

The Dent

By Victoria "Stokastika" Summer 2005

Vic opened the BMW SUV car door at a Napa Valley gas station, with the protruding horizontal stream of metal on the door's edge to greet an invisible, stumpy, blue-chipped steel post with a subtle **bump**. It signaled the embedding of a trivial dent in a dirt-coated vehicle of high fashion, which otherwise remained an immaculacy of the driver's—Kristin's—grandfather's accumulated inheritance.

Kristin was more than ready to snap and shriek and panic and wail and fit and *fit* and *fit* upon sight of this slight automotive "love tap" with a residual scar. Vic, who had always perceived cars as boxes with wheels and engines that facilitated the transportation of humans and resources from point A to point B and on, was perplexed by the magnitude of Kristin's response, especially since they were both engaged in this off-roading geology field trip—and weren't dents and scratches implicitly intended to be open invitations to the experiential coloration of otherwise classroom hermit crabs?

And so the two "comrades," once in a co-existence of comfort, now quarantined in a tainted, blemished container of tension, had to somehow cross... *together*... this vast, turbulent ocean of vineyards toward the home of City Island, riding over long, rolling swells on a Kristinly unstable vessel, *so* wounded, *so* mutilated, she rendered its own sunken doom.

Despite the driver's subsidence of anger spats, they did not talk, even in civility, as the BMW bathed in its own humming silence. The passenger peered outside; her blotchy red face seeped with drying-up creeks, not because of *the dent*, but because of being caught, wedged into the Absurd of the dent. The absurdity of another's perception of the dent. Her absurd extent of *valuation* of the dent. It was the most tumultuous discrepancy of reality confined in close quarters Vic could ever fathom; she shivered in shock, developing an anxiousness to escape this overly skewed regime....

Windshield-wiping her eyes from the snarls of another's inflicted enormities, Vic traced the spectered window reflections, riddled with tidy rows of grapes. She vowed to herself, for the *rest* of her life, to never own, never acquire *any* object, of *magnified illusory worth* beyond its own essential function.