

Exhibit B

by Terry DeHart

I thought my grandmother was a practically a saint, but if that was true, how could we possibly be related? It didn't make any sense. My sweet granny was like *Exhibit A* that I was adopted. I mean, how can anyone be sure?

So we're at the market, and Gramma is buying all kinds of shit to make cookies with. Flour and butter and sugar, and all that. And I'm helping her reach things on the high shelves because she's been shrinking for about 70 years. She thanks me and tells me that I'm a handsome boy, but I'm embarrassed because Kristi Wilkins walks by when she says it. Kristi smirks and I know the story will be making the rounds at David Douglas High, tomorrow.

The truth is, I'm not handsome. I wear these damned 'husky' sized clothes, and they're cheap, too, because my mom is a single parent. It's my fault I'm husky, and it's at least partly my mom's fault that she's a single parent because she stopped putting out for my dad.

What? Did they think I was too stupid to figure out what they were fighting about? And I totally understand why my dad left, but it still pisses me off.

Anyhow, I was in Safeway and not feeling handsome at all. Gramma was humming a hymn I'd heard at least a thousand times, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. And even though I'm not sure there *is* a God, I like that old song because it makes me sad and it reminds me of fresh-baked cookies and windows that are all steamed up against the rain and the sad sound of hymns on the radio. Stupid shit, but maybe that's what fat kids in Portland get off on, okay?

So we get all the groceries and Gramma is short about seven dollars. She looks into every crevice of her old-lady purse and then a

real-estate-looking lady behind us sighs in a smart-ass way and starts to tap her foot. My grandma narrows her eyes. She's really pissed off, but what can an old lady do? Anyhow, I give her some of my own cash. And the money didn't grow on a fucking tree, let me tell you. Try working a paper route in Southeast Portland, sometime. It's pit bull central and it's always pissing rain and there's mud everywhere because the streets aren't paved with gold, or anything else, and assholes in 4 x 4s are always tearing up the roads, trying to get their trucks muddy so they'll look studly and maybe impress some teenage crack whores out in Gresham, or something.

But I give my grandma the money and she smiles in her sweet, I'll-make-it-up-to-you way and she reaches over and pats my hand and I almost feel like somebody.

"You're going to make some pretty girl a fine husband," she says. The cashier, a young dude, hears it and he gives me a look like "I feel your pain," and I roll my eyes, because that's what he's expecting me to do. But the truth is, I want to break the cashier's skinny nose. I like it when Grandma says nice shit about me. And I *do* want her words about my future to come true, because I intend to be a good husband, in every possible way, if you know what I mean.

I handle the heavy lifting with the groceries. It's one of the things husky guys are good at. That and football. So we cruise out to Grandma's Camry and she gives me the keys. I unlock the trunk, but I can't help thinking that I could also start the car—go look for a girl who wants to party with a husky guy. And I'm lifting the bags into the trunk, thinking that Grandma is behind me, admiring how strong I am. She does shit like that. It's a mystery to me how such a nice person can survive in this world.

But Grandma isn't behind me. She's over by a big, black Mercedes, taking a pair of scissors out of her purse. She smiles and waves me over. There are a bunch of real estate signs in the back seat of the Mercedes. Grandma's scissor blades are heavy stainless steel, and I watch that sweet old lady runs the point of those big-ass

scissors down the side of the most expensive car in the parking lot. I look around to see if anyone notices, but we're all alone. Black paint is falling like soot from a meth lab fire, and she's humming "*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*" and screwing that car up, bad. She winks at me and presses the scissors into my hand. I walk to the Mercedes and jam them into the sidewall of one of the tires, and then another, setting the air free from its captivity. Gramma pats me on the head and says, "That's my boy. Let it all out, now."

I kick a big dent in the door of the Mercedes. I'm stunned for a few seconds because of what I've done. I know I've crossed a line, but then I feel fine, damned fine, and Gramma smiles and I figure there's no reason to get a DNA test to prove that we're playing on the same team.

