

Jamie, Wintereyes

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working title

Chapter 4 "They Become a Pack" Continued from Dec

Justin studiously examined the address he had scribbled onto his hand one more time. This couldn't possibly be the correct address. The building did not make him think 'church' at all. Nor did it resemble any other kind of place for worship. No signs were outside at all to even name the building. The windows on the second floor were blacked out and protected by iron bars all the way to the top floor. There were no bottom floor windows. Justin now stood in front of the uninviting place watching everyone who walked by for a moment. Not one of the passers-by noticed the building or paid any attention to the young man standing there quite confused. Resolutely he turned to the metal door.

Nervously he put his hand to the latch, pressed down and pushed. The door swung open into a dark and tiny room. Empty. The only way to go was either back out or through the second door he had found himself facing. It was even heavier than the first, and also locked. Justin then noticed the column of buttons to the side. Perhaps these were why he had been given the instruction of 'extension A'. Seconds later an annoyed voice came out of the intercom speaker above the buttons. Only it was not Saul's voice.

"Yes? Can I help you?"

"Uh... I came because Saul asked me to..." Justin leaned over the little speaker to be sure he was heard.

"Oh Saul. No need to shout... Hold on." The old voice grumbled and the intercom clicked off. A few more moments passed before there was a click in the heavy door. It opened but the little old man wasn't standing there, instead it was Saul himself.

"Hello Justin!" He made a cheery greeting. "I'm really glad to see you! Come to impart a little more information about your Jamie-girl?" Saul was an inch or so taller than Justin, who was not so giant himself. He wasn't even six feet, so Saul must have been just six feet. He was a little heavier set than Justin, as age and desk jobs will do to people. He also looked to be around 45, especially in this odd lighting. He had all his hair though, and was sharp man.

He had explained to Justin earlier that he wasn't so much a police officer as a contracted investigator. Saul worked for the investigation company, which in turn worked extremely closely with the police. The church in turn owned the company, hence the companies location in the church. No it didn't matter, they weren't crossing the lines of separation of church and state.

Justin had really only come to see Saul out of the desperation to have information about Jamie for himself. He imagined that maybe the robbers might have been part of a gang, he wasn't sure if that gang would then chase their last witness down. Apparently no one had seen anyone and there were no bodies as of yet. At least according to the tiny news article in the paper. That's all there had been, a single tiny newspaper article. After he imagined all that he began to wonder if maybe Jamie's uncle was not a good man after all. He had sort of threatened Justin. Then Justin's mind would flip to consider if Jamie hadn't run away on purpose. He would never know if she ever loved him, and he could never have the chance to tell her. She likely barely thought of him now. That is of course, if she was even alive.

All this had gone through his mind yet again as Saul was leading them through a hallway lined with several doors all heavy steel and decorated with strange and ornate crosses.

"I can see you're very worried about your little girlfriend." Saul had stopped at one of the doors at the end of the hall.

"Have you found anything at all? I need to know if she's all right. What about her parents? There's been nothing in the news

except a little blip! A blip! They deserve more than a blip!"

"My boy." Saul motioned Justin through the door first. It was a stairwell that went up the whole building. "Do not take what I say the wrong way. But what is one more robbery and murder in a big city like this? It's not new or dramatically huge. The news can't spend all their time on each individual case."

"But it's bigger than all that. It's gotta be. She's missing! Where are her parents? You've gotta know something. Can't you tell me anything?"

"I can tell you we haven't found out much. But you are right, sort of. It's unusual for parents to just up and leave while their child is missing."

"Up and leave?" Justin was plain out alarmed. That was new information and not particularly good information. He'd only been worried about their health prior, not their existence.

At the third floor Saul stopped again and opened the door for Justin once more. "I thought you knew that. She would have told you that her parents left, I thought. They were in a hurry too by the way their apartment looked. Hmmm, it is better that the news companies are not chasing this. It would get very muddled."

The third floor of the building was lit by a couple of windows. They must have been at the back of the building. The view was not of the street. The bars on the windows were constant fixtures. Saul walked over to one of the desks in this tiny office. He and Justin were currently the only occupants of the repressive space. Saul motioned Justin to take a seat and then sat down in his own.

"Well..." he breathed out. "As I said, they left in a big hurry. So... your girlfriend never told you any plans that they may have made?" Saul grabbed a little notepad from a drawer and a pen from the top of his desk.

"She's not exactly my girlfriend... and no. She didn't tell me anything. All I knew was that she was expecting her uncle. She had even asked him frequently about her parents before they left. He didn't answer her...no really, I knew nothing." Justin shook his head.

"I see," murmured Saul jotting things down on that notepad. Justin wondered how many notes on his desk were for Jamie. He had neatly stacked the papers and folders on the desk. There was also a computer, a small lamp, and several pens. Justin looked around himself as he waited for Saul to finish writing.

"Are there a lot of break-ins all the way up here?"

"Hmm?" Saul looked up confused. Justin pointed at the windows. "Oh. The bars. We've had a few attempts. Hard to believe that- all the way up on this floor. But the bars are a good deterrent I suppose." He stopped writing and set his pen down. "There you see, you had more information for me than you thought."

"Does no one know where Jamie is at all?" Justin pressed.

"We have some guesses. There are a couple of leads. Bits and pieces of stuff. None of it is concrete yet. So I won't talk about it yet for fear of leading you in the wrong hope or unnecessary dismay. Besides, I'm really not permitted to speak about it openly. Confidentiality. You know how it goes. I'm sure you must have some idea where her uncle might bring her?" Saul made an expectant face. Justin merely shook his head. "Well, let me show you around while you're here then."

Saul showed Justin the rest of the little repressive office before bringing him back down the stairs to the first floor. He led Justin to another door of steel that glided easily open with a push. Together they walked down a flight of stone stairs. Their feet scuffed on spiraling stone stairs, the sound echoing down the hallway.

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