

# Chapter 132

Chapter 132 begins with Saint seeking quiet refuge in the sun-drenched landscape near the San Xavier del Bac mission. Still carrying emotional bruises from recent trauma, she books a modest room in San Carlos, hoping distance and silence will offer clarity. The mission's white domes and desert winds provide a strange comfort as she sifts through tangled thoughts of Jimmy, the boy who once stood at the center of her world and now existed only in memories. For three days, she limits her contact with the outside world, pretending normalcy when speaking to Norma, though the truth remains buried behind polite words.

On the fourth morning, a call interrupts her self-imposed solitude. A panicked teller from a small-town bank reports a suspicious sighting, sending Saint racing down winding desert roads. As her car hugs the turns carved into the mountains, she feels both the weight of responsibility and the rush of adrenaline, knowing each bend might lead her closer to the person she's been tracking. The Superstition Mountains rise in the distance, quiet but ominous, mirroring her internal unease as she follows the trail.

As the road stretches into scrubland, she spots a familiar figure—Patch, someone she once loved with the naive intensity only youth can afford. He stands with his back to her, aged by time and hardship, yet still tethered to the past they shared. She parks the car and steps toward him, unsure what words might come, but knowing something unresolved still lives between them. When he turns, their eyes lock in a silence that speaks volumes, the years between them evaporating in that single moment.

They talk cautiously at first, as though testing the air. He asks about life, family, and distant memories. Saint listens, answering in pieces, holding back the full storm of her grief until he mentions Eloise Strike—a name that echoes like a bell through her chest. The memory of that girl, of what was lost, floods Saint's mind, and she realizes the man before her is still haunted by ghosts he never buried.

Their exchange shifts to more intimate reflections, the kind you only have when the past refuses to let go. They recall summer laughter near a lake, children running barefoot across docks, and the way innocence once wrapped around them like a second skin. But the moment doesn't last. Saint feels the tension between what she wants to say and what duty requires her to do. She finally speaks the truth about Jimmy—not just about his disappearance, but the violence tied to him, and what she had to endure as a result.

Patch, caught between denial and regret, struggles to process the weight of her confession. He tries to offer sympathy, but his own guilt prevents any meaningful connection. Saint watches him, torn. She sees not just the man she once loved, but someone shaped by sorrow and self-inflicted wounds. Despite his remorse, the pain between them cannot be patched over with kind words.

When Patch hints at running, her hand tightens around her badge, her voice firm. She warns him not to flee, but he steps back anyway, a silent apology etched in his eyes. In a moment that shatters everything, Saint makes a decision she never wanted to face. She draws her weapon and fires—not out of anger, but because duty leaves no room for hesitation. The echo of the shot marks not just an end, but a profound loss.

As the dust settles, Saint lowers the weapon, her heart splintered. There's no triumph, only silence. In choosing justice, she forfeits something personal and sacred. Chapter 132 ends with her standing alone in the desert heat, the line between right and wrong blurred by everything left unsaid.