What Kira Sees

On the shelf where we kept our photo albums there was a book my Mom called The Family Book of the Dead.



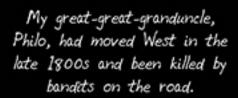
Among its dozen or so pages were the faces of those we'd lost along the way...

There was my grandfather's older brother, Del, who was run over by a car in 1922, at age eleven.





And the twins, Wendy and Gwendy, who would have been my fourth cousins twice removed. They died in the influenza pandemic of 1918.





Once when my father was drunk, he told me Philo had actually been hung as a horse thief, but he denied it later.

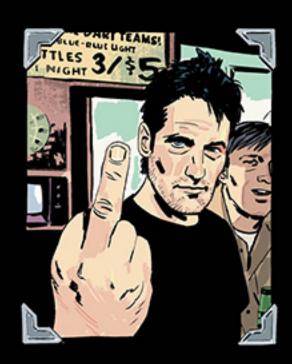
My Grandpa Jimmy had survived Korea, but his helicopter went down in the early days of the Vietnam War.





And of course, my dad, who had died of pancreatic cancer when I was sixteen. Mom got mad at me when I put his picture in the book.

A few years after that Mom's brother, my uncle Jack, fell from a tree and fractured his collarbone. The fracture got infected and he died before the doctors even knew he was in danger.



She said I was "missing the point" and I said she didn't want to be reminded of what she'd done to him.