



Beth stood at the edge of the moon. Or so it seemed. Jagged peaks the color of a sparrow's beak reached skyward amid deep, crooked crevasses gouged out of the earth's crust. The view in all directions was foreign and barren, like a scene out of a science fiction movie. Gusts of wind threatened to push her into the chalky white abyss mere steps in front of her, the tall prairie grasses whipping at her ankles.

An element of profound fascination gripped her, in this place called The Badlands, the dramatic drop-offs and strange landscape stretching into the vast unknown. She'd come to Pine Ridge, the Indian reservation where her cousin had lived, to find out what had really happened to her. Deidra and Beth were born two weeks apart when their mothers lived in the same apartment building in Minneapolis' Indian neighborhood on Hiawatha Avenue. They'd grown up like sisters, best friends, until they were ten years old when Beth's mom married a white guy and they moved to the sprawling suburb of Bloomington. Six months later Deidra's mom married a Lakota man and moved to Pine Ridge.

The girls never saw each other again.

Beth walked the edge of the drop-off, transformed to another world, another time, by the eccentric imagery. The wind blew her shoulder-length hair across her face and she brushed it back. She heard a girl's voice call out. She turned in a circle, eyes scanning in all directions. Was it Jasmine, Didi's friend? Beth peered into the deep ravine looking for the source, but didn't see a soul. No question, she'd heard a voice. She shaded her eyes, the July sun beating down as she searched for signs of anyone. Instead, only the wind answered and despite the oppressive heat, Beth shivered.

The atmosphere on Pine Ridge was still toxic, only four years since the AIM takeover at Wounded Knee in 1973. AIM stood for American Indian Movement, the controversial group that had formed in Minneapolis and found a home—and a cause—on Pine Ridge. Reservation politics aside, Beth had only one goal...to find out why Didi had lost her life at the young age of twenty-three. Beth had just completed a journalism course at the Bloomington community college and told her mom she wanted to write stories that mattered, stories that made a difference.

"Then go to Pine Ridge," her mother said, "and tell Didi's story."

After weeks of trying, Beth had made contact with Didi's friend Jasmine and packed her Vega for the long drive from Minneapolis to Pine Ridge. She found Jasmine's house, a rundown trailer, five cattle guards and seventeen miles off the reservation highway. She'd been camped out at Jasmine's for two days, patiently waiting for her to arrange a meeting with an older woman who had befriended Didi.

Beth scanned the horizon once more, still looking for the haunting voice that had called out to her. Earth and sky met wind and dirt, but

there were no signs of human life. She hiked back to the trailer, serenaded by a meadowlark, dry grass crunching beneath her tennies.

A rusty red Nova with a trail of dust hugging the backend rolled to a stop in front of the trailer. Jasmine's roommates exited the jacked up car and the thinner one held up a paper bag. "Fry bread!"

Beth followed the two young men up the steps made from stacked concrete blocks and joined Jasmine around the yellow Formica table in the kitchen. "You gotta eat it with *wajapi*," said Danny. "Like this." He spooned the dark berry sauce onto a piece and took a big bite.

Jasmine frowned.

"No way, plain is better."

Beth turned to Jasmine. "Were you outside just now?"

"No, why?"

"Never mind."

Lanky cocked his head to one side and eyed Beth up and down. "You with AIM?"

"No," Beth said, surprised. "Why would you think that?"

"Minneapolis, dude."

Beth shook her head. "I'm here because of my cousin."

"Yeah? Who's that?"

"Deidra Berg."

"No way! Didi's your cousin?"

Lanky was small-framed with a thin mustache.

"Yeah, our moms were sisters."

"Cool, man. You're Indian?" Danny asked. He had a round face, beady black eyes, and a snake tattoo on his neck.

"Half. My dad was Irish."

The wall phone in the kitchen rang and Jasmine answered, the long cord tangled in knots. "It's all set, Grandma Cleo said we can come." She grabbed her purse and another piece of fry bread. "C'mon, let's roll. It's sixty miles."



Jasmine's features were stunning, worthy of a magazine cover, dressed in a white peasant blouse and cutoffs, her long black hair in a side braid.

Beth grabbed her shoulder bag and followed Jasmine out to the Vega. "Aren't you afraid? Living way out here?"

"I split with my boyfriend. Had to find a place to stay," Jasmine said, rolling down the window. "Danny and Lanky said I could crash here. They're pretty cool, give me rides into town."

