water flows to sustain life. Most people don't understand the rotation. Officer Bull spoke his Native American words of common sense earth knowledge.

"I get it Bull; I'm kind of an environmental type." Kevin replied while looking south down the Cascade Mountain range. "What's that other mountain?"

"That's Mount Jefferson; it's on the southwest border of the Warm Springs Reservation. The headwaters of the Metolious River start from under that mountain. The Metolious River runs into the Deschutes River and that river runs into the Columbia River. Salmon used to come all the way from the Pacific Ocean to lay their eggs in the small streams in the pine forest all over Central Oregon. Those rivers brought food and life to my people; when we were hunters and fishermen."

"Oh." Kevin mumbled then quickly asked, "Anybody climb that mountain?"

"Mount Jefferson? It can't be climbed without a permit from the Confederated council.

"Why is that?" Kevin focused on another possible climbing challenge.

"There is a sacred burial ground in one of the slot Canyons over there. Many of my people moved on to their Spirit life near the base of that mountain. My Grandfather, Eagle Eye rests and soars in that area."

"Eagle Eye... That was your Grandfather's name?" Kevin asked.

"Yes, that is what he went by on the Rez. He was blind in one eye. But, he went by Mike, when he dealt with the Whiteman."

"My Grandfather's name was Donald, but his friends called him Don." Kevin replied.

"Donald is a solid name." replied Bull. "I'm sure he was a good man to have brought employment to so many."

"Yeah, Don was great to a lot of people," Kevin paused for a long while. "My Grandfather coached me and told me stuff that still affects my life to this day."

"And my Grandfather also," Bull replied.

Kevin paused, yet still focused on Mt. Jefferson. "My climbing mountains has a lot to do with my Grandfather."

"I understand," Bull replied. "If you like, I could arrange a permit to climb Mt. Jefferson. But it's not like this mountain; it is a class 4 ascend." Bull raised his hand south toward Mt. Jefferson. "You would need a climbing guide and you have to rope up for Mt Jefferson. I have a friend that could help you summit the second highest peak in Oregon," Bull offered.

"I don't think I'll be climbing any mountain for a while. At least till my feet heal." Kevin bent his leg to the side and pointed at the raw flesh on the back of his heel.

Bull knelt down on one knee and examined Kevin's heel. "Your boots were too loose or had poor support. That new fake leather is lighter but it is not as strong as the real stuff. If these wounds scar up it will affect your basketball game.

"You can tell all that from looking at my foot? Kevin asked, baffled

"No, I noticed the Duke Blue Devil Basketball jersey in the back of your sports car." Bull answered. "But a foot does tell a lot. Same as a track tells a story." Bull twisted Kevin's foot to better examine it.

"A track tells a story. What's that suppose to mean?"

"An animal track. When you track you don't look at the print you look at the story. How big, how old, how wise. You track an animal the same as he tracks you. A Mountain Lion will get on your scent and track you for days. That Mountain cat will even step in your footprints. He's knows the size and weight of his prey before he strikes."

"That's interesting. Where did you learn that from, sitting around a campfire?" Kevin gently chided.

"No, from my Grandfather... Eagle eye." Bull let loose of Kevin's foot and got up off his knee.

"Sorry Bull, I didn't mean any disrespect..."

"That's okay, no harm taken." Bull started to walk away.

"Bull, the tracking thing your Grandfather taught you. Can you tell anything from a hand print?"

Bull stopped. "Maybe... Why?"

"Kevin ducked back into the car and retrieved the tri-fold brochure and handed it to Bull. "Does this hand print tell you anything?"

Bull looked at the print under the packing tape. "Who are you Sherlock Holmes?"

"Sort of, I guess. A waitress told me that a young boy left me a note on my windshield that I never found. Then, when I drove through a dust cloud, the print appeared on the windshield. It was one of those spiritual moments when you think there is some reason this image appeared on the windshield. Do you know what I mean?"

"I know exactly what you mean, Bull replied. "Show me where you lifted the print."

