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The Exchange Student

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The Exchange Student

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THE EXCHANGE STUDENT

BY FRED G. LEEBRON

Provincetown

The news started coming down Route 6 early that Saturday morning, a peculiar siren sound like a cross between a busy phone signal and an overworked synthesizer. It blasted into the house at 8:32 a.m. when the exchange student was woken by high-pitched keening from the downstairs kitchen.

His eyes raced around the still strange bedroom. His half-full blue rucksack leaned in a corner, his Danish-English dictionary sat on a dark pine desk. He felt under the bed for his unpacked suitcase. Was it keening or was it wailing? He knew he should stay in his room until it passed. It became guttural, as if the voice were choking, and the only words he could understand were: "Now, now . . ." Doors were opening and closing all over the house. There was sobbing. He thought hard to the last time he had heard such emotion. There wasn't a time. The reputation of New Englanders was that they were restrained, deeply reticent, until you got to know them, and that often took a good while. Even then, sometimes, you wouldn't catch so much as a grin or a tear. He lay in bed. His new watch, waterproof to a depth of fifteen feet, told him that an hour had passed. An hour!

It was only August. He still had eleven months left, if he were counting, which he was not. He was just trying to endure. His American brother frequented the gay discotheques, his American sister thought she must be far prettier than she was,

his American father was a gnarled pontificator (about what wasn't yet clear to the exchange student) missing a thumb—he ran a whale watching company—and his American mother seemed as old and stunted as his grandmother back home. Three weeks ago, when he'd seen this unlikely group at South Station in Boston along with all the other host families, he'd prayed they weren't his—and he never prayed.

Now it was 10:05 and the house was silent. It was always difficult to know when to appear and when to disappear. His room was tucked away in a far upper corner, and he could be as invisible as they needed him to be. He supposed he could use the bathroom.

His trip took him past his sister's room, which was empty, and to his brother's door, which was thrown open to the usual mess of cassettes and records. His brother liked to quiz him on music and was appalled by his limited knowledge.

The bathroom was pleasant and white and warm. It caught the morning sun through a skylight. He wondered where everyone was and what the hell had happened. When he was finished, he went into the hallway and looked out the window onto the driveway. Empty. It was a Sunday morning and everything was recovering from the havoc of an August Saturday night and there wasn't a single car. He felt a strange thrill when he realized he might be alone.

He tiptoed down the stairs—he was of course already dressed, you couldn't go to the bathroom without being dressed—and opened the living room door. A newspaper had been left open on the green leather couch. A cup of coffee sat unfinished on a side table. He crossed to the kitchen. On the bare table was a note: *Help yourself to food.*

Hesitantly, he opened the refrigerator. There was milk and cheese and eggs and something they called *linguica*, plus a plastic container of cream cheese. On the counter were a jar of

jam and a bag of rolls from the Portuguese bakery and a bottle of fizzy water. He poured himself some fizzy water and sat at the breakfast table.

The phone rang. He'd never answered it before. It rang and rang and rang. He looked at it; it was black with a rotary dial and appeared ancient. Was it ringing for him? He waited through the twentieth ring and then picked up.

"Good morning," he said.

A man's voice poured back at him, rushed and elusive.

In his best American, he told the man that he didn't speak American so well.

The man offered a few choice words about that—what they were was anybody's guess—and hung up.

He took the glass of fizzy water out through the living room to the front hall and opened the door to the driveway. He stood there smelling the salt air. Carefully he searched the sky above the pine trees that surrounded their partially settled neighborhood, cut off by Route 6 from the town. Just last week on a dune hike, they'd seen a shack practically spontaneously combust. What the hell was going on here?

Against the wall of the house leaned a lone motorbike. That would be his once Valerie left for Denmark. He looked at his watch—he'd never had a watch before—and saw that would be in just two days. In just two days he'd be free of her. She spoke to him more than anybody else in the family, but primarily it all revolved around how many boys kept telling her how beautiful she was. She was all right, but she was not beautiful. She had dark hair, for one thing. He couldn't tell whether she was trying to provoke him into saying something like, *But you are beautiful*, or if she was just gloating. The town had never had an exchange student before, inbound or outbound. The silence was unstinting.

