

Look Inside Sample

The Weight of Hurdles

James is the name the world knows — the man who moved through systems, uniforms, and expectations.

“I” is the voice that lived inside that movement.

This story requires both to be true.

This preview includes the opening of the Prologue and the beginning of Chapter 1.

Prologue -- Watching the War

The television flickered in the background --- silent, forgotten --- but neither of us was watching anymore.

I sat cross-legged on the floor, a worn checklist beside me, my C-bag half-packed. Boots. Uniform. Socks. Shaving kit. Canteen. Every item double-checked, triple-checked --- as if certainty itself could be packed like gear.

She moved around me in quiet circles --- my wife, only four months into forever. Folding a shirt here. Adjusting a strap there. Her silence said everything her lips didn't.

I kept talking, more for her than for me.

"It's going to be all right."

"They're just calling everyone up --- precaution."

"It won't be long."

They weren't lies.

Chapter 1 — White Beginnings, Born of Many Nations

I was born in the kind of cold that makes silence louder — North Dakota silence, where snow buries everything except memory.

My blood ran with stories older than the land we stood on. African endurance from Mississippi fields. Choctaw resilience shaped in the mists of Oklahoma. Cherokee knowing that life bends but does not break. My mother walked with quiet fire, like the women who once carried whole nations on their backs. My father, rooted deep in a legacy of survival, gave me the strength that didn't always speak — but never wavered.

I was their convergence — history folded into breath. In the frostbite stillness of early life, before I even knew words like “race” or “culture,” I knew warmth. I knew pride. And I knew that identity wasn't something I would one day choose — it was something already humming beneath my skin.

Those were the first lessons I didn't know I was learning. In a house warmed more by love and routine than by the old base furnace, I began my life as a military child—quiet, observant, surrounded by order and the unspoken weight of duty. My father, crisp in uniform. My mother, steady and strong. And me, absorbing it all like snow absorbs sound