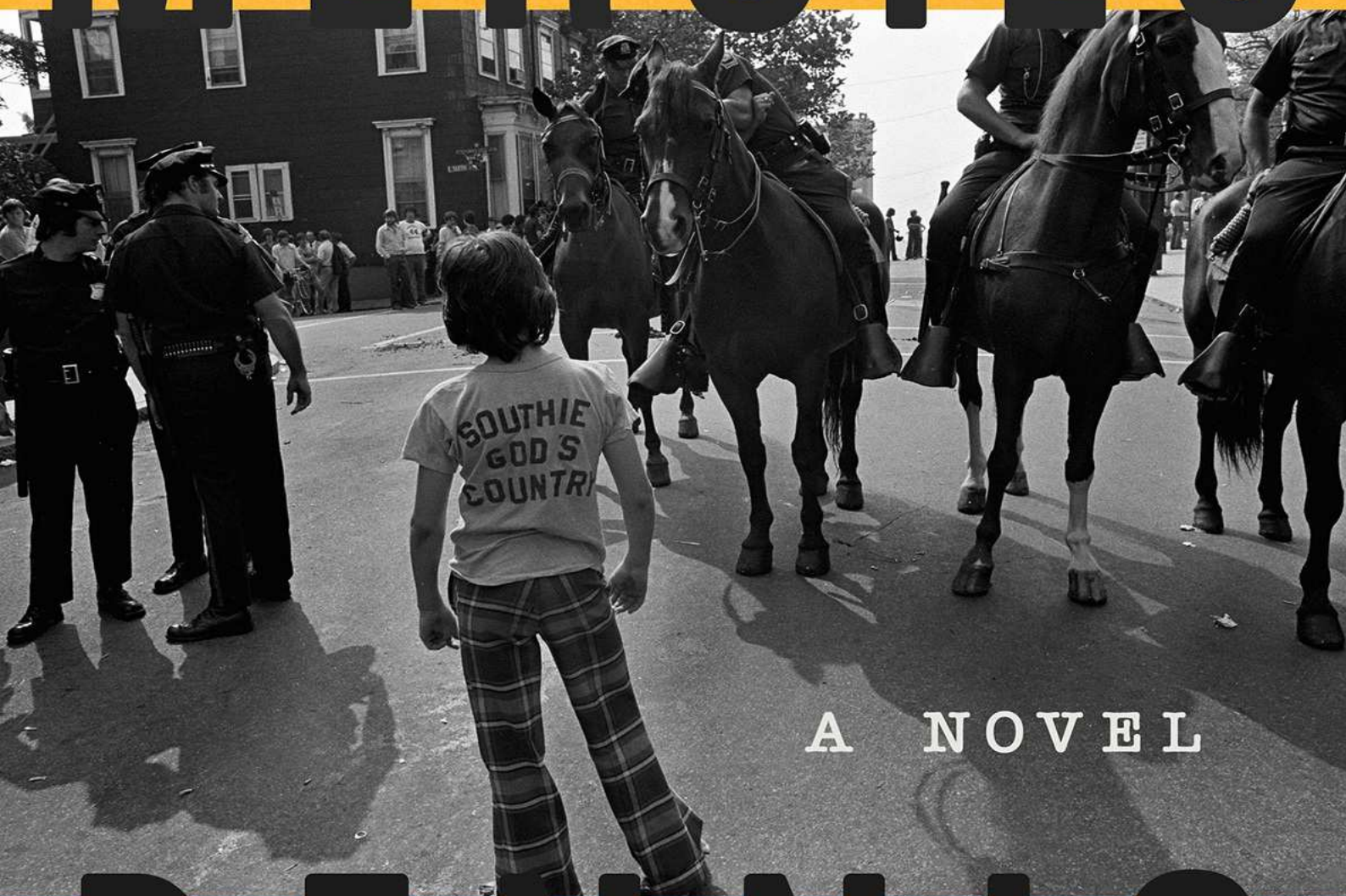


SMALL MERCIES



A NOVEL

DENNIS LEHANE

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HARPER

An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Dedication

For Chisa

Epigraph

To cut oneself entirely from one's kind is impossible. To live in a desert, one must be a saint.

—Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*

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Also by Dennis Lehane

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Historical Note

On June 21, 1974, U.S. District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., ruled in *Morgan v. Hennigan* that the Boston School Committee had “systematically disadvantaged black school children” in the public school system. The only remedy, the judge concluded, was to begin busing students between predominantly white and predominantly black neighborhoods to desegregate the city’s public high schools.

The school in the neighborhood with the largest African American population was Roxbury High School. The school in the neighborhood with the largest white population was South Boston High School. It was decided that these two schools would switch a significant portion of their student bodies.

This order was to take effect at the beginning of the school year, on September 12, 1974. Students and parents had less than ninety days from the date of the ruling to prepare.

It was very hot in Boston that summer, and it seldom rained.

1

The power goes out sometime before dawn, and everyone at Commonwealth wakes to swelter. In the Fennessy apartment, the window fans have quit in mid-rotation and the fridge is pimpled with sweat. Mary Pat sticks her head in on Jules, finds her daughter on top of her sheets, eyes clenched, mouth half open, huffing thin breaths into a damp pillow. Mary Pat moves on down the hall into the kitchen and lights her first cigarette of the day. She stares out the window over the sink and can smell the heat rising off the brick in the window casing.

She realizes she can't make coffee only when she tries to make it. She'd brew some on the stovetop—the oven runs on gas—but the gas company grew sick of excuses and killed their service last week. To get the family out of arrears, Mary Pat has picked up two shifts at the shoe warehouse where she has her second job, but she still has three more shifts and a trip to the billing office before she can boil water or roast a chicken again.

She carries the trash can into the living room and sweeps the beer cans into it. Empties the ashtrays from the coffee table and the side table and one she found on top of the TV. It's there she catches her reflection in the tube and sees a creature she can't reconcile with the image she's clung to in her mind, an image that bears little resemblance to the sweaty lump of matted hair and droopy chin dressed in a tank top and shorts. Even in the flat gray of the picture tube, she can make out the blue veins in her outer thighs, which somehow don't seem possible, not yet. Not yet. She's only forty-two, which, okay, when she was twelve seemed like one foot over the threshold into God's waiting room, but now, living it, is an age that makes her feel no different than she always has. She's twelve, she's twenty-one, she's thirty-three, she's all the ages at the same time. But she isn't aging. Not in her heart. Not in her mind's eye.

She's peering at her face in the TV, wiping at the damp strands of hair

on her forehead, when the doorbell rings.

After a series of home invasions two years back, in the summer of '72, the Housing Authority sprang for peepholes in the doors. Mary Pat looks through hers now to see Brian Shea in the mint green corridor, his arms full of sticks. Like most of the people who work for Marty Butler, Brian dresses neater than a deacon. No long hair or bandit mustaches for the Butler crew. No muttonchop sideburns or flared pants or elevated shoes. Definitely no paisley or tie-dye. Brian Shea dresses like someone from a decade earlier—white T-shirt under a navy blue Baracuta. (The Baracuta jacket—navy blue, tan, or occasionally brown—is a staple of Butler crew guys; they wear it even on days like today, when the mercury approaches 80 at nine a.m. They swap it out in the winter for topcoats or leather car coats with thick wool lining, but come spring they all bring the Baracutas back out of the closet on the same day.) Brian's cheeks are shaved close, his blond hair cropped tight in a crew cut, and he wears off-white chinos and scuffed black ankle boots with zippers on the sides. Brian has eyes the color of Windex. They sparkle and glint at her with an air of mild presumption, like he knows the things she thinks she keeps hidden. And those things amuse him.

“Mary Pat,” he says. “How are you?”

She can picture her hair splayed sodden on her head like congealed spaghetti. Can feel every splotch on her skin. “Power's out, Brian. How are you?”

“Marty's working on the power,” he says. “He's made some calls.”

She glances at the thin slats of wood in his arms. “Help you with those?”

“That'd be great.” He turns them in his arms and stands the pile upright beside her door. “They're for the signs.”

She seems to remember spilling beer on her tank top last night and wonders if the scent of stale Miller High Life is being picked up by Brian Shea. “What signs?”

“For the rally. Tim G will be by with them shortly.”

She places the slats in the umbrella bucket just inside her door. They share space with the lone umbrella with the broken rib. “The rally's happening?”