A car pulled into the driveway, spraying pebbles and

seashells. Valerie and her parents were visible through its smudged oversized windows. He waved to them uncertainly. What was he supposed to do—go to the car, retreat into the house, stand there like a statue? Finally, Valerie got out of the car. She strode over to him and took his hand. She was an inch or two taller.

“Come,” she said with grim determination.

She led him into the house and through the kitchen to the refrigerator, still holding his hand. She’d never held his hand before. He wasn’t surprised that he didn’t like it. She opened the refrigerator and grabbed two cans of beer and shut the door with her hip and led him upstairs. At the top of the stairs she looked left and right, as if she’d never been there before. “Okay, okay,” she said, urging herself onward, still holding his hand. She’d probably held a lot of hands. He wondered if she’d had sex yet; he hadn’t, though of course it was never far from his mind.

They walked down the hall together, separately but side by side. He thought he could see a tear in the corner of her eye; he thought he could sense something awful waiting at the end of the hall. She opened the door to his room, pulled him in, shut it, sat him forcefully on the bed, sat beside him, opened a can and handed it to him, opened her can, and tried to smile.

“Skaal,” she said, perhaps her one word of Danish, tapping his can with hers.

“Skaal,” he said.

She took a sip and he took a sip.

“What have you been doing this morning?” she asked. “What have you heard?”

He looked at her. It seemed wrong, perhaps even dangerous, to admit he’d heard anything. “I was asleep,” he said.

“You couldn’t sleep through that.” She looked at him in frank disbelief.

“I don’t know what I heard.”

She took up his hand again; at a point, he didn’t know when, she’d ceased holding it. “What you heard was my mother crying because my brother has been killed in a car accident.”

As the words left her mouth, her face crumpled as if it had forgotten it had bones. Tears streamed from her clenched eyes. He reached for her because that was all he could think to do, and both their cans spilled and fell to the carpeted floor. Her chest heaved against his and he willed himself not to grow hard and was relieved to see that the effect at least for the moment followed the intent.

“Ronnie,” she sobbed. “Oh, Ronnie!”

He knew he should express some feeling, but he also knew that it would seem false because it *was* false, and he had so little experience on this front that any gesture was risky. Holding her, as he continued to hold her, was risky. He remembered glimpsing his mother through her half-open bedroom door when she’d come home from the hospital after Grandfather had died, and stepping carefully into her room and going right up to her and hugging her and saying, “Oh, I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry,” and how that had been the right thing to do.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry,” he said to Valerie.

She was sobbing and sniffing, trying to get on top of the emotion and falling right through it so that she was all emotion and nothing else. He rubbed her back in what he hoped was a brotherly way.

“My mother,” she forced out. “Will. Not. Ever. Get. Over. This.”

It was too early in his stay for him to know anyone’s story. The routine had been a leisurely but efficient breakfast, a drive to this new place or that—Race Point, his future school now just eight days away, the A&P out Shank Painter, the odd thick forest that grew just south of where the dunes ended, the

little Provincetown airport—then lunch at home, time alone in his room to study English, afternoon coffee in the living room, dinner, more time alone in his room, evening television and evening coffee in the den, polite and grateful goodnight. (At the two-week language school prior to their distribution to their host families, the exchange students had been bludgeoned with the fact that the most important single phrase in New England was *thank you*, and he said it these days, by his count, at least twice an hour, to everything—meals, coffee, being told where the extra soap was kept, being taken along to the supermarket, being brought home from the supermarket, being irrecusably invited to go sit in the gay discotheque for seven hours practically every Friday and Saturday night, the beer occasionally slid his way, being told there was a letter from home.) All he knew was that Ronnie and Valerie were Americans by birth, that they'd been adopted, that they'd been teased in school mercilessly about it, that Valerie had absolutely zero curiosity about her birth mother but knew her to be a drunk (they'd met once), that Ronnie, while working regular hours in his father's whale watching company, was desperate to be a deejay and travel around the States and maybe to Canada, that he really didn't know these people and didn't necessarily want to, that this was the longest, strangest embrace of his life.

Soon, she stopped trembling and signaled, very deftly he thought, almost like a shrug, that she was ready to release. Quickly, he opened his arms and she shifted slightly away and arched her back and looked at the floor.

“Oh. Those beers,” she said.

He moved to get something to address them.

“Don't,” she said. “Don't do anything, okay?”

She rubbed at her eyes as if she could shut off her tear ducts. She reached into the pocket of the lightweight black

leather jacket she always wore and pulled out a pack of cigarettes.

