

The magic of television brought Joe's face up close. He looked uncomfortable, Cheryl noticed. Despite the complexity and confusion of her recent emotions she felt a twinge of pity for him: his face was very red and sweat was pouring down his forehead and cheeks.

'Your father hates crowds,' Cheryl said. 'This must be very unpleasant for him.'

'So, demagogue and would-be leader of the masses is a great career choice for him then,' said Sarah.

Cheryl took her customary deep breath, ready to lecture her daughter on her attitude, held it for a moment, feeling perplexed, then released it in a puff of some emotion difficult to define – defeat? resignation? Agreement.

She allowed a smile to curl up the left side of her face. 'Yeah, *fucking* great career choice!'

Once more Sarah stared. Her mother seemed completely oblivious of her scrutiny, focusing her attention on the screen.

Now was the moment for Sarah to test her hypothesis. She stole a glance to upper right and left. Sure enough, the eyes of all the *soi-disant* ancestors had swivelled in the direction of the TV. Those closest, with the least comfortable view of the screen, had even managed to lean forward and twist to one side so that their upper bodies protruded from the canvas. Could there be any doubt? No, the hypothesis was confirmed. She wondered whether to mention this to her mother, but thought she was probably too pre-occupied to give it due attention. And in any case, what action could they take, even if they both admitted the knowledge?

But what was even more worrying than the idea of the portraits having some form of 'life' was the expression on their faces. Whereas they had variously been depicted

with expressions of valour, defiance, solemnity, pompousness, or piety, they now all displayed obvious looks of dismay.

Sarah focused on the TV once more. Immediately round her father were a hundred or so men around his age, dressed in much the same clothes – suits or semi-formal trousers and blazers, mainly grey or black. But their numbers were dwarfed by an enormous crowd of men in their late twenties or early thirties with shaved heads, wearing jeans and T-shirts. They were waving much more aggressive and obviously racist placards than Joe's friends. Sarah wondered how well Joe got on with them, indeed if he approved of them at all.