First Place (7-12): Short Fiction

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What Goes Around Comes Around

Silence, a cold, sad, silence filled the small house as the police officer said, "I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you this, but your daughter was found dead this morning." After a short pause he continued, "She was found at the old fair grounds east of White Owl Springs. We are investigating what happened."

The Sheila heard was "your daughter was found dead…," before an unbelievable sense of loss overcame her. She sat down on the old couch in the small living room; a wave of memories came flooding into her mind. She remembered her daughter, the youngest of 6 children, always having a gentle smile on her face. She had long black hair, and dark eyes, with a smile of perfect white teeth. She was in the 11th grade, only 17 years old, with a bright future. Now she was dead.

The last time she had seen her daughter was during Christmas break. She had been at the reservation boarding school for the past three years and only returned home for the short holiday visits. On the last visit Sheila had told her daughter, "My girl, be careful, I love you."

“Charlie” had said, “I love you to mom, you don’t have to worry about me, all I do is study and work. You know that.” Sheila did know, her daughters grades were always straight A’s.

It was a Friday, on a cool spring day in April, the sky was blue and the slight breeze was refreshing. Charlie was ready to relax with her girlfriends after a long week of mid-terms. She knew the moon would be full and all the kids in the dorms would be going home for the weekend. Charlie sometimes wished she was brave enough or stupid enough to go out and “party” like the rest of the kids. She was too smart for that though.

Just as her thoughts drifted towards what she would be doing instead, someone shouted to her “Hey, Charlie what are you doing!? You should cruise around with us.” As Charlie slowly turned toward the road she already knew who it was; Johnny, the cutest guy in her English 11 class. He had wavy, light brown hair and hazel colored eyes. He was a handsome guy. Johnny was hanging out of the passenger seat of a huge old Cadillac. His eyes were smiling and honest. She and many other girls had a crush on him.

“Hi, Johnny,” Charlie replied. “I would come, but I have a lot to do this weekend.” *Charlie was thinking “if he asks me one more time, I’m going with him. He looks so handsome in the sunlight.”*

Johnny asked again, while making a baby face, “Oh, come on, you deserve to have some fun.”

“Okay. Where exactly are we going? ,” Charlie responded with a smile. Then for the first time she realized who he was with. All of the most popular guys in school were in the car with Johnny. Eddie Jo Johnson, Mike Janison, Robbie Swears, and Henry Hatcher; all of these boys were from Whitaker too but they were half-breeds, half white and half Indian. To kids this meant nothing, but to older people it was known that full bloods did not mix with half-breeds. If her mom knew what she was about to do, she would definitely be disappointed.

As Charlie climbed into the car, all of the guys said “hi” in unison. Charlie climbed into the front seat between Eddie and Johnny. They headed straight for Slate, the border town that sold alcohol to Indians. Johnny put his arm around Charlie and she felt safe.

Johnny looked down at her smiling and said “What’s your poison?”

Charlie said, “What?” unfamiliar with the slang.

“What do you want to drink?” Johnny responded laughing at her loudly. The other boys also joined in the laughing.

Charlie thought, *that’s kind of rude, that they are all laughing at me*. But she brushed it off because she was excited about the coming evening.

Charlie said, "I'll have strongest drink on the shelf." She immediately thought, *I hope this isn't a mistake, but I hope I sounded cool.*

Johnny went into the store and emerged minutes later with a bottle in a paper bag, a can of coke, and a case of beer. They drove back to White Owl Springs and just drove around town. Johnny opened the bottle and the coke and used a cup to mix the two together. He handed the cup to Charlie, a big smile on his face.

Charlie grabbed the cup saying, "thanks, aren't you going to have any?"

Eddie said, "No, that's all for you girl. We just drink beer; we have a game tomorrow so we have to keep it light." Johnny shook his head in agreement since he was the pitcher for the team.

After midnight the guys made the decision to go to the old fair grounds east of town. When they arrived, Charlie got out of the car with Johnny, realizing for the first time she was intoxicated. She had never felt this out of control before. She grabbed at Johnny's arm to steady herself. He grabbed her and pulled her toward him, forcing her to kiss him. She pushed him back. *Charlie thought, what is going on? Why is he doing this? I should have listened to my mom?*

The next day around 8am a rancher who lived near the old fair grounds found her. She was lying naked on the ground with her hair all matted with blood. Her face was unrecognizable.