“Do you mind?” she asked.

“Of course not.”

She went to the window and popped it open and lit the cigarette with her red plastic lighter and stood smoking into the fresh still air. She smiled coldly at him, shaking her head.

“I could use a beer,” she said. “Mom and Dad, I don’t know when they’ll be back, but it will be hours before she’ll want to come home, and I’m not sure what it is I should be doing.”

He stayed on the bed, nodding, remembering her instruction not to do anything.

“This will be very difficult for you,” she said.

She was still looking at him. He nodded. Again, he didn’t want to say anything inauthentic, it was too big a situation not to say anything completely true, and he had no idea what the complete truth was. That *he* didn’t matter? Well that was a lie, that couldn’t be what he thought, selfless thoughts were rarely true, at least from his experience. Good God, this *was* going to be hard.

“Can’t you say anything?” she demanded.

“There is nothing good to say,” he tried.

“Well, that’s something.” She reached through the window and crushed the cigarette against the side of the house and then must have let it drop to the ground because when she pulled her hand back in, it was empty. She stepped past the spilled cans and took his hand.

“Let’s get a beer,” she said.

Jens, that was his name, Jens, he didn’t really know how much he’d figure into this story so he hadn’t yet taken a name, Jens walked with her down the empty hall and now it was like he too had never been here before, everything suddenly seemed so different, the hallway wider or narrower, the walls brighter or darker, he couldn’t tell. Even though he hadn’t

cried, hadn't shed a single tear, he felt as if he had. He felt wrung out. Maybe he felt stoned. Not quite paranoid, but approaching it, as if the floor might at any minute be taken out from under him, and he'd like to be prepared. Valerie held his hand all the way down the stairs and into the kitchen and even as she rummaged through the refrigerator. She must have felt the same way. It was an awful feeling. For the first time since he'd left home he found himself nearly missing his parents.

"What are you thinking?" she asked as they stood in the kitchen sipping beer, no longer holding hands.

"Nothing," he said.

It was odd how he didn't miss his parents. None of the other exchange students missed theirs either, or one did, but she'd already gone back home. They were an odd, slightly estranged lot, and next year, though of course he didn't know this yet, when he went to university with a whole other group of people, he'd discover that they too were an odd, slightly estranged lot. It made sense of course—or it would make sense—but still.

"That's a lie," Valerie said.

"Of course it's a lie," he said. "Anytime anyone says they're thinking nothing, it's a lie, because everyone's always thinking something." He looked at his beer, surprised. Had he really just said that?

"Exactly," Valerie said.

They took small sips of their beers in rapid succession, as if they couldn't bear to have their mouths freed from the bottles, because then what would they say? Valerie turned to stare out the window onto the empty driveway.

"My God, you are going to be here all alone," she said to the window. "I have to go, you know. It means everything to my dad that I go. And I want to." Her back still to him, she brushed quickly at her face.

“They’re saying he was drunk,” she continued. “But what does that matter? He didn’t hurt anyone but himself. When we went to see him his face was all blue and swollen but he did, as they say, look peaceful.” Then she let loose a stream of words and he had no idea what she was saying, except for the curse words, which Ronnie had been teaching him diligently.

She turned back and her face was flecked with tears and splotted.

“We’re stuck here, you know. There’s no car and only one motorbike and it’s too small for two of us and there’s nowhere really I want to go and I was told not to leave you by yourself anyway. Are you afraid?”

“Afraid?” Sure, he was afraid, but he didn’t yet know of what. But yes, he could feel some fear. It was in his stomach, the way he felt kind of sick.

“Afraid,” she said. “Can you say that? Say, *Are you afraid.*”
“Are you afraid.”

“Yes,” she said. “I am.”

That he understood.

“Really,” she said.

“Of what?”

“Oh.” She let out a long sigh, like she was trying to gather herself and it wasn’t him she wanted to talk to anyway. “You know what, I’m really tired. I really don’t know what I’m saying.”

She finished her beer and stared at him until he finished his. Then she reached in and got them two more.

“I don’t know where we should sit,” she said. Clearly, the task of him had been assigned to her, and that evidently involved sitting somewhere in a civilized fashion. “This house is too damn big now. Is it okay if we stay in the kitchen?”

