CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Hat's the Thing

JOHANNA WAGNER

We wear our lids around and we look good. You see our status. We can put it all together. Our hats make our outfits, they match our shoes and it's a new phat look every day. Our hats are sharp, flat brimmed, perfectly fine, and worn with style. These caps don't show allegiance. How I wear the cap is more important than what the cap says. Tomorrow I will wear another, and look twice as good, because I can. The hat doesn't make me, I make the hat.

My hat shows you who I am and what team I love. I won't go anywhere without it, at least not without a fight. My hat is dirty. My hat has been under my truck, and in my field, on fishing trips and to church. It's been to the corner store, and out for a walk with the dog. When my son was born, he got one too. My team hasn't been good for a while, but I love them. I remember them as a kid, and I will watch them when I am too old to see the TV. When they have a good year, I stand taller and walk prouder. When they have a bad one, I stand with them, because that's who I am, and where I come from. This hat is who I am.

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How can a cap mean everything and nothing at the same time? Is it race or class? Or just where we come from and what we are taught. These hats fill us with pride, whether we give allegiance to something else or just ourselves. It's just a hat, right? Wrong. This hat means everything.