“Friday. We're taking it right to City Hall Plaza. Making some noise, Mary Pat. Just like we promised. We're going to need the whole neighborhood.”

“Of course,” she says. “I'll be there.”

He hands her a stack of leaflets. “We're asking folks to pass these out

before noon today. You know—before it gets crazy hot.” He uses the side of his hand to wipe at sweat trickling down his smooth cheek. “Though it might be too late for that.”

She takes the leaflets. Glances at the top one:

BOSTON’S UNDER SIEGE!!!!!!!!!!

**JOIN ALL CONCERNED PARENTS AND PROUD MEMBERS OF
THE SOUTH BOSTON COMMUNITY FOR A MARCH TO END
JUDICIAL DICTATORSHIP ON *FRIDAY, AUGUST 30*, AT CITY
HALL PLAZA.**

12 NOON SHARP!

NO BUSING! NEVER!

RESIST!

BOYCOTT!

“We’re asking everyone to cover specific blocks. We’d like you to cover . . .” Brian reaches into his Baracuta, comes back with a list, runs his finger down it. “Ah. Like you to cover Mercer between Eighth and Dorchester Street. And Telegraph to the park. And then, yeah, all the houses ringing the park.”

“That’s a lot of doors.”

“It’s for the Cause, Mary Pat.”

Anytime the Butler crew comes around with their hands out, what they’re really offering is protection. But they never exactly call it that. They wrap it in a noble motive: the IRA, the starving children in Wherever the Fuck, families of veterans. Some of the money might even end up there. But the anti-busing cause, so far, anyway, seems totally legit. It seems like *the* Cause. If for no other reason than they haven’t asked for a dime from the residents of Commonwealth. Just legwork.

“Happy to help,” Mary Pat tells Brian. “Just busting your balls.”

Brian gives that a tired eye roll. “Everyone busts balls in this place. Time I’m done, I’ll be a eunuch.” He tips an imaginary cap to her before heading down the green corridor. “Good to see you, Mary Pat. Hope your power comes back soon.”

“Wait a sec,” she calls. “Brian.”

He looks back at her.

“What happens after the protest? What happens if, I dunno, nothing changes?”

He holds out his hands. “I guess we see.”

Why don't you just fucking shoot the judge? she thinks. *You're the goddamn Butler crew. We pay "protection" to you. Protect us now. Protect our kids. Make this stop.*

But what she says is “Thanks, Brian. Say hi to Donna.”

“Will do.” Another tip of the imaginary cap. “Say hi to Kenny.” His smooth face freezes for a second as he probably recalls the latest neighborhood gossip. He flashes her doe eyes. “I mean, I meant—”

She bails him out with a simple “I will.”

He gives her a tight smile and walks off.

She closes the door and turns back into the apartment to see her daughter sitting at the kitchen table, smoking one of her cigarettes.

“Fucking power's off,” Jules says.

“Or ‘Good morning,’” Mary Pat says. “‘Good morning’ works.”

“Good morning.” Jules shoots her a smile that manages to be bright as the sun and cold as the moon. “I'm going to need to shower, Ma.”

“So shower.”

“It'll be cold.”

“It's fucking ninety degrees out.” Mary Pat pulls her pack of Slims back across the table from her daughter's elbow.

Jules rolls her eyes, takes a drag, directs the smoke at the ceiling in a long steady exhale. “What did he want?”

“Brian?”

“Yeah.”

“How do you know Brian Shea?” Mary Pat lights her second of the day.

“Ma,” Jules says, her eyes bulging, “I don't *know* Brian Shea. I know Brian Shea because everyone in the neighborhood knows Brian Shea. What did he want?”

“There's gonna be a march,” Mary Pat says. “A rally. Friday.”

“Won't change anything.” Her daughter tries for a tone of casual apathy, but Mary Pat sees the fear swimming in her eyes, darkening the pouches underneath. Always such a pretty girl, Jules. Always such a pretty girl. And now clearly aging. At seventeen. From any number of things—growing up in Commonwealth (not the kind of place that produces beauty queens and fashion models, no matter how pretty they were coming out of the gate); losing a brother; watching her stepfather walk out the door just when she'd finally started to believe he'd stick around; being forced—by federal edict—to enter a new school her senior year in a foreign

neighborhood not known for letting white kids walk around after sundown; not to mention just being seventeen and getting into who knows what with her knucklehead friends. A lot of pot around these days, Mary Pat knows, and acid. Booze, of course; in Southie, most kids came out of the womb clutching a Schlitz and a pack of Luckies. And, of course, the Scourge, that nasty brown powder and its fucking needles that turn healthy kids into corpses or soon-to-be-corpse in under a year. If Jules keeps it to the booze and the cigarettes with the occasional joint thrown in, she'll only lose her looks. And everyone loses their looks in the projects. But God forbid if she moves on to the Scourge. Mary Pat will die another death.