“Of course,” he said, marveling at how steady he sounded. She was two years older and an inch or two taller, and usually

when he was with her he felt about twelve. Twelve or thirteen. Now she leaned against the dry sink and he leaned against the counter and they sipped their beers just once. He looked at the floor, he couldn't look at her anymore, it was too hard, it hurt to look at her, like it was wrong to look at her, like really she needed to be however she could be and not have to be looked at. A single American ant traveled along over the American kitchen floor, weighted by a speck of a bread crumb.

"You didn't even really know him, did you? You don't really know any of us."

"Yes," he answered, but it came out a whisper, an intake of breath. That was the way the Danes said yes, breathing in at the same time as the word came out. It was meant as a form of encouragement, used mostly to signal to the one who was talking to keep going.

She looked at him queerly. "What the hell was that?"

"My . . . my breathing slipped."

A laugh escaped her mouth and she immediately covered it with a hand. Her eyes had a certain brightness even though they were brown, and her brown curly shoulder-length hair fell wherever it wanted. Her face was pale and thin and narrow, and her chin came to a delicate point. He hadn't seen her laugh by mistake before.

"What are you looking at?" she asked without accusation.

He felt his face redden. Was this really happening, or would he wake up soon? That was the way it usually worked. He didn't masturbate—he supposed his parents had somehow kept him from it before he was truly conscious of the possibility; they'd somehow conditioned him—and so he had wet dreams, lots of them, and lately, unfortunately, they involved Valerie and he always woke right after it was too late to stop whatever was happening to him.

"Sorry," he said. He looked at her with true apology and

she smiled back at him without any threat or meaning whatsoever, as if maybe she didn't even know what he was sorry for.

"You have trouble sleeping, don't you?" she observed. "Almost every night I hear you get up and go to the bathroom."

How did these people appear to know everything, when he knew nothing? Had he run the water so long that she could tell he was cleaning himself up? She seemed to be mocking him in that way she sometimes couldn't help but have, the way that said, *I have all the experience and you will never have any*. His face felt so hot he could no longer feel it.

"You don't look so good," she said, and he couldn't tell whether she was amused or concerned or both. How could anyone be both? How could Ronnie be dead and they be standing here drinking beer on such an eerie Sunday morning? Suddenly, she reached across and felt his forehead, rested her hand there. "You're hot," she said, and took her hand away matter-of-factly. "God, everything's so crazy I don't know how it can all be real." She wiped one eye and then the other. He glanced around and down at the floor. "Maybe we could sit on the floor? I don't know how to explain it but I don't want to sit in the breakfast nook." Her hand waved at the arrangement.

"Nook," he said.

"Yes, breakfast nook. That's what it's called." She sat on the floor cross-legged. Gingerly, as if he thought he might injure himself, he sat down across from her.

"I've never done this before," she said, "but for the first time I think I'm glad we have a small kitchen." She sipped her beer. "I feel like we're little kids."

He nodded and drank seriously from his beer, or he nodded seriously and drank from his beer. It was only his second and really watery, but he was seventeen and he weighed fifty-five kilos and he hadn't eaten since yesterday evening's dinner, when they had squeezed into the "nook" and Ellen had

brought her chair out to sit at the head and they had the usual ground beef and ketchup and something that was green like broccoli or kale. Then Ellen had done the dishes with Valerie and he had sat in the living room with Ralph and Ronnie and they had read the *Cape Cod Times* and he had read his book—he was trying to read a lot for his English, to ease himself into the swing of things when really he was just depressed, waiting for school to begin, waiting for his new life to begin. He was reading *The Source*, wondering what relics might possibly be found in the apparently thin ground beneath them, and then it was time for coffee and television in the den where they watched their favorite series, M*A*S*H, which was helping him to learn. It had a lot of sarcasm in it, every episode featured several sarcastic exchanges, and he was amazed by how the family looked at it so normally, as if there was nothing obvious about it, and after it was over, Ronnie had said, “I’m going out for a drive.” He’d turned to Jens and punched him lightly on the shoulder and said, “You want to come?” and Jens had stopped his face from souring at the thought of another too dark and too fast ride to one of Ronnie’s friends’ houses, where they’d sit in the mildewed basement and listen to Donna Summer and Boney M. and have one watery beer or at most two beers each and he’d have to nod his head to the music and pretend he liked it. “No, thank you,” he’d said, “but thank you.” They all laughed at him at that, and Ronnie said, “Crazy Dane,” and batted him on the shoulder, and shook his keys in his hand like dice, and said, “See you.” The remaining tufts of his dirty-blond hair had fluttered as he hurried from the house. In the den, Valerie had rolled her eyes and shook her head, and he couldn’t tell whether it was at him for not going or at Ronnie for, well, being Ronnie.

