

Chapter 15: Jack

Play with fire too much, you're going to get burned. Tell that to the fire-eater.

Chapter 16: Patricia

Dear Mom and “dad” (now that know the truth, it’s really difficult for me to call you “Dad” anymore, but “Dwayne” doesn’t sound right either. “Mr. Wilson” doesn’t sound right either, so for now, in writing anyway I’ll call you “dad”... we’ll see what happens when I have to talk to you in person.)

By the time you read this, I’ll be gone for a couple of hours at least. Don’t worry. I’m not doing anything dangerous. I’m just going to see him. (In case you don’t know “dad” the “him” that I’m talking about is my real biological Dad. I don’t know who to feel worse for. You for living in the dark all these years -Mom tells me you don’t know-. Me, for living under a lie for my entire life. Mom, for feeling like she had to keep this a secret. Or, Biological Dad, for the surprise that he’s about to get.)

I’m taking a bus. He should be easy to find (oh, yeah, “dad” that’s something else you’ll probably have to come to terms with. Biological Dad is famous, and rich. Good choice, Mom.)

After I talk to him, I’ll let you know what I’m going to do next.

Your Daughter (daughter)

Rainbow.

She had read the letter four times. Not to find anything new, she just didn’t know what else to do. It was mostly written to Dwayne, really. And he was angry. Angrier then Patricia had ever seen him. She didn’t like to see him angry. He didn’t do it well. He was a slow-burn,

let's-pretend-everything's-alright kind of guy.

Dwayne had read the letter twice in succession. While his coffee got cold sitting in the now ironic “Worlds Greatest Dad” mug. When he was done, he didn't say anything, just stared out the kitchen window at the backyard where the early morning sun was just starting to hit the swing set and make the dew on the lawn glisten before dissipating into the morning air.

Just sat there. Silent. His jaw clenched tightly as though this time he wasn't sure that his normal avoidance of angry words was going to work and they would all spill out at any moment.

Even at his angrier moments, usually when money was tight or Rainbow was bringing her annoying friends to the house, even then he would at the very least give Patricia a peck on the cheek and a “bye” when he left for work. Today, he was out the door and gone while Patricia was in the bathroom. Gone without a word.

Dwayne was monumentally angry.

But what was she supposed to do about it? What's done is done. And if he isn't going to talk how was she supposed to explain her side?

She looked at the letter again. Neatly written and well thought out. This wasn't a spur of the moment plan by Rainbow. The bus trip was a lie, she wasn't sure how she knew that but she did, she also wasn't sure what the truth was, but for some reason she knew that the bus trip was a lie. Everything else she couldn't quite sort out.

Rainbow has run away, and it was all her fault. She didn't feel as though she had the right to go to the police. Maybe she should anyway. But, a part of her, a very large part of her, wanted Rainbow to succeed in trying to find her father. Then she would, maybe, understand Patricia's reasoning.

As she sat at the kitchen table with both her and Dwayne's

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untouched coffee mugs now at room temperature, she stared out the window at the back yard. The sun now full up. A new day was officially started, and Patricia couldn't tell if it was going to be the best of her life, or the absolute worst.