

Chapter Seventy One

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The stench in the small bathroom hits Robert hard with a mix of blood, feces, piss and whiskey. His body exudes a smell of booze and body odour. “Fuck,” he grips the faucet and shakes as he looks out the window. “Fuck, look at these people, not a care in the world, and look at me.” He tries to lift the window but the pane is too much for him. He lies on the floor and rolls over and tries to do push-ups but his body won’t move. “What the fuck” He crawls around and gets up. He walks around the apartment aimlessly and covers his mouth.

The stench lingers. Laundry, boots, empty beers cans, wine, tequila and whiskey bottles and colorful rubbish litter each room. He walks over to the radiator and feels the pipes. Cold hard steel, “Damn I must have forgotten to bleed the rads.”

In the kitchen broken dishes on the counters and floor, empty take-out food containers and blood on the walls and green muck on the tiled floor. “It looks like Christmas gone wrong.” Robert walks into the bedroom. He grabs clothes from the floor; black 511 Levi’s, black crew neck t-shirt and black Levi’s jacket.

The brunch crowd at Easy fills up the medium size diner. The walls are covered in 70s film posters and every wall shelf displays vintage toys and vinyl. The smell of strong coffee and fried potatoes mixed with the bacon

grease makes his stomach growl. He stumbles over to his spot, a two-seater table beneath a red hood of a 1967 Mustang. The waitress, Robin is petite and bubbly with short

auburn hair and a big smile. "Water, coffee, Huevos Divorciados, please." The background noise buzzes with laughter and much talk with Big Star on the stereo. Robert perspires, closes his eyes. *'Don't need to talk to no doctor, don't need to talk to no shrink, cause when my baby is beside me I don't worry, I don't need to think.'* The lyrics repeat and scream in Robert's head. His head aches as he fidgets. "I need to talk to you. Don't say a word."

Robert opens his eyes. Focus is blurry as his mouth gets dry. He straightens up. Frank pulls a chair and sits down. -A lean body at 55, short greased back hair and short sideburns. Frank shifts in his chair -the scent of Frank's nicotine stained fingers is familiar.

"Word on the street is that you're running with some bad dudes. Stop whatever the fuck you're doing. The next time I see you here it better be with her..." Robert stares at Frank and swallows hard, fidgets and finds a small packet in his jacket. Memories flood and explode into a maze of confusion, delight and horror. A smile comes as he remembers the euphoric bliss. He suddenly realizes he wants that again.

"You gotta-understand that my life went south when Bella left."

Frank moves closer.

"You two were always so rock'n'roll but whatever. Don't do anything stupid... before you know it she will be back."

"Isabella had a miscarriage. She went to Italy to heal." Robert wipes his eyes and nose and touches Frank's arm, The longer she's away I don't

want to live...”

Frank grabs Robert and pulls him closer, “Listen you shit, Bella would want you to be strong. For fuck’s sake...”

The music changes, and Nick Cave croons, Frank screams, “Who put this on?”