"It's weird that Lanky thought I was in AIM. Isn't that group pretty radical?"

"AIM started because Indians were tired of the government telling us where we can live, what we can eat. In the old days the government took everything from us—our language, our ceremonies, our freedom. They destroyed the *La-kota* way of life. Kids were sent away to boarding schools, forced to cut their hair and take English names.

"My parents were beat in boarding school so they ran away. They had us kids when they were really young, but all they wanted to do was party and drink. My dad started beating up my mom, so she left him. By then she was hardcore, drinking all day. Sometimes she'd take off for days and we had no idea when she was coming back. My older sister, who was six, had to take care of me and my little brother. Try growing up when you're so hungry you're willing to eat worms and dandelions. Mom told us if we stayed with her we'd probably starve to death, so she called the police to take us away."

Beth was stunned, unprepared for the sad and sorrowful tale of Jasmine's childhood. How could she respond? She'd grown up in a loving home with more than enough food at every meal. Pete, her stepdad, was a butcher at the local Lunds market and came home with thick cuts of meat more often than she could count. Her mom would fry up potatoes and fresh vegetables from their garden, and always made extra in case friends or neighbors stopped by.

"Our tribal chairman is corrupt," Jasmine continued, staring out the window. "He's got his own little army, a real life militia. They ride around in pickup trucks with rifles all the time, threatening anybody who crosses them. It was time to take a stand. AIM picked the site of the Wounded Knee massacre and brought a couple hundred people with them. Someone needed to get the government's attention."

"I remember seeing that on the news."

"Indians came from all over the country in support. The FBI sent in a bunch of agents, US Marshals, state police, all thinking they could fix it in a couple days. There were shootouts and bullets flying every day. The occupation lasted over seventy days."

"How'd it end?"

"AIM ran out of food and ammunition and eventually surrendered. Big shots from Washington DC came in and signed the official papers, but nothing changed. The tribal chairman was still in power, the corruption got worse. To this day people disappear or get killed all the time."

A chill ran down Beth's spine. "What about those two FBI agents that were killed. I read the guy that killed them went to prison a few months ago. So it's over, right?"

Jasmine rested an elbow on the open window. "Sure, maybe in a Disney movie."

"Can't the FBI stop the corruption?"

"According to AIM, the FBI is part of the problem. They say the FBI is backing the tribal police and militia."

"But they're the bad guys, right?"

Jasmine pulled out a tube of lipstick from her cutoffs. "All depends on which side you're on," she said, applying a thick coat of candy apple red.

Beth hesitated a half-second before asking, "Which side are you on?"

"Neither. Wanna know why?"

Beth nodded.

"I wanna live to see twenty-five."

Beth swallowed the lump that had crash landed in her throat. Life on the reservation was nothing like she had imagined. Daily shootouts between Indians and the government? Rogue authorities torching a blaze of violence across the rez without discretion? This was 1977 after all, modern day America!

"I dunno," Jasmine said, smoothing out her braid. "I keep thinking there's a better way."

"Like what?"

"Didn't say I had the answer, just think there should be a better way."

Jasmine's words echoed in Beth's mind as she followed a wide curve, the panoramic view captivating her in ways she didn't understand. To her left, wide open plateaus dropped into a virtual nowhere at a moment's notice. The downslope resembled wrinkled fingers in shades of skin tones, as though centuries of dry bones had been ground into fine dust and deposited in layers for the world to wonder why.

"Left," Jasmine said, when Beth reached the highway.

Straight across, a herd of black cattle crowded a fence line in a vain attempt to find a slice of shade. The highway crossed a dried-up riverbed where scattered pieces of driftwood lay along the edge, once giant cottonwoods now smooth and skinless. In the distance the silhouette of an old church rose above the flat landscape, the white paint faded to a dismal gray. Despite the broken windows and boarded-up entrance,

**My older sister, who was six, had to take care of me and my little brother. Try growing up when you're so hungry you're willing to eat worms and dandelions.**

the cross at the top of the bell tower, poised and proud, rang out a message of resounding hope.

"Where does your grandma live?"

"Porcupine."

"Pork what?"

Jasmine snorted. "Porcupine, that's the town. And she's not my grandma."

"Who is she then?"