The Vietnam War was happening in 1970. Henry had been in the war for less than six months when he went MIA. His last moments before he went missing were those of a guilty man brought to justice by the universe. He was near a village in the jungle, the enemy were everywhere. He was instructed by his captain to be quiet and still. He was looking toward the village when a woman began walking toward him. As she got closer he saw the long black hair he remembers so vividly, the big black eyes, and the perfect smile of Charlie. He panicked and began screaming loudly, running into the jungle never to be seen again.

Eddie Jo Johnson was a wild child and he turned out to be a wild man. Late one night after a day of drinking in Slate he began walking, hoping to catch a ride to **White Owl Springs**. He caught a ride to White Owl Springs but continued on to Whitaker, his home town. He was just east of town, by the old fair grounds when he noticed a woman walking on the other side of the road from him.

He said," hey, where are you going?" But the woman continued walking without reply. He said, "You dumb bag I'm talking to you!" Finally she stopped and began walking toward him. As she got closer he noticed that even though it was a very dark night he could see her features. She had long black hair, big dark eyes, and she was smiling at him. He realized he recognized her. In his drunkenness he forgot where he knew her from. So he welcomed her companionship for a few feet, then he looked at her again and saw that her head was smashed in, and her face was beaten and bruised, she

had no clothes on. He remembered to late where he knew her from. Charlie!? He screamed. They found him the next day, a hideously distorted face, like he had been screaming. He had a heart attack.

Mike Janison was a successful business owner in the town of Slate. The only business in slate was that of a bar owner so that's what he did. One day while driving his truck back to White Owl Springs and giving an employee a ride home Mike met his fate. She said she lived just before the old fair grounds. After dropping his employee off he saw a young girl walking on the side of the road. He stopped to pick her up and they began talking.

He asked her what her name was, she replied, "Charlie."

He said, "What?" Thinking he had misunderstood.

She said again, "Charlie."

He looked at her and her face changed into the memory he tried so long to forget. She disappeared into thin air. He drives in to the ditch where he barely misses a tree. But at the same time he feels a sharp pain in his arm. That was the last memory for Mike.

Robby sits quietly on a barstool reading the obituaries in the local newspaper. He sees some very familiar names including his friends Eddie Jo and Mike. He can't believe it, they were both still so young. Not even thirty yet. He slams the paper down and rushes out the door planning on going to see Johnny. Driving fast with his heart racing

he isn't paying attention to the road. He sees a light in the distance but is so concerned about getting to Robby he drives faster and more hastily. He sees a girl in front of him; he slams on the brake but the truck is already out of control because of the speed he is going. He hits the ditch going eighty miles an hour. Johnny is thinking, "Oh my GOD, did I just see Charlie? No, I must be going crazy." He feels the truck flipping.

Johnny is driving his motorcycle toward Slate to see Johnny. He saw the obituaries in the paper. He wants to make sure his friend is alright. As he is driving he sees the lights of a truck coming towards him. He knows it is too late to move out of the way so he tries to go around it. The front of the truck hits the back of his motorcycle whipping him in a circle. He slams into the ground and feels his back strain and then a loud pop. A second later he is lying in the wet ditch, the image of a woman standing above him smiling sweetly. He knows her. Charlie. He can't move, but he can see. She stands above him smiling, the young beautiful girl he once knew but couldn't have. He tries to say he is sorry but nothing comes out. Then only cold darkness surrounds him.

The investigation into her murder was short and no one was ever convicted. This was not because of a lack of evidence or a lack of witnesses, but because she was a full blood and the men who murdered her were half-breeds. During the trial her mother was said to have taken a knife into the court room because her grief was so great she wanted revenge. Her father was a very spiritual man who told his family to let it go because no bad deed goes unpunished. In the end Charlie's father was right. All of the

accused died horrible deaths at a young age. Where the law failed Charlie, GOD and the universe did not; their unique form of justice was served.