Jules, she's come to realize over the last couple of years, never should have been raised here. Mary Pat—one look at *her* baby pictures and childhood snapshots, all scrunched face and wide shoulders and small powerful body, ready to audition for the roller derby or some shit—looks like she came off a conveyor belt for tough Irish broads. Most people would sooner pick a fight with a stray dog with a taste for flesh than fuck with a Southie chick who grew up in the PJs.

But that's Mary Pat.

Jules is tall and sinewy, with long smooth hair the color of an apple. Every inch of her is soft and feminine and waiting on a broken heart the way miners wait on black lung—she just knows it's coming. She's fragile, this product of Mary Pat's womb—fragile in the eyes, fragile in her flesh, fragile in her soul. All the tough talk, the cigarettes, the ability to swear like a sailor and spit like a longshoreman, can't fully disguise that. Mary Pat's mother, Louise "Weezie" Flanagan, a Hall of Fame Irish Tough Broad who'd stood four-eleven and weighed ninety-five pounds soaking wet after a Thanksgiving dinner, told Mary Pat a few times, "You're either a fighter or a runner. And runners always run out of road."

Mary Pat sometimes wishes she'd found a way to get them out of Commonwealth before Jules finds out which she is.

"So where's this rally taking place?" Jules asks.

"We're going downtown."

"Yeah?" That gets a wry smile from her daughter as she stubs out her cigarette. "Crossing the bridge 'n' shit." Jules raises her eyebrows up and down. "Look at you."

Mary Pat reaches across the table and pats her hand so she'll look at her. "We're going to City Hall. They can't ignore us, Jules. They're gonna see us, they're gonna fucking hear us. You kids ain't alone."

Jules gives her a smile that's hopeful and broken at the same time.

"Yeah?" She lowers her head. Her voice is a wet whisper when she says,

“Thanks, Ma.”

“Of course.” Mary Pat feels something clench in the back of her throat. “You bet, sweetie.”

This may have been the longest she’s sat with her daughter, just talking, in months. She’d forgotten how much she likes it.

A tiny clap of thunder shakes the floor beneath their feet, rattles through the walls, and the lights come on above the stove. The fans start moving in the windows. Radios and TVs in the other apartments return to battle with one another. Someone whoops.

Jules shrieks, “I call shower!” and bolts from her chair like she owes it money.

Mary Pat makes coffee. Takes it into the living room with one of the freshly emptied ashtrays and turns on the TV. They’re all over the news—South Boston and the coming school year. Black kids about to get bused into Southie. White kids about to get bused out to Roxbury. No one on either side happy about the prospect.

Except the agitators, the blacks who sued the school committee—been suing it for nine years because nothing was ever good enough.

Mary Pat has worked alongside too many blacks at Meadow Lane Manor and the shoe factory to believe they’re bad or naturally lazy. Plenty of good, hardworking, upstanding Negroes want the same things she wants—a steady paycheck, food on the table, children safe in their beds. She’s told both her children if they’re going to say “nigger” around her, they better be sure they’re using it about those blacks who aren’t upstanding, don’t work hard, don’t stay married, and have babies just to keep the welfare checks rolling in.

Noel, just before he left for Vietnam, said, “That describes most of the ones I’ve ever met, Ma.”

“And how many have you met?” Mary Pat wanted to know. “You see a lot of coloreds walking up West Broadway, do ya?”

“No,” he said, “but I see ’em downtown. See ’em on the T.” He used one hand to imitate someone holding a subway strap and the other to scratch under his arm like a monkey. “They’s always going to Fo’-rest Hills.” He made chimp sounds and she swatted at him.

“Don’t be ignorant,” she said. “I didn’t raise you to be ignorant.”

He smiled at her.

