

Travis took in a full breath and gazed around him. The cold made the night sky crystal clear, the low ridges of the rolling prairie sharp in the moonlight. It was not the ancestral land of the Northern Cheyenne, but it was what they had now.

The crunch of tires on the gravel road caught his attention. A fairly late-model pickup traveled down the road toward the Tongue River Breaks.

Travis gestured for his dog, Little, to come to him. While violence was too common on the reservation, most of it occurred in alcohol-induced bar fights or suicide. Still, it paid to be alert.

The truck rolled to a stop. "I heard you were in town. Ready to fight over your stupid windmill like Don whatever-his-name-was?"

"Quixote."

"Ah ... well you're the one with the fancy college education." His cousin David's voice was raspy with the cigarettes he refused to give up.

Travis walked closer to the truck, Little by his side. "What do you have against my windmill?"

"Other than it's yours? We don't need a bunch of bird killers on our land."

"You know my company has new technology to keep the birds away."

"So you say." A match flared.

Travis waited. He'd save his arguments for the council tomorrow.

"I'm going to stop you. So why don't you go back to Billings?"

He stayed silent, listening to his cousin's drags on the cigarette reverberate in the cold, still air.

David laughed, put the truck in gear, and spun off, sharp stones of gravel flying out from his tires.

Travis stepped back, dragging Little out of harm's way. He stared after the truck—what was his cousin up to now?