"Everyone calls her Grandma Cleo because she used to take in kids who needed help. She never turned anyone away, no matter how many already lived with her. And just so you know, the devil doesn't live in hell. He's here, on the rez, alive and well in every bottle of booze. When the police took us away, we were shipped from one place to the next, first an uncle, then some in-law, each one worse than the other. Until we got to Gramma Cleo's. She was our angel from heaven."

Beth slowed her speed as she entered the town of Porcupine, the lone water tower silhouetted against a sheet of gold as the sun slid toward the western horizon. A half-dozen boys rode horse bareback down a side street, their yelps and laughter urging the horses into a trot. She passed several trailer homes clustered together, the siding peeled away. Young children played in the dirt, half-dressed, their thin bodies exposed, oblivious to the rusted-out cars and junk surrounding them. It was as though the sky had opened and a plague of poverty had descended on their tiny corner of the world.

Farther down the street a small house was painted a soft yellow, the color of a ripened pear, with white trim and a decorative front porch. Pink petunias filled the window boxes and a newer car was parked in the driveway. A man in faded Levis and a cowboy hat pushed a mower across the neatly trimmed yard, evidence that at least some on the rez had found a way to rise above the challenges thrown their way.

Jasmine directed Beth to a tattered, rectangle house partially hidden by a tangle of overgrown shrubbery. Beth grabbed her bag and followed Jasmine up the wooden steps.

"Hey, Grandma," Jasmine said, opening the broken screen door.

It took a moment for Beth's eyes to adjust to the low lighting. A tiny woman, ghost like, sat in the corner sofa chair, her gray hair pulled tight into a bun. "*Tanyán yahipi. Tókheškhe yaún*, my child."

Jasmine bent over and kissed the woman on her cheek.

"You are Esther's daughter?" Grandma Cleo asked, looking up at Beth.

"Yes."

"Come closer."

The cracked linoleum floor sagged beneath the rag rug as Beth crossed the floor.

"Sit." Grandma Cleo motioned to the footstool as Jasmine slid onto the armchair.

Beth sat down in front of the woman, so small and frail that the wide chair appeared to swallow her up. "You knew my mother?"

"Esther and Evelyn, good girls. I see your mother's eyes."

"And my father's hair," she said, tugging at her wavy auburn hair. Beth glanced at a corner table covered in porcupine quills and tiny containers of colored beads. A faded photo of a young couple dressed in traditional Indian clothing hung on the wall next to a dream catcher. "Mom never talked about her life here. She said Grandpa moved them to Minneapolis for a better life. He wanted to see them graduate from high school."

"Did they?"

"Yes."

Grandma Cleo smiled. "So you want to know about Didi."

"Yes." Beth took a spiral notebook out of her bag. "Can I take notes?"

Grandma Cleo nodded. "She was beautiful, much like you. Evelyn got pneumonia, you know. The winter was harsh that year, not enough wood to burn to keep warm."

"Uncle LeRoy sent a letter about a month after Aunt Evelyn died," Beth said. "Asking for money."

"Deidra was lost without her mother. Young thing, barely a teen."

"Mom wrote to Uncle LeRoy asking if Didi could come and live with us, but he wouldn't let her. Mom kept calling, but the phone was disconnected. Her M.S. got worse after Aunt Evelyn passed. It upset her that she couldn't help Didi. When we heard that she'd been killed in a car accident, it crushed her."

"Car accident," Jasmine said. "Like hell."

"What's that mean?" Beth asked.

Grandma Cleo patted Jasmine's arm as she talked. "Health services took Didi away from LeRoy, put her in the boarding school. She sprained her ankle playing basketball and the new doctor at the clinic treated her. Over time he developed a fondness for Didi and offered to be her guardian. In the beginning, Doctor Kelcher was good to her. He bought her clothes and school supplies." Grandma Cleo's voice was so soft Beth had to lean in to catch her words.

"When Didi turned sixteen, Doctor Kelcher gave her a job at the clinic, filing records. She was so proud, you know, to have a real job." Grandma Cleo smiled and the lamp light caught a glint of gold on her teeth. "But the doctor's heart was not pure. One night he asked her to stay late. He took her in his office and closed the door. Led her over to the couch to talk, he said. Next thing, he pushed her down, his hands fumbling at the buttons on her blouse. On his desk was a picture of his wife and daughters, their faces staring back at Didi as he forced himself on her."