God, she misses her son’s smile; she first saw it, crooked and wide, when he was on her breast, drunk on mother’s milk, and it blew open a chamber of her heart that refuses to close no matter how hard she presses down on it.

He kissed her on the top of her head. “You’re too nice for these projects, Ma. Anyone ever tell you that?”

And then he was gone. Back out to the streets. All Southie kids loved the streets but none more so than project kids. Project kids hated staying in the way rich people hated work. Staying in meant smelling your neighbors’ food through the walls, hearing their fights, their fucks, their toilet flushes, what they listened to on their radios and record players, what they watched on TV. Sometimes you’d swear you could *smell* them, their body odor and cigarette breath and swollen-feet stink.

Jules comes back into the living room in her old tartan bathrobe, at least two sizes too small at this point, drying her hair. “We going?”

“Going?”

“Yeah.”

“Where?”

“You told me you’d take me back-to-school shopping.”

“When?”

“Like fucking *today*, Ma.”

“You doing the buying?”

“Ma, come on, don’t fuck with me.”

“I’m not. You notice we don’t have a stove?”

“Who gives a shit? You never cook.”

That gets Mary Pat off the couch with blood in her eyes. “I never fucking cook?”

“Not lately.”

“Because the gas was turned off.”

“Well, whose fault was that?”

“Get a fucking job before I break your head in,” Mary Pat says, “talking to me like that.”

“I have a job.”

“Part-time don’t count, honey. Part-time don’t make the rent.”

“Or keep the stove working, apparently.”

“I will knock you into fucking next week, I swear to Christ.”

Jules raises her fists and dances back and forth in her ridiculous robe like a boxer in the ring. Smiling big.

Mary Pat bursts out laughing in spite of herself. “Put those hands down before your punch your own head, end up talking funny the rest of your life.”

Jules, laughing through her teeth, shoots her the bird with both hands, still doing the ridiculous dance in the ridiculous robe. “Robell’s, then.”

“I got *no* money.”

Jules stops dancing. Puts the towel back over her head. “You got some. You might not have Boston Gas bill money, but you got Robell’s money.”

“No,” Mary Pat says. “I do not.”

“I’m gonna go to the spearchucker school looking poorer than them?” Her eyes well, and she runs the towel violently over her head to make the tears get no further. “Ma, *please?*”

Mary Pat imagines her there on day one, this trembly white girl and her big brown eyes.

“I got a few bucks,” Mary Pat manages.

Jules drops into a crouch of gratitude. “*Thank you.*”

“But you gotta help me knock on a bunch of doors first.”

“Fuckin’ what now?” Jules says.

They start in the Heights. Knock on all the doors that circle the park and the monument. A lot of people aren’t home (or assume she and Jules are Christian Scientists spreading “gospel” so pretend not to be), but plenty are. And few need converting. They provide the outrage, the righteousness, the umbrage. They’ll be there on Friday.

“Bet your ass we will,” an old lady with a walker and smoker’s breath tells them. “Bet your sweet ass.”

The sun’s in descent by the time they finish. Not setting so much as dipping into the brown ribbons of smoke in a constant drift from the power plant at the end of West Broadway. Mary Pat takes Jules to Robell’s and they pick out a notebook, a four-pack of pens, a blue nylon school bag, a pair of jeans with wide flares at the bottom but which run high on the hips. Then Jules, in the groove of it all finally, goes with her mother to Finast, where Mary Pat buys a TV dinner for herself. When she asks what Jules wants for dinner, Jules reminds her she’s going out with Rum. They move through the checkout line with one TV dinner and one *National Enquirer*, Mary Pat thinking she may as well have *Lonely, Aging, and Pudgy* plastered to her forehead.

On the walk home, Jules, out of the blue, says, “You ever wonder if there’s some different place?”

Mary Pat says, “What now?”

Jules steps off the curb to avoid a pile of ants swarming what looks like a broken egg. She pivots around a young tree before stepping back up on the sidewalk. “You just, you know, you ever have the feeling that things are supposed to be one way but they’re not? And you don’t know why

because you've never known, like, anything but what you see? And what you see is, you know"—she waves at Old Colony Avenue—"this?" She looks at her mother and cants a bit on the uneven sidewalk so they won't collide. "But you know, right?"

"Know what?"

