

Chapter 109

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At that instant, the significance of the revelation hit Peterson. He considered the Waltons, a powerful and influential force that had loomed over his life recently in an unexpected way, now emerged as the common enemy shared between him and this mysterious individual. The implications were profound, and Peterson's thoughts raced as he contemplated the gravity of the situation and the potential alliances that lay ahead.

Still in shock, Peterson pulled himself together, his mind reeling with important questions. As he regained his composure, other figures began to appear from different corners of the space, further increasing his tension. Curiosity peaked within him, and he couldn't hold back any longer. He directed his question toward the man who had just taken a seat on a rocky chair that Peterson hadn't noticed before.

"Who exactly are you people?" Peterson asked, his gaze shifting from one stoic expression to another. The strange faces before him remained impassive, adding to the mystery that surrounded them. Peterson's voice trembled slightly, revealing a mix of fear and curiosity.

"How did you know I hate the Waltons?" His voice grew firmer as he continued. "What's your agenda?"

The man in the rocky chair leaned back, his eyes locked with Peterson's. His features were enigmatic, and a faint smile played at the corners of his lips. Peterson could sense an aura of authority emanating from him.

"We are the Guardians," the man finally replied, his voice deep and resonant. "We have been watching you, Peterson, for a long time. We know more about you than you can imagine."

Peterson's heart skipped a beat. The mention of his name intensified the whirlwind of emotions swirling within him. He felt a mixture of awe and trepidation at the thought of being observed so closely by unknown entities.

"As for your disdain for the Waltons," the man continued, his gaze unwavering, "we have been monitoring the world and its inhabitants for centuries. We have access to knowledge that spans generations, allowing us to see beyond what most can comprehend."

Peterson's mind raced, trying to make sense of the situation. The Guardians' cryptic presence and their knowledge about his personal preferences left him on edge.

"And...what's your agenda?" Peterson pressed on.

As the man's irritation grew, his sneer intensified, causing Peterson to instinctively step back. The man leaned forward on the rocky chair, his stance exuding dominance. A menacing aura surrounded him, and his threat sent a chill down Peterson's spine.

"If you take another step back, you'll lose your pathetic life," the man spat, his voice dripping with contempt. Peterson's heart raced, and he froze in fear, realizing the gravity of the situation. He knew he had to tread carefully to ensure his safety.

Summoning all his courage, Peterson managed to steady his trembling voice. "I apologize," he stammered, desperately trying to regain control. "I didn't mean any disrespect. I'm just... caught off guard by all of this."

The man's sneer softened slightly, but his eyes remained cold and unyielding. "You should just stay calm instead of being a wimp now," he retorted, his voice laced with disdain. "We have important matters to

discuss, and your composure will be crucial."

After a brief silence, the man beckoned to one of the individuals standing nearby. With a nod, the person hurried off and returned shortly with a small table, upon which a hookah was placed. The man reached for the hookah, lighting it with practiced ease. Thick smoke billowed from the apparatus as he took a long drag, the air around him becoming hazy and mysterious.

Exhaling a cloud of smoke into the sky, the man's demeanor shifted slightly. His tone became less aggressive, though an air of authority still clung to his every word.

"Guess who confirmed our information regarding you?" the man taunted, a sly smirk playing on his lips. Peterson furrowed his brow, unable to fathom who could have revealed such personal details about him. The suspense mounted, urging him to make a guess.

Shaking his head, Peterson admitted defeat. "I have no idea," he muttered, his voice tinged with frustration and curiosity.

The man's smirk widened, relishing the moment of revelation. With a dramatic flourish, he pointed toward a figure who had been lurking in the shadows. The figure stepped forward, throwing back a hood to reveal a face that Peterson knew all too well.

It was his sister, Sarah.

Peterson's eyes widened in disbelief as his gaze locked with Sarah's. The room seemed to spin around him, and he struggled to comprehend the situation. Sarah, who had always been a constant presence in his life, now stood before him as a part of this enigmatic group.

"Hi, brother," Sarah greeted him, her voice unusually formal and

detached. Peterson searched her face for answers, his confusion deepening.

"What are you doing here, Sarah?" he asked, his voice laced with a mixture of concern and bewilderment. His mind raced, trying to make sense of the situation and understand his sister's involvement with these strangers.