"That's horrible," Beth whispered.

"She came to me the next day, scared and crying. The doctor said he would keep buying nice things for her if she kept quiet. I told her we must tell the tribal police."

"So what happened?" Beth asked in a hoarse voice.

"An Indian girl has no voice against a white doctor. She couldn't face him, so she asked a friend to take her to Oklahoma."

"Why wouldn't she contact us?"

"To hide from the shame."

"But—"

"The one man she trusted, he broke her spirit."

Beth's hand went limp, unable to record the tragic details. "If only we had known..."

"Later, when the doctor came on the television, bragging about his big new fancy clinic in Rapid City, saying Indians were welcome, our medicine man persuaded Didi to come back, to fight for justice. So she did, she tried. She met with the authorities."

"Was he arrested?" Beth asked.

"Oh, no," Grandma Cleo said, shaking her head. "See, the power and money of a white man like Doctor Sam Kelcher goes a long way." She used her fingers to imitate an animal running.

"But she told the police what happened."

"By then our governor had given Doctor Kelcher an important job with the state. Now he's in charge of IHS."

"What's that?"

"Indian Health Services," Jasmine said. "Our version of medical assistance."

"So how's that connected to the car accident that killed her?"

"Get this," Jasmine said, folding her arms in a defiant pose. "They claim she was standing in the middle of the road. Late at night, on a deserted road. The report said hit-and-run, the driver never saw her. Right. They pushed her out of the car, ran her over, and left her to die in order to silence her and save the creep's reputation."

"Didn't somebody investigate? The police or FBI?"

"You are an innocent one," Grandma Cleo said, patting Beth's arm. "Here, it's another dead Indian girl on the rez."

"What do you mean 'another'?"

Grandma Cleo nodded. "Go ahead."

Jasmine opened a desk drawer and took out a beaded pouch. She pulled out a piece of paper and unfolded it for Beth. "Here."

Beth glanced at the list of names and dates, barely legible in pencil. "What's this?"

"All the young women killed on the rez since the occupation." The anger in Jasmine's voice simmered like a pot of buffalo stew ready to boil over. "If you really want to write a story, write it about all of them."

*Cynthia LeReaux, January 6, 1972. Found in field, severe beating.*

*Simone Dubois, August 14, 1973. Struck by a car.*

*Lorie LaPorte, December 30, 1974. Found in creek bottom, died of exposure.*

*Marion Two Feathers, April 22, 1975. Hit by car.*

*Sheila Alonia, April 26, 1975. Killed by multiple gunshots.*

*Constance Hawk, May 4, 1975. Stabbed to death.*

*Deidra Berg, May 4, 1975. Hit-and-run; deserted road.*

*Lacie Garcia Cross, July 15, 1975. Killed by gunshot in her home.*

*Brenda Borcharte, November 26, 1975. Severe beating.*

*Eileen Janssen, November 26, 1975. Alcohol poisoning.*

*Nancy White Grass, February 5, 1976. Severe beating.*

*Marlys Fast Lane, March 6, 1976. Intoxication, found on road.*

*Rebecca Mae Sweetgrass, May 28, 1976. Found beaten to death.*

*Patricia Lone Eagle, June 9, 1976. School teacher, poisoned.*

*Doree Spotted Elk, August 3, 1976. Found dead on side of the road.*

*Renee Browning, Found September 1976. Gunshot to her head.*

*LaVonne Yellow Star, September 16, 1976. Found on rez road with bullet in her head.*

Beth was stunned. "How can this be? Didn't anyone investigate?"

"Don't you get it?" Jasmine said, tossing her braid behind her shoulder. "The tribal police, FBI; one's just as corrupt as the next. They make up some lame excuse: out of jurisdiction; not enough evidence; ties to AIM; car accident; intoxication."

"It says some of these women were beaten."

"Then they label it 'domestic violence' and frame the boyfriend or husband," Jasmine said. "Anything but the truth."

"Our beautiful daughters, each with their own hopes and dreams," Grandma Cleo said, resting a hand on her heart. "In here."

"Why are all the names women?"

"A reign of terror has come to the *La-kota*. Many more of our men have been killed." Grandma Cleo's shoulders slumped as she talked. "Too many. The Creator, He asked me to pray for the young girls. I write down their names, the dates, so we never forget, and lift their spirit to the Creator."

