

**Introduction**

"I love the smell of napalm in the morn—."

Dillon lifted his finger off of the soft power button on the remote control and tossed it back onto the couch cushion where he had found it. He turned around and walked over to the kitchen table where four plates had been set for him and his family. As he walked to his chair, he stepped on a worn dog bone which had been lying right next to one of the legs of the table. He kicked it out of the way and sat down at the table, directly across from his younger sister Sara, who smiled at him.

"Alright kids, now *this* is what Thanksgiving is all about," his father said, putting a large, silver covered tray in the middle of the table.

"My teacher said it was about appreciating family bonds," Sara said, correcting her father.

"No, Sara, it's more about how we killed Indians—"

"Native Americans," his mother corrected as she sat down at the table.

"Yeah, them. Well, we killed them. And took their land. And called it America. And now we live here," Dillon said, grinning.

His father slapped him across the back of the head with the cup of his hairy hand. He then took the large, reflective silver top off its tray and revealed to the family the golden brown skin of the turkey. The steam rose up into the chandelier over the table.

Dillon watched as his father made slices into the turkey. The metal of the cutting knife refracted the light from the sun outside into the teenage boy's eyes as his father set pieces of sliced white meat along the sides of the tray. Dillon pet the head of the dog who had come up to him and rested his graying muzzle on his lap.

A moment later, the dog let out a high-pitched yelp — unprompted, as far as the boy knew. He looked over to his sister, as if to see if she was the cause of it, but she looked at him with surprise. And then the boy saw a large flash of light out of the corner of his eyes. He recoiled at the searing pain of the light and felt, for an instant, a bitter metallic taste in his mouth. He opened his eyes and saw his father still cutting the turkey, the sound of the knife scraping against the surface of the tray filled the dining room. The boy looked, once again, at the windows outside and felt his eyes widened. His mind went blank as he stared, jaw-gaping, through the window over Sara's shoulder.

All that Dillon could really notice through the window was a tidal wave of debris coming straight for him. His legs refused to move and he couldn't find the words to say anything to his family, who were talking about the well-cooked turkey. He gasped as the wall of stone, dirt, and pieces of metal and covered the entire visible landscape through the window. As the wall in front of him was crushed from the unstoppable wave — the glass of the windows shattering and getting sucked into the vortex of refuse with ease — the boy wondered why he wasn't seeing his life flash before his eyes. In the milliseconds before his death he had expected a wave of soothing memories to overtake him... And yet, he thought, it never came.

Dillon's last thought was that death was a real letdown.