

Near the end of the car stood a young woman, apparently in her late teens-almost eighteen to be exact-but already tired and jaded. A while before, the long white chords that indicated the use of an ipod had descended from her ears to the hidden rectangular prism music player, but the battery had run low, so she had put them away to listen instead to the other passengers' tales. Her hair was long and curly; and under the light, it glowed a fiery red, not accentuating, but strangely dulling the freckles that dotted themselves upon her small nose. Although her denim jacket appeared to be quite expensive, the blue material was frayed, and her long dark brown skirt had been torn at the hem. A black messenger bag, ostensibly of the designer variety, was slung across her shoulder, and buttons advertising *Harry Potter* and environmentally friendly energy sources and vehicles decorated it, though rather sloppily and conflictingly upon the material. She also wore black high-tops upon her feet, which were much better for walking the city streets than heels. Her face was gaunt and forlorn, as if she had just recently gone through a difficult experience. She was called Regina Townshend, the sole daughter of a C.E.O. and founder of a highly successful international corporation, Ellen Townshend, but if anyone dared to mention her mother, Regina's gaunt face would turn hostile, which quickly chased any prying inquisitor away. Rumor was that she had escaped from her parents' lavish, modern abode to live in a friend's small, dingy apartment in a shady part of town, the infamous "black sheep" of the well-to-do Townshend clan. In truth, nobody knew much of anything about her: Regina's interests, daily routines, and personal

business remained shrouded in a pall of mystery. The girl was a walking enigma, allowing everyone to guess, but only laugh and brush them away when they assumed incorrectly; one could only hope that behind her deep hazel eyes was the mind of a beautiful young woman, but only if she was willing to speak would the truth finally come out into the open world.