“Now what are you thinking about?” Valerie asked.

“Last night,” he said.

“I was going to tell you about Ronnie and me as little kids, but I don’t want to talk about the past.” Suddenly she rose and brushed herself off. “We should have a drink.”

He went with her to the cabinet in the living room where the hard stuff was kept. She got two little glasses and handed them to him, then took out a dark bottle and looked at it and returned it to the cabinet and then took out another one and inspected it.

“This one, I think,” she said, holding it up to him. “I don’t think you’ve tried this one yet.”

“Okay,” he said, though the thought of anything strong and fiery going down his throat and into his empty stomach nearly set him on the floor again.

“I think maybe we’re going too slowly. I think maybe we should be drinking faster,” she muttered almost to herself. “Where did we leave our beers?”

“On the kitchen floor. I’ll get them.”

“No—”

But he was past her and entering the kitchen, where he promptly kicked over both cans.

“That’s four.” She clapped her hands as if he were a zoo animal who had performed this feat unwittingly for her entertainment, which seemed to him probably correct. “Soon we’ll be swimming in beer. Soon the whole house will be flooded with beer.”

“I am so sorry,” he said, blushing, looking for a paper towel. He wasn’t sure they had paper towels in this country. “Excuse me.”

She set the cans on the table and reached out and he handed over the shot glasses. “We’ll have a shot and then we’ll clean this and then we’ll clean upstairs. We have so much time.”

“I am such an idiot,” he said, his face hotter than ever.

“We’ve come to expect it.” She patted him in a motherly fashion on his shoulder, three quick taps, then poured the shots. She peered at him and raised her glass. “To Ronnie,” she said, her expression instantly contorting and then returning to itself.

“To Ronnie,” he said.

When he downed the shot, it was like a blowtorch in the face. The shock ran up his nose and down his throat and spine and burned his stomach like it harbored lighter fluid.

“Very good.” She set down the glass and started wiping up the beer.

He reached around her narrow shoulders and plucked up the cans and stepped over the puddle and jammed them into the garbage can under the sink.

“You see,” she said, showing him the freshly dried floor. “It’s nothing. Can you hand me a wet paper towel with a little soap on it?”

He found the paper towels and soaked one with warm water and a little soap and handed it to her, making sure their fingers didn’t touch.

“You are such a careful boy, even when you’re not.”

There was a candid assessment in her words but also blunt despair. All those times he’d gone with Ronnie, five or six times in just three weeks, the guy never had more than two beers. He preferred drinking in the discotheque or in his room. Had Ronnie gone to the discotheque without Valerie and him?

“Now what are you thinking about?” Valerie asked, looking up from the floor where she rested on one hand, legs folded under her. The upward turn of her face and the upward cast of her eyes made her appear surprisingly like a lost child, mouth slightly open and lips parted as if she wanted to say something more but had no idea what it was and was waiting for him to say something too. He felt queasy and bereft, as if the floor had indeed decided to shift from underneath him.

“I’m going to miss you,” he said.

“I know.” She gave one last wipe and stood up and stepped right next to him at the sink, where she rinsed and wrung out the cloth and set it on the counter. “Now we have to deal with upstairs.” She dried her hands on her jeans and reached out for him and he gave up his hand, and when she held it he felt on slightly firmer ground.

On the way upstairs, she grabbed a small towel from the bathroom and soaked it and soaped it and then led him to his room, where she dropped to her knees. He reached around her again and picked up the cans and started for the kitchen.

“Don’t leave me up here alone,” she said.

Her tone, so simple and yet so starkly and unbearably vulnerable, startled him and he halted instantly as if jerked by a rope, and then he was falling, falling on his clogs—that was the first thing Ralph and Ellen had remarked about him, that he wore those clogs—and he tumbled out of them onto the floor. She was laughing so hard her face was red. She let the towel fall and crawled to him and held him in her arms against her lap and breasts as if he were some kind of fallen soldier.

