

**CollabOrate**  
**Justice #11**  
**Naomi**

LADY JUSTICE, JUSTITIA, GOES TO HER TENTH AND FINAL PSYCHIATRIC APPOINTMENT. *Justitia finds the door ajar. A young girl, possibly seven years old, sits in the psychiatrist's armchair, her black leather shoes swinging four inches off the floor. The juvenile's white linen bonnet and black ankle-length long-sleeved dress with its blue apron identify her as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Amish. A small blood stain dampens the front left of her starched bonnet. The black box of conscience rests quietly beside the child. Justitia smiles. Justitia lays to one side her sword, scales, and blindfold, and settles herself on the divan. The woman's eyes meet the girl's. Both relax.*

NAOMI: My name is Naomi--Naomi Rose Ebersol. What's yours?

JUSTITIA: I am Justitia. I work in the courts and around town. Are you my psychiatrist for the day?

NAOMI: I do not know what that is. I am supposed to talk to you. Do you want to talk?

JUSTITIA: That would be very pleasant, I am sure. My email said you are from West Nickel Mines School.

NAOMI: Uh-huh. I got hurt. In October 2006. A man hurt my head.

JUSTITIA: Someone hurt your head? Can you tell me about that?

NAOMI: A bad man came to the school just after morning recess. He blocked the front door with his pickup. He had a gun. The bad man forced the boys to haul in lumber, guns, chains, and toilet paper from his truck. He made us girls line up against the classroom chalk board. He made all the boys and adults and babies leave. He kept eleven of us girls. We heard the police come in a few minutes. They had loudspeakers. We girls knew what was happening. Marian and Barbie asked to be shot first, if the bad man would let the rest of us go. The bad man shot them, and then the rest of us. All in the head. He shot some of us over and over. Blood was everywhere. Five of us died. Six survived. Some of the girls who lived are not healthy still. The bad man was Charles Roberts IV. He died too. When he saw the police would get him, he shot himself. When Mr. Roberts was hurting me and my friends, I wanted to hurt him back. I wanted to....

*The black box of conscience slides open. No little person stands, but a voice wafts over Naomi and Justitia.* "Naomi, this is your muttie. Amish do not talk, or even think, in this way. Mr. Roberts did a very bad thing. God will speak with him; God is just. Our task is to fix what can be fixed, and to forgive the bad man. You remember, we have talked about this at meeting and at bedside prayers." *Naomi nods. A little tear wets her cheek.* "Yes, mama. I remember. I am sorry." *Muttie soothes,* "Do not worry, Naomi. You are a little girl. You are just learning." *Justitia hears kissing sounds from the box. The lid of the black box of conscience shuts silently.*

JUSTITIA: Was that your mother?

NAOMI: Yes. Muttie and the Amish ladies and all of the Amish people forgave Mr. Roberts right away. They comforted the Roberts family--the bad man's wife and three children and relatives. They collected money for them. Many attended the bad man's funeral. The Amish surrounded the families of us girls, the dead and the living, and paid our medical expenses. That cost a lot of money because God does not want us to have health insurance, momma says. They helped Muttie--all the mutties and papas really--to get better. All our families miss us terribly. And everyone else misses us too. The people tore down the school house. They built a new one in a different place.

JUSTITIA: Why did the bad man attack you, Naomi? Do you know?

NAOMI: He was sick. He left suicide notes. The notes said Mr. Roberts molested children. Mr. Roberts named children he molested. But when the police checked with those people, there was nothing. Mr. Roberts wanted to hurt girls, and thought he had hurt them. But he was wrong. At least, until he came to our school. He did not touch us in private places. But he hurt us. Mr. Roberts was broken in the head, momma says.

JUSTITIA: You are a very brave little girl. Thank you for telling me your story. My job is to help people decide what to do when people hurt one another. That's what justice is about. Do you have advice for me?

NAOMI: They told me you would ask that. So I have thought about it a lot.

JUSTITIA: Go ahead, then, Naomi. How should I change?

NAOMI: The Amish think you are confused. You try to fix the past. The past cannot be fixed. You can change the future, but not the past. Make the future better. And you spend too much time deciding about money. Money does not make hurts better. Money distracts everyone from what is wrong. People's hugs get broken. Momma says that love mends broken hugs. Not feeling love. I do not have lovey feelings about Mr. Roberts. Neither do any of the Amish. I mean love as doing stuff. You have to work to forgive bad people, work on yourself--just like momma said. People who suffer need help. They need real hugging and weed-the-garden kind of help. Put away your sword. Leave your blindfold at home. Fix your scales. Momma says that justice should restore people's community, not hurt bad people. I like what my muttie says. Do you?

JUSTITIA: I do, Naomi. Of all my psychiatrists, your story cuts deepest. If I heed you, everything will change. I am thinking about the things all the people who sat in your chair have said to me. Thank you, Naomi.

*Naomi smiles, a dazzling toothy beatitude. That grace lingers, as she vanishes. A Cheshire cat moment....*

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