Kevin walked around Bull to the front passenger side of his car. "The print was right here." Kevin pointed just above the windshield wiper blade."

Bull crowded next to Kevin bent low and looked across the windshield. There was still faint hints of oil on the glass. He lifted the wiper blade and positioned the paper above the barely visible oil spots. "Is this where you lifted the print?"

"Yes, exactly!" Kevin replied.

"First of all, the reason this isn't a good print is because light pressure was applied, probably so not to set off the car alarm."

"The waitress did say that she heard my alarm go off a couple of times." Kevin quickly injected into the crime inspection.

Bull scrutinized the paper even closer "The other thing I can tell is that this is the print of a fairly tall person.

"How can you tell all that?" Kevin asked

Bull positioned his fingers right above the dust under the tape. "Look at where my fingers are. My finger tip barely covers the spacing of these. This isn't the hand print of a women or kid. This print is that of a tall or big man that works with his hands.

"I thought the same thing when I compared it against my own hand." Kevin replied. "But how can you tell the guy works with his hands?"

Bull pulled the paper out from the wiper blade and pointed at the large palm print. Look here at the calluses or blister indentation in the center of the palm." This individual uses a shovel, swings an ax or something."

Wow, I'm impressed with your skill. Kevin stated. "Maybe callous from playing a lot of tennis?"

"Maybe..." Bull turned his hand over and pointed. "You see, I still gather firewood, fish and even work on my own automobiles. All these cuts and calluses tell a story. Even my missing middle finger has a story."

"How did you lose your finger?" Kevin asked while staring at Bull's hand." That story is for another day." Bull dropped his hand to the side. "Scars and cuts are the bump and bruises in life, but they can leave a permanent mental mark behind."

"I hope these blisters don't leave a permanent mark." Kevin said pointing down at his bare feet.

"I got something to help you heal." Bull returned with a small buckskin pouch that had a beaded draw string. "Rub this into your open flesh. It will burn for thirty seconds, then it will start to tingle, then you will feel nothing."

Kevin put the leather pouch up to his nose and took a whiff. "I'm not going to rub this stuff into raw flesh."

"You don't want that skin on the back of your heel to turn to scar tissue. It could interfere with climbing or basketball." Bull quietly spoke.

Kevin took another whiff into the bag. "Thanks, but I'll stop at a drug store and pick something up." Kevin took another extended smell into the leather bag.

Bull dropped a pair of moccasins at Kevin's feet. "At least take these to protect your feet."

Kevin slipped on the moccasins and took another long extended sniff into the buckskin bag. "These slippers must be magical. I feel like I'm floating in them."

"You're not floating; you're getting high from sniffing peyote healing suave." Bull said with a warning tone.

Kevin opened the passenger door; it felt like he was floating down into the passenger seat. "I guess I will rub some of this on since it makes me feels so good."

"Just give it thirty seconds or so. Then it will start to tingle. Then you shouldn't drive for at least forty-five minutes," Bull warned.

The burning quit. "Hey I do feel it tingling," Kevin replied "And now it feels cool. What is that stuff?" Kevin asked while smelling the ointment again.

Bull grabbed the bag from under Kevin's nose then answered, "It's something my Grandfather passed on to the tribe. He was a Medicine man. He's is the one that cut off my finger and poked out his own eye all on the same day."

"Wow... Your Grandfather cut off your finger." Kevin reclined the passenger seat. The peyote suave was now working its way through the open blisters into his blood stream.

"Yes and he never forgave himself. But, like I spoke before. That is a story for another day." Bull paused. "Give me your car keys."

Kevin dug into his pocket and flung the keys out the window to Bull. "Here you go big Indian guy." Kevin closed his eyes. *Wow... I thought what my Grandfather did to me was a hard lesson...But he didn't cut my finger off.*

Bull walked about a hundred yards up the dark red lava dirt about where Kevin had sat down last night. He raised his arms up toward the mountain, and then lowered them so that his arms crossed across his chest. Bull knelt down then tossed some lava dust up into the wind.