"Know it's not what you were meant for." Jules taps the space between her breasts. "In here."

"Well, sweetie," her mother says, with no fucking idea what she's on about, "what were you meant for?"

"I'm not saying it that way."

"What way?"

"The way you're saying it."

"Then how're you saying it?"

"I'm just trying to say I don't understand why I don't feel the way other people seem to feel."

"About what?"

"About everything. Anything." Her daughter raises her hands. "Fuck!"

"What?" Mary Pat wants to know. "*What?*"

Jules waves her hand at the world. "Ma, I just . . . It's like . . . Okay, okay." She stops and props a foot up on the base of a rusted BPD callbox. Her voice falls to a whisper. "I don't understand why things are what they are."

"You mean school? You mean busing?"

"What? No. I mean, yes. Kind of. I mean, I don't understand where we go."

Is she talking about Noel? "You mean when we die?"

"Then, yeah. But, you know, when we . . . forget about it."

"No, tell me."

"No."

"Please."

Her daughter looks her right in the eyes—an absolute rarity since her first menstrual cycle six years ago—and her gaze is hopeless and yearning in the same breath. For a moment, Mary Pat sees herself in the gaze . . . but what self? Which Mary Pat? How long since she yearned? How long since she dared believe something so foolish as the idea that someone anywhere has the answers to questions she can't even put into words?

Jules looks away, bites her lip, a habit of hers when she's fighting back tears. "I mean, where do we go, Ma? Next week, next year? Like, what's the fucking," she sputters, "what's the—Why are we doing this?"

"Doing *what?*"

“Walking around, shopping, getting up, going to bed, getting up again? What are we trying to, you know, like, achieve?”

Mary Pat wants to give her daughter one of those shots they give tigers to knock them out. What the fuck is she on about? “Are you PMSing?” she asks.

Jules hucks out a liquid chuckle. “No, Ma. Definitely no.”

“So what?” She takes her daughter’s hands in hers. “Jules, I’m here. What?” She kneads her daughter’s palms with her thumbs the way she always did when she was feverish as a child.

Jules gives her a smile that’s sad and knowing. But knowing of what? She says, “Ma.”

“Yes?”

“I’m okay.”

“You don’t sound it.”

“No, I am.”

“No, you’re not.”

“I’m just . . .”

“What?”

“Tired,” her daughter says.

“Of what?”

Jules bites the inside of her cheek, an old habit, and looks out at the avenue.

Mary Pat continues kneading her daughter’s palms. “Tired of what?”

Jules looks her in the eyes. “Lies.”

“Is Rum hurting you? Is he fucking lying to you?”

“No, Ma. No.”

“Then who?”

“No one.”

“You just said.”

“I said I was tired.”

“Tired of lies.”

“No, I just said that to shut you up.”

“Why?”

“Cuz I’m tired of you.”

Well, that’s a nice ax in the heart. She drops her daughter’s hands. “Fucking buy your own school supplies next time. You owe me twelve sixty-two.” She starts walking up the sidewalk.

“Ma.”

“Fuck you.”

“Ma, listen. I didn’t mean I’m tired of *you*. I meant I’m tired of you

giving me the third fucking degree.”

Mary Pat spins and walks toward her daughter so fast Jules takes a step back. (*You never take a step back*, Mary Pat wants to scream. *Not here. Not ever.*) She puts a finger in her face. “I’m giving you the third *fucking* degree because I’m worried about you. Talkin’ all this stuff that don’t make sense, your eyes misting up, looking all lost. You’re all I got now. Ain’t you figured that out? And I’m all *you* got now.”

“Well, yeah,” Jules says, “but I’m young.”

If she hadn’t smiled right away, Mary Pat might have laid her out. Right there on Old Colony.

“Are you okay?” she asks her daughter.

“I mean, I’m not.” Jules laughs. “But I am. That make sense?”

Her mother waits, her eyes never leaving her daughter’s.

Jules gestures broadly at Old Colony, at all the signs—SOUTHIE WILL NOT GO; WELCOME TO BOSTON, RULED BY DECREE; NO VOTE = NO RIGHTS—and the spray-painted messages on the sidewalks and the low walls around parking lots—*Niggers Go Home; White Power; Back to Africa Then Back to School*. For a second, it feels to Mary Pat like they’re preparing for war. All that’s missing are sandbags and pillbox turrets.

