

# THE BEAUTIFUL DEAD END

A NOVEL

CLINT HUTZULAK

ANVIL PRESS • VANCOUVER

Copyright © 2001 by Clint Hutzulak

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical—without the prior written permission of the publisher, with the exception of brief passages in reviews. Any request for photocopying or reprographic copying of any part of this book must be directed in writing to the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (CANCOPY) One Yonge Street, Suite 1900, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5E 1E5

Printed and bound in Canada by Morriss Printing

Cover and book design: Rayola Graphic Design

Cover photos: Vince Klassen

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Hutzulak, Clint, 1967 –

The beautiful dead end

Fiction.

ISBN 1-895636-39-6

I. Title.

PS8565.U92B4 2001 C813'.6 C2001-910751-X

PR9199.4.H88B4 2001

Represented in Canada by the Literary Press Group

Distributed by General Distribution Services

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the BC Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) for their support of our publishing program.



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA  
ARTS COUNCIL  
Supported by the Province of British Columbia

Anvil Press

Suite 204–A 175 East Broadway,

Vancouver, BC V5T 1W2 Canada

[www.anvilpress.com](http://www.anvilpress.com)

*We're everywhere, all the dead of the world. Our final trick, becoming visible again in stone and root and leaf. Translating ourselves into words. Laid out in our dark cloth of letters, spread thin on white sheets, you can see us in any alphabet. Look closely: we are breathing in the spaces between the words.*

## LIVING ROOM

STACE TOUCHED HER FACE with the back of his fingers.

I hate you, Lillis Rae said. She was looking right into his eyes and he had to close his eyes to shut her out.

It was the last time they made love. The room was filled with late afternoon sunlight and through the open windows they could hear the purple martins calling out over the hot lawn.

He worked his fingers into her neck, the muscles of her shoulders, her shirt sliding and bunching beneath his hands.

I thought I knew what you did, what you were capable of, where you stood, but I don't, she said. Whatever it is you've done, I don't want to know. There are others who know more about you than I do, now.

He worked down under the muscles, moving in slow deep semi-circles, his thumbs at the base of her neck, the warm velvety skin

supple beneath his thumbs, working out from her spine, his fingers under her arms.

He pulled the bottom of her shirt out from her jeans.

This is not a good idea, she said.

Why not?

You know why.

He took off her earrings, put them on the coffee table. Tell me why.

He put a hand under her shirt, to her belly, pushed her down until she was lying on the couch with her head on the armrest. She swung her legs up and into his lap. He took her shoes off, ran his fingers around her cool, bony ankles. Tell me why.

It's because I love you and I don't know why else. To see it all destroyed by one stupid thing.... She waved her hand in the air. She closed her eyes.

Stace picked up one of her feet, laid his warm cheek against the sole of her foot, cupping her heel in his hand.

That feels nice, she said.

They waited in silence awhile. The only movement, his thumb stroking the smooth arch of her foot. He was losing it all, everything, he knew that. If there had been a way out he would have taken it but there wasn't. It was now someone else's living room, someone else's furniture. So this is my heart breaking, he thought, looking down at her.

Do you mind if I take my shirt off?

He pressed his lips to the underside of her toes.

Her breasts were small and flat to her chest, the nipples like ornaments dark and high on her body. He shifted on the couch and knelt between her legs to undo her belt. She braced her feet

and arched her back so he could get the jeans down. The delicate bones of her chest spreading like bird's wings.

I don't know what the hell I'm doing, she said suddenly.

Yes you do, he replied.

He pulled the jeans off, leaving her naked legs around him.

Let me just look at you for a while, he said.

She locked her ankles behind his neck and pulled him down. He kissed her breasts while she unbuttoned his pants, hooked the waistband with her long toes. Help me, she said.

He went partway in.

Her lips moved across his cheek. I think this is a very bad idea, she said into his ear.

He was inside her deeply, her thighs around his waist, her head coming up now against his neck.

You're so far away already, she whispered. Where are you?

He balanced himself with the top of his head in the hollow of her shoulder and with both hands lifted her ass off the cushions, his fingers sliding around and into her.

What are we going to do? Lillis Rae asked.

He breathed through his mouth so that he would not cry, his throat clamped as if by an iron band, and he saw that she was waiting for an answer and he said nothing, nothing, holding her against his chest. He knew it was over and she knew it too and was waiting for him to say it, say anything, but he could not shape an answer, even a single word.

He was twenty-eight years old and he reached down inside himself for something he knew should be there and from the kitchen he could hear the kid calling for Dickey, calling for his father who was not there and never would be.