With his finger, he outlined a symbol of an Eagle, and then spoke these words, "Many lives have been offered up on this mountain. Kenneth Saxton's soul needs the help from the God's of the sky. May the dust that I throw into the wind find its way to push out the loss and pain and bring back the will and hope to all Billy's kin." Bull stood, then danced around the symbol chanting a prayer for spiritual peace.

Kevin was still laid back feeling the peyote pleasure when Bull shook his shoulder. "Mr. Trask, you may want to go up to the lodge and get some coffee before you start driving."

Kevin's eyes were glazed over; he blinked a few times, and rubbed his forehead. "How long have I been sleeping?" Kevin asked.

"Maybe twenty minutes or so." Bull answered.

"Where did you go?" Kevin asked and then opened the passenger door.

"I followed your boot prints going up the mountain last night. Your stride and how your heel hit hard showed determination; not pleasure in your quest to climb last night."

"Come on... You're trying to mess with me." Kevin replied, now rubbing at his eyes.

"A man that leaves a heavy print has a determination but not always has a good reason. Like a Mountain Lion that leaves a light print or steps in his prey's footprints. To walk lightly in this world shows a deep understanding of one's spirit. To walk heavy on this world, shows a man forging ahead not knowing the desire of the spirits. That man takes everything in his path and leaves little. What you want with your eyes is sometimes different than what your soul needs," Bull answered.

Bull's words sent the heavy bittersweet message deep into Kevin's hallucinating dream state. "Hey, I think I will go get that cup of coffee up in the lodge. Why don't you join me?"

"Sure," replied Bull as he walked next to Kevin toward Timberline Lodge. "Up on that lava dirt in your tracks. I saw where you sat and where you were carried. I saw a man that is swimming so hard against the river of life."

The **Lumberjack** coffee shop inside Timberline lodge had lots of logging equipment on display. Kevin used it as a segue-way to get off the all-white-man's-fault topic and begin a new conversation. "The Saxton family; have they been logging up here for a long time?"

"For as long as I can remember." Bull replied. "But they have been down on their luck ever since their Son's accident."

"Was it a logging accident?" Kevin asked.

"No, Billy died on this mountain last year."

"How's that?" Kevin took a small sip of the hot coffee.

He was climbing the Devils Kitchen route when a rock the size of a basketball hit him directly in the head. Billy died instantly."

Kevin sat his coffee cup down and looked past Bull at nothing. He didn't want to know but asked anyway. "Was that their Son's climbing equipment, that I... That I rented from Lilly?"

"I didn't think that they rented climbing equipment" Bull replied. "I know Lilly is trying to get a fishing guide service up and running."

Kevin felt like he was slugged in the gut. *No wonder the reluctance to rent the climbing equipment. And then I go and lose one of the crampons. I'm going to hike back up there and find that crampon even if I have to stay here a week.*

"Mr. Trask." Officer Bull halted Kevin's thoughts. "Billy's spirit will look over the Saxton family."

"Bull, what was all that stuff about a firewood contract bond that you were talking to Lilly about?" Kevin wanted to change the subject again.

"The Tribal Council has been trying to find a bonded company to deliver firewood to the resort. None of the tribal people want to do it because they all want the higher paying jobs or to waste time gambling at the new casino." Bull replied. "It will be another issue that Native Americans can blame on the whiteman."

"Bull, I'm not sure every problem on an Indian Reservation is the fault of the Whiteman!"

I was being sarcastic, Mr. Trask. Blame is a tool that the Evil Spirits uses to keep all men from standing up and owing their own faults.

"I could float the bond for the Saxton's. I heard you say to Lilly it was only a one hundred dollar insurance bond."

"Richard Saxton wouldn't let you do that; he's too proud"

"Well then let's you and me setup a shell corporation. You said you had a business degree, let's put that degree to work."

Yeah we could do that. Maybe a small start up and call it White-Crow Logging something that has a Native American twist.

"Why not, **White Crow Earth Safe Logging**? That name should cover all the bases."

