

fuck you Barbara—got to work.

Stacey had been after the 126th the whole campaign, the first two weeks of the war, lurking in their passage, watching it all on the computer screen from the other side of the planet. She knew the markings they had painted on their vehicles and the callsigns they used to report progress to their superiors and she knew—she watched, even as it happened, and it happened over, and over—the shabby little deaths they died, in a country that wasn't theirs, and she wasn't glad, exactly. They were just boys. But she didn't think much of their suffering. She had thought she was a good person, so it was strange, not to worry, watching death. The first death she'd ever seen, really. A traffic accident or two, a slashing glance of an arm hanging from the wreck. But not like this—hour after hour of video, helmet-cam of the ambush, cell phone footage of the aftermath, babushkas with groceries spitting on the corpses, garbagemen dragging the bodies by the boots. This was new. She studied and catalogued and measured and named and drew and, most of all, she mapped the war, far away. She drew in trace after the 126th a long red line, from Crimea, across the river, into the impossibly vast interior of Ukraine. @ChuvaKurka and the others in the Project, on the official map, shrunk the line in proportion to sustained losses. It was like campaign maps Stacey had seen, in History 1510 up at Columbia (not *that* Columbia—she was smart, but only state school smart). Maps of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Every mile the line got thinner. Stacey had hated that class; all war, and those wars abstract, long won or lost, just old numbers.

But now, she followed as the Russian 126th CDB captured a town named Bilohorivka, and then another, also named Bilohorivka. She imagined a final and accurate map of the war, just a series of narrowing lines from Bilohorivka to Bilohorivka, and in between all the little corpses in the fields of sunflowers.

In the video, a Ukrainian marine kicked at the camera of the dead Russian. Then she saw the rest of the road, angling up the draw away from the houses, paused on what sure looked like a radio tower on the ridge.