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**CHAPTER THREE:**

Her Story

Wetzel put a hand on Jenna’s shoulder, “You sure you wanna do this?” She looked up to him with a wry smile, “Going to have to move past it sometime. Besides, I think it’s only fair.” Wetzel gave her shoulder a soft pat before taking a step back to let Jenna tell her story.

“First thing’s first, I think it would be best if we introduced ourselves.” She said, relaxing her pose a bit. “You probably guessed by now but my name isn’t actually ‘Jenna.’” Gabriel gave a tired snort. Jenna ignored him, “Real name’s Jessica. That over there is Gregory. Don’t let his stature fool you, he’s actually quite kind at heart.” Wetzel interjected, “I could say the same about you.” Jessica shot him a look. “With *that* out of the way…”

Jessica cleared her throat, "Like you, I grew up in this city." she said, with a distant look in her eyes. "But there's a key difference. You see, I was born into a poor family. We used to live in an old apartment building, kind of like the one you described. I was able to go to school, but home was… let's just say unsafe. My parents used to be craftsmen; they could make anything from watches to small self propelled vehicles. With the new tech going mainstream though, they weren't needed anymore. So, since they couldn't find work, I decided to one day move us somewhere better. Somewhere they could do what they loved again."

"Did you ever manage to?" asked Gabriel. He couldn't tell if she was lying, but she seemed different than when she'd tossed him in the trunk. She took a deep breath, "My parents both died when I was twelve. They'd been sick for weeks, and one day, they just… wouldn't wake. So, I ended up on the streets."

Jessica sighed, "I still went to school, but obviously couldn't afford to go to any higher education. So, when high school ended, I spent all my time at the library. And I read, and researched, and learned all I could about economics; managing accounts, dealing with interest, even a few complex formulas. After a year, I went straight to Wall Street. Started out with all I had left, a single dollar. Everyone laughed, thought I was just some idiot vagrant off the street."

"What happened?" Gabriel asked. "By the end of the day, I had made over a hundred thousand dollars. Everyone was shocked." If she was lying, she was doing a hell of a good job. At the moment though, everything did seem to be lining up, as far as he knew. "I think I remember hearing something about a savant entrepreneur a few years back," Gabriel said, "But what does this have to do with why we're here?" "I'm getting there." Jessica replied.

"As soon as the markets closed, I found an apartment in Manhattan, got new clothes, and a few luxuries, and the next day, I went back." Jessica now had a distant expression, almost like regret, Gabriel thought. "Eventually, I made millions; then billions. And then, after a few years, trillions. And, for a few years, that's all I did." She gave out an amused huff. "Making deals, exchanges; making money. But, without anything to spend it on, without a reason for having it, one day, I just gave it all away to different charities. I headed to the bridge over the river, and stood on the edge." After a moment of silence, Gabriel spoke. "So, what made you change your mind?" He wanted to ask why she said she had no reason, but he sensed she wasn't ready to tell him quite yet. What he did know was that she definitely wasn't lying.

After a what seemed like an eternity, Jessica spoke again, smiling slightly as she spoke. "This man with a southern accent came up and told me I needed a purpose. Well, more specifically, that I needed a job. At that point I didn't care anymore, so I listened to what he had to say. I didn't know it then, but my life was going to change so much. And its because of that that we're here today." "To offer me a job?" Gabriel asked, "Doing what exactly?" "Helping people." Jessica answered, "Doing what it is you've always wanted."

"But why me?” Gabriel asked. “And what about the force? After all, that's why I signed up. Or, did I miss something?" She leaned back, "Because like us, you really care about helping others. And serving on the police force would allow you to help a lot of people, that’s true. But what if, what if you could do so much more? To help to stop violent crimes, deadly crimes, before they happen? By the time the police get involved, its usually too late! Hell, what if you could stop terrorist attacks before they can ever occur?"

It was all just so crazy. Even if it could be true, it was all just like a dream. "Who are you guys; black ops, CIA, top secret MOD task force?" He tried asking. Jessica and Wetzel looked at each other, and neither seemed to want to answer. Eventually, Wetzel began to speak. "We're kind of like, guardian angels. Watching over and protecting people." Gabriel wasn’t satisfied, "But who do you work for?"

Just then, Wetzel's phone gave out a pair of short, high pitched beeps. "Looks like we got some more orders." Wetzel said after he checked it. "What’s he saying now?" Jessica asked. "Looks like we're going have a little demonstration." Wetzel answered. "To help him make up his mind." "Demonstration?" Jessica asked, clearly confused. "Yeah, in the Bronx." Wetzel replied. "Says to get there by sunrise." "Well then," Jessica said, "we'd better get moving."