Officer Bull and Kevin put together a business plan before the Saturday brunch crowd took over the restaurant. They left Timberline Lodge together and Kevin handed Bull one of the Trask corporate gold embossed business cards. Bull made a beeline for the patrol car and called into dispatch via a two way radio.

Kevin tried his mobile phone-GPS unit hoping to give Condi the heads up on White Crow Earth Safe logging. The signal was nonexistent. Kevin waved at Bull as he headed back up into the lodge to make the phone call from a payphone. Officer Bull waved at Kevin as he headed out of the parking lot.

Kevin found a payphone just inside the front doors. "Condi, sorry to call you at home but I wanted to give you the heads up on a call that you will be getting from a Bull Lightfoot Monday morning."

"Kevin I've been trying to get a hold of you since Thursday!" Condi's scream through the handset bounced off of the glass walls of the phone booth.

"Whoa, hold on Condi," Kevin spoke in a calming voice. "I did get the message and do plan to call in on the corporate office line Monday morning."

"Kevin, I found out about what is going to happen on that call. I tried all day Friday to get a hold of you!" Condi got more keyed up. "When you call in on the Trask Corporate line Monday morning they are going to ask if your Dad can take a proxy vote for your shares. At that moment if you say yes, all the Trask trailer manufacturing will be outsourced."

"Wait a second slow down. Who are they going to outsource to?" Kevin asked; more concerned.

"To the Hung Meng manufacturing plants in China!" Condi replied.

"Slow down Condi. It's not that easy to just pull up a manufacturing plant and move."

"Kevin, they already build all of the wiring harnesses and axels over there now!"

"What? I didn't know that. When did that happen?" Kevin asked with even more alarm.

"About two years ago. That's why we have had so many layoffs." Some of the worker's in the plant are only working twenty hours a week." Condi was getting close to crying or just losing it.

"Okay Condi, I'll tell you what. I'm about two hours from Portland, Oregon. If you can get me a flight tomorrow give me a call on that mobile phone in my car. I'll be able to make the meeting Monday morning in person."

Kevin had barely made it five miles down the Timberline Lodge Wilderness Road when the car mobile phone rang. The display changed from **73 miles to Portland International Airport** to **Incoming call**. Kevin made out about four of Condi's words before he spoke loudly into the handset. "Condi, I'll call you from a landline when I find one."

Kevin remembered a medium sized grocery store in the town of Rhododendron east of Zig Zag and remembered seeing a payphone there near the entrance. The prototype Mercedes hugged all the curves coming down from Timberline Lodge. Kevin was down shifting into the corners and just tapping the brakes like Danny had coached him on the Trinity Loop Road. *May the perpetual light shine upon Danny...* were the words Kevin had prayed at least a hundred times since last Thursday.

The **Out Of Order. No Phone in Store**, written on the white piece of paper didn't stop Kevin from pushing open the glass bi-fold doors to check for himself. When he removed the headset from the cradle, the cut wire to the handset was a give-me. Kevin looked back over his shoulder at the grocery store. There was an older woman about thirty feet from the main doors next to the highway selling flowers from

a make-shift stand. "Madam, do you know where another payphone is located?" Kevin asked as he approached.

"Sir, there is a payphone at the first gas station that you come to when you get into Sandy," she answered and pointed west.

"How far is Sandy?" Kevin asked.

"Maybe twenty miles," she replied. "But the vandals might have cut the wires there too.

"Okay." Kevin glanced over at the grocery store. "Do you know if they have a phone in the store?"

"They do, but they won't let anyone use it. The owner is always cranky. He calls the police on me all the time for selling my flowers here on the highway."

Kevin stepped out on Highway 26 and looked east then west. He remembered the town of Government Camp back up the road about ten miles. The weekend traffic headed up to the mountain was bumper to bumper. Kevin approached the older woman again. "How much are the flowers?"

"Five dollars a bunch or three bunches for ten dollars," she replied.

"I'll take three bunches," Kevin said while pulling a twenty from his wallet.

