

## SINS OF THE FATHER

My name is William. Just like my father and just like my son. And like both my grandfathers. And, God willing, like my son's son and his son. We all have the same name. Not that it's important to anyone outside the family. Or inside the family for that matter. It's just who we all are. And, probably, all we will ever be.

I never chose this life. None of us did. Well, maybe some long-dead William 100 years ago did. But ever since that first choice was made, once he reached a certain age every son was expected to pick up the William mantle. Not expected, really. We just did.

I used to try to picture what it would be like if it were different. What if I wasn't a William. But those were the stupid thoughts of a young man with unweathered hands and whose back had not yet been broke. I don't think those thoughts anymore. I don't have time to.

I have accepted my lot. It's all I know. And all any of us have ever known for a very long time. And, most likely all my son will ever know.

I look up at the hillside overlooking the valley. The one dotted with stones covering what's left of so many who shared my name. Men who worked hard and kept their heads down. Men who did what they were supposed to do. And I wonder if any of those Williams ever felt like me.