“It’s my *senior* year,” Jules says.

“I know, baby.”

“And nothing makes sense.”

Mary Pat hugs her daughter on the sidewalk and lets her cry into her shoulder. She ignores the stares of passersby. The more they stare, the prouder she grows of this weak child she’s borne. *At least Commonwealth hasn’t erased her heart*, she wants to say. *At least she held on to that, you thickheaded, coldhearted Hibernian assholes.*

I might be one of you. But she isn’t.

When they break the clutch, she wipes under her daughter’s eyes with her thumb. She tells her it’s okay. She tells her someday it *will* make sense.

Even though she’s waiting for that day herself. Even though she suspects everyone on God’s green earth is.

2

Jules takes another shower when they get back, and then her poor excuse for a boyfriend, Ronald “Rum” Collins, and her sidekick since second grade, Brenda Morello, come calling. Brenda is short and blond with huge brown eyes and a figure so full and fleshy that it seems designed by God to make men lose their train of thought whenever she walks by. She knows this, of course, and seems embarrassed by it; she continues to dress like a tomboy, something Mary Pat has always liked about her. Jules calls Brenda into her bedroom to ask about what she’s wearing, so Mary Pat gets stuck in the kitchen with Rum, who, like his father and uncles before him, has the conversational skills of a baked ham. Yet he’s mastered the art of saying very little around girls and his peers at Southie High, replacing the natural dullness in his eyes with a lazy contempt that a lot of kids take as a sign of cool. And her own daughter fell for it.

“You look, ah, nice today, Mrs. F.”

“Thank you, Ronald.”

He looks around the kitchen like he hasn’t seen it a hundred times. “My ma said she saw you up the supermarket last week.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Said you were buying cereal.”

“Well, if she says so.”

“What kind?”

“Of cereal?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t remember.”

“I like Froot Loops.”

“They’re your favorite, huh?”

He nods several times. “‘Cept when they’re in the milk too long and they turn it, like, different colors.”

“That’d be unfortunate.”

“So I eat it fast.” He gets a look in his eyes like he’s putting something over on Kellogg’s.

While her lips say, “That’s quick thinking,” her head says, *I pray you don’t breed.*

“But, yeah, I don’t like colors in my milk.” He arches his eyebrows as if he just said something wise. “Not. For. Me.”

She shoots him a tight smile. *And if you do breed, please don’t breed with my daughter.*

“I like milk, though. Without colors.”

She continues smiling at him because she’s too annoyed to speak.

“Oh, hey!” he says, and she turns to see Jules and Brenda coming into the room behind them. Rum steps past Mary Pat and puts a hand on Jules’s hip and kisses her on the cheek.

At least tell her she looks nice. Pretty.

“So let’s get outta here,” he says, and slaps her daughter’s hip, lets loose a high-pitched cackle-yelp that immediately makes Mary Pat want to brain him with a fucking rolling pin.

“Bye, Ma.” Jules leans in and gives her a peck on the cheek and Mary Pat gets a whiff of cigarettes, “Gee, Your Hair Smells Terrific” shampoo, and dabs of Love’s Baby Soft just behind her daughter’s ears.

She wants to grab Jules’s wrist and say, *Find someone else. Find someone good. Find someone who might be dumb but won’t be mean. This one will grow mean because he’s only one or two elevator stops above retard, and yet he thinks he’s kind of smart, and the ones who are like that grow mean when they realize the world laughs at them. You’re too good for this boy, Jules.*

But all she says is “Try to come home at a reasonable hour,” and returns the quick kiss to her daughter’s cheek.

And then Jules is gone. Lost to the night.

When she goes to cook her TV dinner, Mary Pat is once again reminded that her gas is shut off. She puts the dinner back in the freezer and walks up the block to Shaughnessy’s. In Southie, everything has to be given a nickname—it’s like canon law or some fucking thing—so Shaughnessy’s, which is owned by Michael Shaughnessy, is never referred to as Shaughnessy’s but as Mick Shawn’s. Mick Shawn’s is known for its Saturday-night brawls (they keep a hose behind the bar to clean the blood off the floor) and its pot roast, which stews all day long in a pot in the tiny kitchen off the end of the bar, just past the hose.