

[...] It was a dark brown car, square and long like the kind police detectives drove, at Plymouth or something, and its bumper stopped by their legs and the two cops looked out through the windshield at them, their faces watery in the reflected trees that swam across the glass.

The driver got out. He looked like a cop - blond crew cut, red face, white shirt, black-and-gold nylon tie, the heft of his gut dropping over his belt buckle like a stack of pancakes. The other one looked sick. He was skinny and tired looking and stayed in his seat.

The beefy one crooked a finger at them, then wiggled it toward his chest until they stood in front of him. 'Let me ask you something, okay?' 'You guys think it's okay to fight in the middle of the street?' Sean noticed a gold badge clipped to the belt buckle beside the big man's right hip.

'No, sir.'

'No, sir.'

'No, sir.'

'A pack of punks, huh? That what you are?' He jerked his big thumb back at the man in the passenger seat. 'Me and my partner, we've had our fill of East Bucky punks scaring decent people off the street. You know?'

Sean and Jimmy didn't say anything.

'We're sorry,' Dave Boyle said, and looked like he was about to cry.

'You kids from this street?' the big cop asked. His eyes scanned the homes on the left side of the street like he knew every occupant, would bag them if they lied.

'Yup,' Jimmy said, and looked over shoulder at Sean's house.

'Yes, sir,' Sean said.

Dave didn't say anything.

The cop looked down at him. 'Huh? You say something, kid?'

'What?' Dave looked at Jimmy.

'Don't look at him! Look at me. You live her kid?'

'Huh? No.'

'No? The cop bent over Dave. 'Where you live, son?'

'Rester Street.' Still looking at Jimmy.

'Your mother home?'

'Yes, sir.' A tear fell down Dave's cheek and Sean and Jimmy looked away.

'Well, we're going to have a talk with her, tell her what her punk kid's been up to.'

'I don't... I don't...' Dave blubbered.

'Get in.'

Dave looked at Jimmy.

'Get in', the cop said. 'Or you want I should throw the cuffs on you?'

'I-'

'What?' The cop sounded pissed off. He slapped the top of the open door. 'Get the fuck inside!'

Dave climbed into the backseat, bawling.'

Jimmy and Sean stepped back, and the cop hopped in his car and drove off. They watched it reach the corner and then turn right, Dave's head, darkened by distance and shadows, looking back at them. And then the street was empty again, seemed to have gone mute with the slam of the car door. Jimmy and Sean stood where the car had been, looked at their feet, up and down the street, anywhere but each other.