The woman picked out three of the best looking bunches and wrapped them in newspaper. "All I have is a coffee can to put them in, is that okay?"

"Yeah no problem," Kevin replied as he took the flowers and handed her the twenty. "Keep the change."

The bells on the back of the door rang out and when Lilly looked up. Her heart stopped at the sight of Kevin in the doorway with the fresh cut flowers. "Kevin, I'll be with you as soon as I finish up with this customer."

The eighty pounds of mass of black fur came from behind the glass display case and leaped at Kevin' almost knocking the flowers out of the coffee can.

Out of the corner of her eye, Lilly watched Kevin rubbing Tuckers head and under his neck. Kevin held the door for the customer then walked over to the counter and held out the flowers. "These are for your family; for me losing the crampon and all."

"Thanks." Lilly took the flowers and quickly vanished down the connecting hallway. Tucker was rubbing against Kevin's legs seeking more attention. Lilly returned. "Mom says thank you very much."

"Lilly, could I use your phone? I'll pay for the call."

"Sure no problem," she replied, "follow me." Lilly led Kevin down the hallway into a small Kitchen.

Peggy was propped up against the sink arranging the flowers in a glass vase. "Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers."

"I hope you enjoy them." Kevin replied.

"The phone is on the wall over there." Lilly pointed at a yellow corded wall phone hanging just to the left of a small kitchen table and then left down the hallway.

Kevin lifted the headset off the chrome cradle and dialed. "Condi did you get flight?"

"Kevin the only flight I could get departs from Portland, Oregon at 9:00 Sunday night and gets into LAX just before midnight."

"That should work. What's the flight number?" Kevin asked over the harvest yellow wall phone handset.

Peggy Saxton turned from her position at the sink and grabbed the gray walker handles; she pointed at a pencil and tablet on the small table with her left hand. The yellow coiled phone wire pulled taut as Kevin reached for the pencil and paper.

"Flight 709 on United Airlines. Terminal two." Condi's words came over the phone as Kevin wrote them down.

"Thanks Condi." Kevin hung the headset back on the cradle and peeled off the paper from the tablet.

"United Airlines, that's my old employer." Peggy Saxton said to Kevin.

"Oh, what did you do for them?" Kevin asked.

"I was a stewardess back in the day," Peggy replied with hint of pride all while trying to stand a little taller with the aid of her walker. "That was before I married a logger," Peggy's stance of pride turned to a slump.

"Thanks for the use of the phone," replied Kevin as he exited the small kitchen. Lilly was just coming back and they met face to face in the connecting hallway.

"Did you get your call made?" Lilly asked.

"I did and thanks," replied Kevin as the scent of baby powder reminded him of being under the sleeping bags in the old rustic cabin. "Thanks for not letting me freeze to death last night." Kevin added not trying to be forward or rude; just words that flowed naturally.

"You should really be thanking Tucker," Lilly replied as she looked into Kevin's green eyes and felt her heart pounding.

"Lilly could I buy you dinner tonight?" Kevin wasn't sure why he was standing toe to toe with Lilly in this small dim hallway and asking her out to dinner. Maybe he felt obligated to the Saxton's for coming to his rescue but this was different, Lilly was different and he appreciated that about her.

"Thanks for the offer, Mr. Trask, but I have other plans tonight." Lilly slid around Kevin and disappeared around the corner into the kitchen and carefully listened for the sound of the cowbells as Kevin left their small storefront. She plopped down at the small table and Tucker came over and nuzzled his head against her leg.

"Why didn't you take up that nice young man's offer for dinner?" Peggy asked.

"Mom, I'm not good enough for a guy like that." Lilly said in a dismal tone.

Peggy's back was turned arranging the flowers in the sink. Lilly could not see the flow of tears falling from her mother's face onto and into the vase of cut flowers. Two anguished hearts as one, in a small kitchen on the Sabbath, the day of rest. Tucker could sense the regret and the heart pain radiating from both of them. Class distinction never rests—no matter what time, day or place. The Saxton's were not equal to the Trask's—not even close.