"But," Beth said in protest, her mind reeling with the injustice. "This isn't right. Someone should care."

"Go back to your big city and tell the story," Jasmine said with a distinct edge in her voice. "Tell them about the corruption; tell them about the militia and their buddies in the FBI. Maybe then someone will care."

Beth held her tongue. She wanted to argue that FBI agents were loyal and true and would never side with anyone breaking the law. Her best friend's dad was an FBI agent, the kind of man who believed right was right and wrong was wrong and served Lady Justice with honor and distinction. Yet Jasmine seemed so sure the FBI was untrustworthy. Maybe, just maybe, in a time and place like this, the lines of good and evil weren't so clear, fluctuating instead like the horizon, distant and blurred, always changing and ever elusive.

Beth shuddered, thinking about the shocking contrast between her life and Didi's. Grandma Cleo closed her eyes and Jasmine nodded toward the door. The night air was still steamy as Beth pulled up to a sparsely lit diner with a row of white-washed buffalo skulls across the top.

Three younger men hung out on the porch, their T-shirts boasting Indian slogans. The taller man with a solid build leaned his shoulder into a post, a red bandana tied in a headband around his jet black hair. He whistled a cat call as Jasmine and Beth walked up the front steps. "Hey, girls," he said, beer in hand. "Want to party?"

Jasmine gave Beth a stern look and pushed her through the screen door. "Ignore them, okay?" she said, directing Beth to an empty booth.

Beth ordered Cokes and burger baskets from the waitress. "I've been thinking..."

"Yeah?"

"A guy in my journalism class works for WCCO, it's the largest news station in Minneapolis," Beth said. "If I tell him how many women have been murdered without so much as a care, I know he'd want to do the story."

"The rez has been on the news before."

"No, I mean talk about who they were, where they lived, who loved them. How does a young teacher end up poisoned? School teachers aren't out causing trouble, they're dedicated to their students, they love them. See what I'm saying? Everyone in America can connect to that," Beth said, her idea suddenly taking form. "Like Grandma Cleo said, tell their stories so we never forget."

"No one's ever done that."

"I'd have to do some research first, get the history on AIM and the tribal politics. People need to understand why they're killing each other."

"Can anyone understand that?" Jasmine commented as the waitress brought their burgers.

"I'll start tomorrow," Beth said, grabbing the ketchup. "Where's the library?"

"Are you kidding?" Jasmine said, her voice laced with sarcasm. "Right next to the museum and movie theater. Look around you."

"Sorry."

"No, I'm sorry." Jasmine let out a long sigh. "Let me ask around first, make sure it's safe, okay? LaVonne Yellow Star was high up in AIM, untouchable by the militia, or so they said."

"Wasn't her name the last one on the list?"

Jasmine nodded and glanced around the diner. "A rumor started that she was an informant for the FBI," she said, lowering her voice to a whisper. "Next thing you know, she's missing. Months later they found her with a bullet in her head, out in the middle of nowhere."

Beth thought for a moment. "Okay, how about this? I'll go back to Minnesota and do the research first. My friend from WCCO can

help. Once we get the details figured out, we'll come back and do the interviews together."

Jasmine flashed a smile. "Hey, you know what?"

For the first time Beth caught a glimmer of hope in Jasmine's eyes. "What?"

"Maybe your story *is* the better way."

Later that night Beth laid in the bottom bunk, her mind whirling. Her cousin, her childhood best friend, was raped by a doctor as a teen and murdered by age twenty-three. She thought about her comfortable life in comparison, a nice three-bedroom rambler, kickball in the cul-de-sac, the

glow of lights from the Twins baseball stadium, sneaking to the Dairy Queen with friends. It could have so easily been the other way around. What if *her* mother had married

and moved to the rez, and Evelyn and Didi had moved to the suburbs?

The steamy night air was suffocating and Beth threw the sheet aside, the breeze gone. She never dreamed Didi's story would turn into something so powerful. Newscasters recited the day's headlines in dry, emotionless tones; she would focus on the mothers, daughters, sisters... the heart and soul of the people.

The next morning Jasmine offered Beth a piece of toast and leftover *wajapi*. "Sorry, it's all I have."

Danny strolled into the kitchen bare chested, a cigarette hanging on his bottom lip. "What's going down?"

"Beth's going back to Minneapolis. She knows a reporter at a big TV station."

"I want to do a story about all the young women who've been killed."