Before Sarah could respond, the man interjected, his voice dripping with condescension. "Are you blind?" he sneered. "She's a part of us. A valuable asset, I might add."

Staring at Sarah, Peterson's frown deepened. He struggled to reconcile the sister he thought he knew with the Sarah standing before him now, aligned with these mysterious individuals who seemed to hold great power and secrets.

"Hey, Peterson," the man interjected, his voice cutting through the tension. "She did nothing wrong in confirming our information regarding you. In fact... she has helped you." He took another drag from the hookah, seemingly unaffected by the weight of the situation.

An eerie silence settled over the room as Sarah slowly approached Peterson. His eyes held a mix of confusion and hurt, his voice barely a whisper as he voiced his disbelief. "Sarah, you want to ruin me?" he asked, his words laden with bewilderment and a sense of betrayal.

Sarah met his gaze, her expression softening with a mix of compassion and determination. "Though we are step-siblings," she began, her voice matching his hushed tone, "you know deep down that I can never mean harm to you. Trust me, Peterson."

Baffled, Peterson searched her eyes for any signs of deceit. He had always

relied on their bond, their shared experiences, and now it felt as if that foundation was crumbling beneath him.

"You're at the right place," Sarah continued, her voice steady, "and in front of the right person who can make your problems vanish."

Peterson's problem seemed to be hanging in the balance as he listened to Sarah's unusual suggestion. Doubts filled his mind as he repeated her words.

"My problem vanish?" Peterson questioned skeptically, unsure of what to make of Sarah's claim. He couldn't help but wonder if her proposed solution was too good to be true.

Sarah nodded confidently, affirming her previous statement. She pointed towards a man named Gregg, who was standing nearby, smoking a cigarette with a grimace on his face. Peterson's gaze followed her gesture, and he noticed Gregg fixating his eyes on him. The mysterious man seemed to exude an air of authority and confidence.

However, Peterson couldn't help but feel apprehensive about the situation. He turned towards Sarah, expressing his doubts and disbelief. "You're crazy," he remarked, his voice filled with skepticism. "Is this the help you said you'd find for me?"

Maintaining her composure, Sarah stood her ground. "Yes," she replied firmly. "Gregg over there is the only one who can help you. You just need to listen to him and pledge your allegiance to him."

Peterson opened his mouth to argue, feeling reluctant to blindly follow someone he barely knew. Before he could voice his concerns, Gregg's hoarse voice cut in sharply, filled with impatience.

"If the dimwit brother of yours is not ready to make a deal, it's okay,"

Gregg interjected, his tone revealing a hint of annoyance. It seemed that he had little patience for Peterson's hesitations.

Gregg added, "But, let him know that he can leave this place with only one arm."

Gregg's menacing threat hung in the air, causing Peterson to involuntarily freeze in fear. The implication of losing an arm sent a shiver down his spine. The weight of the situation became palpable as Peterson exchanged a worried glance with Sarah, who seemed equally taken aback by Gregg's words.

With his voice almost failing him, Peterson managed a nod, unable to find the words to express his shock and apprehension. It was clear that Gregg's intimidation had silenced him.

Sarah, however, stepped in with unwavering conviction. She spoke on Peterson's behalf, asserting that he was ready to comply with their demands. Her faith in Peterson's willingness seemed unshakeable, despite the fear that gripped him.

Shifting his piercing gaze from Sarah to Peterson, Gregg gestured at him, a silent command for him to speak. Peterson gathered his courage and found his voice, addressing Gregg with a mixture of trepidation and curiosity.

"Yes," Peterson stammered, his words hesitant yet resolute. "I'll do as you say, as long as you can help me resolve my problems." He glanced briefly at Sarah, seeking some reassurance or guidance.

Peterson's question hung in the air, his eyes fixated on Gregg, awaiting an answer. He needed to understand the motive behind Gregg's demands, to grasp the full extent of what was being asked of him.

Leaning forward, Gregg's voice carried an unwavering firmness. "The journal," he stated bluntly, leaving no room for ambiguity. The demand resonated with a sense of urgency and significance, deepening the mystery surrounding the situation.

Peterson's voice quivered with confusion and fear as he responded to Gregg's demand. "What journal?" he asked, his tone filled with genuine uncertainty. The mention of a stolen journal caught him off guard, as he struggled to recall any such incident.

