

Chapter 104

In Chapter 104, Saint receives an unexpected call that shifts the course of her evening. The caller, a streetwalker familiar with the underworld of St. Louis, alerts Saint to a troubling situation. A young girl, who is estimated to be no older than sixteen, has been forcibly thrust into the dangerous world of streetwalking. The caller provides a specific street name where the girl is likely to be working that night. Despite having previously made plans for dinner with Jimmy and his mother, Saint feels an overwhelming urge to intervene and help. With little hesitation, she decides to follow the tip and investigate, her sense of duty outweighing her personal commitments.

As Saint navigates through St. Louis, she observes the contrast between the lively city streets and the quieter, more ominous sections she passes. The tall, modern high-rises of the downtown area give way to the worn, decaying buildings of North Street, an area marked by neglect. The bright lights and energy of the city feel distant, replaced by a heavy atmosphere of danger. As she drives through this unfamiliar territory, she becomes aware of several young men loitering on the street corners, their eyes watching her every move. Her attention is soon drawn to a girl, likely in her late teens, dressed provocatively. As they make brief eye contact, the girl unexpectedly tosses a small piece of paper into Saint's car window before quickly retreating into the shadows. This interaction, brief as it was, leaves a strong impression on Saint.

The piece of paper contains an address that leads Saint to a rundown house located on the corner of Fairshaw and Brooklyn. Upon arriving, Saint experiences an immediate sense of unease. The house is old and poorly maintained, with broken windows and a decaying facade. The environment around the house seems deserted, heightening the tension in the air. Despite the ominous atmosphere, Saint does what she knows is necessary. She quickly contacts dispatch, providing them with the details she has gathered, ensuring that help is on the way. Even as she waits, she cannot shake the

feeling that something is terribly wrong. Her instincts tell her that this is the moment when the girl's fate could change. From the corner of her eye, she notices an upstairs light flicker off, and then the silhouette of a young girl appears at the window. A large, imposing man can be seen trailing closely behind her, his presence sending a chill down Saint's spine.

As the minutes pass, the tension in the air grows unbearable. Saint watches with growing apprehension, knowing that any second could be the difference between life and death for the girl. Just as she begins to feel the weight of the situation, local law enforcement arrives. They take immediate action, surrounding the house and preparing for an arrest. Saint remains in her vehicle, a silent observer, as the police enter the building. The door is opened, and a young girl, trembling with fear, is escorted out by the officers. Saint's heart sinks as she watches the girl's face, recognizing the anguish in her eyes. The girl is identified as Mia, a sixteen-year-old girl who has been trapped in this dangerous world by forces beyond her control. The girl's rescue is a bittersweet victory, but it's clear that her journey to freedom has just begun.

Saint continues to observe from a distance, feeling a mix of emotions as she watches the scene unfold. As the first light of dawn begins to break, Mia's parents arrive, their faces filled with a blend of relief and sorrow. They rush to their daughter, enveloping her in an emotional embrace. The reunion is deeply moving, as Mia's parents had likely feared the worst, never knowing if they would see their daughter again. Saint can't help but feel a sense of pride, knowing that her actions have made a real difference in the life of a young girl. But she also feels the weight of the night's events, the emotional toll of witnessing such hardship, and the stark reality of the dangerous world she has just entered.

As Saint drives away, the quiet of the morning envelops her, and she reflects on the emotional significance of the night's events. For her, this experience marks a turning point in her mission. It is her first successful rescue of a young girl from the grim circumstances of street life, and the weight of the moment is not lost on her. The night

has been long, but Saint knows it has been a step forward in her journey. As she drives toward home, she feels a sense of fulfillment mixed with the understanding that there is still much work to be done. The mission isn't over. In fact, it has only just begun.