

# Chapter 252

Chapter 252 opens with an intense moment of survival as Saint finds herself trapped in a vicious struggle for her life against Eli Aaron, whose grip tightens around her throat, cutting off her air supply. The air in the room grows thick with panic, every breath she takes becoming harder, each one feeling more like an impossible task. Her body thrashes and kicks out in desperation, trying to break free from his iron grip. Eli, disturbingly calm, whispers the word “Poetry,” as though reciting a line from a book, his demeanor a chilling contrast to the violence he’s inflicting. His composure only makes the struggle feel more surreal, and Saint’s fight for survival becomes even more frantic, as her mind races, trying to make sense of the brutality before her.

In a moment of clarity, Saint summons every ounce of strength left in her body and manages to land a knee to Eli’s midsection. The move causes his grip to falter for just a moment, offering her a sliver of hope, as she gasps for the air she’s been deprived of. In that split second, the images around her—the photographs of other young girls on the walls—remind her of the pain that has defined so many lives, including her own. These silent witnesses to suffering only intensify her determination to escape. She can’t let herself become another image on the wall, a silent memory of what once was.

Eli, however, seems unaffected by her struggle. As Saint fights to regain control, Eli presses even harder against her, seemingly feeding off the tension. His low, guttural grunts grow louder as if he is savoring the control he has over the situation. His grip around her neck tightens again, and Saint’s vision blurs, but she refuses to give in. She knows that this battle isn’t just for her life, but for those she loves, for the family and friends who depend on her. Every kick, every movement, every ounce of her strength is for them, for the future she still hopes to have.

Despite the suffocating pressure, Saint's mind never wavers. She thinks of Charlotte, her grandmother, Jimmy, and Patch—each of them flashing through her mind as she fights for survival. Their faces keep her anchored, reminding her of the strength she has within her, the strength she must summon in this critical moment. The room around her begins to fade, replaced by a tunnel vision focused only on the fight at hand. Her body burns with exhaustion, but her spirit refuses to break.

Then, the tension shifts, and in a sudden, deafening crack, a gunshot rings out, and Eli's grip loosens as a portion of his skull is blown apart. The air is immediately filled with the ringing echo of the shot, followed by the sickening sound of Eli's body hitting the floor. Saint stands in shock, gasping for breath as her hands instinctively go to her neck, feeling the remnants of the constriction. She can hardly process what's just happened—one moment, she's fighting for her life, and the next, the threat is gone.

The room falls into an eerie silence, save for the sound of her labored breathing. Saint, disoriented but alive, stands in the wake of the violence, her body trembling from the ordeal. Her eyes flicker to Eli's lifeless form on the floor, and a flood of emotions overwhelms her. Relief and horror collide within her, and she's left standing in the aftermath of the chaos, trying to reconcile the violence she's just witnessed and survived. The gunshot not only ended Eli's life but marked a pivotal moment in Saint's own journey—a moment she will carry with her for the rest of her life.

The chaos of the moment gradually fades into the background as Saint surveys her surroundings. Blood stains the floor, and Eli's body is a grim reminder of the brutal reality she has just faced. The violence of it all hangs in the air like a dark cloud, yet she's still standing, still breathing. The relief of survival is tempered by the emotional weight of what she's had to do to stay alive. Saint's heart pounds in her chest, her thoughts swirling, unable to fully comprehend the magnitude of what has just occurred.

As the dust settles, Saint is left with the unsettling realization that this moment marks a turning point in her life. She's no longer just a survivor—she's a participant in a much larger, darker world, a world that has forced her to confront unimaginable violence.

The sense of victory is fleeting, replaced by an overwhelming sense of loss and dread about what's to come. This encounter with Eli Aaron, a man who represented everything she's fought against, has shifted her life forever, and the path ahead is now uncertain, filled with both the hope of survival and the fear of what's yet to unfold.