"Stop the militia once and for all," Jasmine said, giving Beth a nod of approval.

Danny lit his cigarette. "Cool." He grabbed a Coke from the fridge. "Me and Lanky are gonna go meet Tucker. Later, man."

Beth finished her toast. "I didn't sleep a wink last night, all these thoughts racing through my mind."

**It could have so easily been the other way around. What if *her* mother had married and moved to the rez, and Evelyn and Didi had moved to the suburbs?**

"Do it for Didi," Jasmine said, her dark eyes pleading. "Do it for all of them."

"We were like sisters, you know."

"She told me."

Beth hugged Jasmine and started down the reservation road. Straight ahead a tumbleweed bounced and rolled across the flatland, only to catch in the barbed wire fence at the edge. Much like Jasmine and her siblings, bouncing from one home to the next, caught in the crushing cycle of alcoholism, the sharp barbs of dysfunction leaving deep, life-long scars, until by the grace of God they found the angelic wings of Grandma Cleo.

Beth had crossed three cattle guards when she saw a plume of dust ahead. She steered to the right side of the road, but the oncoming pickup drove straight at her. She swerved, her backend fishtailing in the gravel. She came around a sharp curve where a second pickup blocked the road. She slammed on the brakes and skidded to a stop, nearly plunging over the steep side. Shaken, Beth waited for the dust to subside. She looked up as two men exited the truck, rifles in hand.

"Oh, no..." Heart racing, Beth slid across the seat and out the passenger door. The men marched toward her, in no particular hurry. She scrambled down the embankment, looking for a hiding spot, her sandals slipping on loose rocks.

Beth heard the shot ring out. A split second later her body thrust forward and she slammed into the ground face first. *Get up! Run!* her mind screamed. *Get up!*

But she couldn't move.

She sucked in deep breaths, trying to grasp what was happening, her left cheek crushed against razor sharp rocks. *Take a breath and get up.*

*Get up!*

Gurgling sounds came from her throat and she swallowed back warm liquid.

Her bag lay several feet away, the contents spilled across the chalky ground. *Get up, Beth!* Her mind willed, but her body didn't respond. She heard tires crunch on the gravel and recognized the sound of her Vega as it drove away.

From her limited vision she could see a short distance down the ravine. Without her car, no one would know where to look for her. Or that she was even missing. Her mom wasn't expecting her back until next week. Jasmine believed she was long gone to Minnesota.

She swallowed and nearly choked. Overhead tender blue sky contrasted against the jagged peaks. Minutes passed, maybe longer. Wheezing, gurgling sounds escaped from her throat. Something warm and moist pooled under her cheek. And then it dawned on her: she was experiencing the same nightmare as the women on Grandma Cleo's list. Left to die, like Didi, alone, on a deserted reservation road.

Beth remembered her mom once saying that she and Evelyn had done everything together. The two sisters were eleven months apart and as kids had the measles and chicken pox at the same time. They graduated from high school in the same year, and both got pregnant for the first time within weeks of each other. And now, their daughters would succumb to the same horrifying death.

Tears trickled across her face, blurring her vision. *No...this can't be happening.* The bullet must have severed her spinal cord, her body in shock. She had no pain, her mind still clear. She stared at the lunar-like landscape. *What a strange place to die.*

She fought for another breath, listening. The only sound came from her heart beating against the ground. Maybe someone would drive by and see her bright yellow tank top. Maybe she still had a chance.

Beth shut her eyes as a squall of dust blew through the ravine. She heard a voice, several voices, in fact. *Someone's coming!* She opened her eyes, desperately trying to move. *I'm here, I'm alive!* The dust passed over her as the voices came again, louder and more distinct. Where were they coming from? Her eyes darted across the layers of whitish rock and blue sky within view. Did they see her? If only she could lift her head!

Beth took another breath. Her eyes were heavy and she decided to rest a minute. The voices continued, friendly and joyous. They recognized her, welcoming her back, as though she was in the midst of a family reunion, everyone talking and laughing at the same time.

A sense of peace washed over her, relieved to know she was with people who loved her. Strange, the voices weren't in English, yet she understood everything they said. She smiled, listening to their excited conversations, reminiscing about the good times.

Grandma Cleo opened the pouch and pulled out the worn piece of paper.

*Beth Shannon Dougherty, found November 1977. Bullet in her back.*

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