“Is my little Dane hurt?” she said, and kissed him on the forehead. She withdrew for a moment as if trying to convince herself of something, and he was still gazing at her thinking this must be a dream, don’t do anything, don’t do anything, when she bent again and kissed him with her tongue, without pause, she could actually breathe while kissing him and he was trying to kiss her back. Then she was moving from under him and was over him and on top of him on the floor and her hand was sweeping his chest, gliding down toward his jeans, and unzipping him, all seemingly in one movement, and they were still kissing and he was still telling himself don’t, don’t, and thinking don’t what? Don’t let her do this in her state or don’t come yet or what? And she was all over him and he was kissing

her and just holding on tight and he was out of his pants and underwear and she was out of her pants and underwear and his hand was under her jacket and shirt—she still had that jacket on!—and she was straddling him and then something happened and he couldn't help himself. He said, "Am I in?"

"Haven't you done it before?"

"Of course," he said.

And she was moving atop him and he was thinking about how lucky he was on such an unlucky day and he was thinking it felt different than he thought it would and he was thinking he was starting to ache a little, that somehow it was starting to hurt.

"You're supposed to too," she said.

"What?"

"Move."

Move how? he thought. The truth was he didn't know. He'd seen parts of some porn films, but they were kind of gross and he hadn't learned anything from them. He moved sideways.

"What *are* you doing?"

"Moving," he said, and he worried it came out like a question.

Then her face collapsed and she was crying, really crying, her chest wracked with sobs, and she sank fully upon him, and then she slid from him and lay atop him weeping and her face was pressing against his shirt and he didn't know where to put his hands—certainly not on her bare bottom—and he held her tightly through her leather jacket and she cried and cried.

After a while she stopped and her hand found him again, and again she slid him into herself and was moving with an almost seriousness of purpose.

"Why are we doing this?" he asked.

"Shut up," she said. "Just be quiet. Okay?"

He knew enough not to say even okay. She kept going and he was trying to move somehow—how could he be so ignorant about this, so unknowing?—and then she swallowed hard and her eyes didn't appear to be looking at all, and she stopped and patted him lightly on the chest.

“Okay,” she said.

She maneuvered herself off him and stood and went to the bed for the duvet and came back and lay beside him on the floor and covered them both because it did seem suddenly colder than it was.

“You'll be so much different when I come back in a year,” she said. “You'll know how. The girls here have never seen a Dane and they'll be curious.”

And neither of them could know—how could they?—that she wouldn't come back in a year but in two and a half months, because it would turn out to be so awful over there, so horrible, in silly backward small-town Denmark, and her face would be so haggard and gaunt that she'd look at least thirty, sitting across from him in the breakfast nook as she smoked her cigarettes and rolled her eyes. And he couldn't know and she couldn't know that in just twenty years both her parents would be in the ground and she would be in the ground, that they would all be dead, leaving nobody behind except maybe him and he didn't count.

He could feel her groping around and she dug out a cigarette from her jacket pocket and lit it and lay on her back smoking up at the ceiling.

“You know, we talked about it,” she said.

“What?”

“Ronnie and I. We talked about doing it. Fucking. I mean, we weren't—” her voice caught at that. “Weren't related, really. So we could have. And we talked about it. But we didn't do it.”

“Oh.” For an instant, he had a vision of them doing it and it made him shiver.

“Is my little Dane cold?” She moved a hand toward him. “My little Dane who’d never done it before.”

“I know,” he admitted.

“You’re going to be fine,” she said.

And he was, he was going to be fine. Although they wouldn’t ever sleep together again, he would last the year and go to university and marry and have kids and, in all the ordinary meanness and tragedy of life, experience happiness. But none of them here in this house would experience that after today. Yesterday would be their last day. The police would determine that Ronnie wasn’t drunk, he just hadn’t been a particularly cautious driver. He liked to go really fast. Jens could remember that, how the trees whistled at them on their way to Race Point, how Ronnie turned Province Lands Road into his personal quarter oval. He could remember sitting in the passenger seat and thinking it was so dangerous he couldn’t even admit to himself just how terrified he was, the way Ronnie would look over at him grinning insanely but in a not unkind fashion as he brought the car up to ninety and then one hundred miles an hour, his zany American brother.

But that was a long time ago, before many of you were even born. Don’t think about it, there’s no point in thinking about it. There’s no point in trying to look back.