Gregg's gaze hardened, his eyes narrowing with an intensity that sent a chill down Peterson's spine. "The journal you stole from one of the subsidiaries of the Walton Group of Companies," Gregg clarified, his voice laced with a mix of authority and accusation.

Feeling trapped and desperate, Peterson grasped at a slim hope. He mustered the courage to pose a question, his voice tinged with nervousness. "What if I told you I've gotten rid of it?" he asked, a glimmer of anticipation in his eyes.

The response from the surrounding men was immediate and menacing. In a synchronized motion, they cracked their guns, pointing them directly at Peterson. The display of firepower left him startled and on the brink of panic.

Gregg's voice cut through the tension, cold and calculated. "Then you're a finished man," he declared, his words dripping with finality. The gravity of the situation became crystal clear as he continued, "Neither you nor Sarah would leave this place alive if that's the case."

Peterson's heart raced, his mind racing to find a way out of this dangerous predicament. In a wave of fear, he waved his hands frantically,

attempting to calm the situation. "No, please, put your guns down," he pleaded, his voice trembling. The realization of the dire consequences he faced if he couldn't produce the journal compelled him to make a desperate claim. "I've got the journal," he blurted out, his words laden with a mixture of fear and relief.

As Peterson let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding, relief washed over him as the men, at Gregg's command, lowered their guns. The immediate threat had temporarily subsided, providing a moment of respite in the tense situation.

Curiosity mingled with apprehension as Peterson sought to understand the significance of the journal and why it held such importance to Gregg and his associates. He mustered the courage to voice his question, his voice still tinged with unease.

"Why do you need the journal?" Peterson inquired, hoping for some clarity amidst the chaos.

Gregg's expression remained stern, his eyes fixed on Peterson as he explained his motive. "I believe I can use it to take down the Walton Group of Companies," he responded with conviction. "Just hand over the journal to us, and we'll handle the rest."

Peterson's mind raced, contemplating the implications of his actions. He had initially intended to dispose of the journal to avoid any potential legal consequences associated with stealing and distributing sensitive information. The prospect of being caught and spending years in jail loomed over him, casting a shadow of doubt on Gregg's proposal.

Voicing his concerns, Peterson hesitated before speaking. "What if I'm caught for stealing it and giving it out?" he asked, his voice laden with worry. The fear of the unknown consequences weighed heavily on him.





Gregg maintained a calm demeanor, exuding an air of confidence. "You won't be caught," he assured Peterson, his words carrying a hint of reassurance.

Peterson's eyebrows furrowed as he processed Gregg's response. The offer of evading capture provided a glimmer of hope, but he couldn't help but wonder about the potential risks and the true nature of the operation.

Seeking further clarifications, Peterson pressed on. "Hm, what's the price then?" he asked cautiously, realizing that he needed more than just assurances to consider his involvement.

Gregg's reply was direct and left little room for negotiation. "You'll get 100 million dollars," he stated, the figure hanging in the air with a mix of temptation and uncertainty. "I will personally clear your debts too and enable you to start a better life elsewhere," Gregg added.

Gregg's additional offer of personally clearing Peterson's debts and providing him with the means to start a new and improved life elsewhere left Peterson severely shocked. The weight of the offer pushed him to contemplate the true value and significance of the journal he possessed.

Confusion and curiosity wrestled within Peterson's mind as he struggled to comprehend why such immense rewards were being offered for what appeared to be a simple journal. The magnitude of the proposition left him dumbfounded, unable to fully grasp the underlying motives.

Sarah, sensing the weight of the decision, urged Peterson to accept the offer. "Bro, the offer is great," she emphasized, her voice filled with conviction and encouragement.

Peterson shook his head in disbelief, his mind reeling with questions. The gravity of the situation propelled him to seek answers, to understand

the reasons behind the exorbitant rewards being proposed.

"Why so much for just a journal?" Peterson finally voiced his burning question, his voice tinged with a mix of curiosity and skepticism. He yearned to unravel the mystery, to comprehend why something seemingly ordinary held such extraordinary value in the eyes of Gregg and his associates.

Gregg's response was a prolonged silence, his gaze fixed intently on Peterson. The silence was loaded with unspoken implications, his mouth tightening as he withheld an immediate answer.