

GUARDIAN II

The Luck of the Draw by TibbieB

Chapter 8

Jenny lay crouched against the wall, protected from the cold concrete floor by only a smelly, rough, wool blanket, standard issue from any Army/Navy surplus store. She'd drifted in out of an exhausted sleep over the last several hours. In the dark, windowless room, she had no concept of time. Had she been here hours? Days?

He'd promised she could speak to her father soon; but to what end? She'd waited anxiously, but hours had passed without his return. She prayed a lot, asking God to let someone find her soon. Surely by now they were searching for her. Of course they were...but how would they know where to look? Jenny felt a sob rise in her throat, thinking about her mother and how worried she must be. Who was this man? Why was he doing this to her?

Memories of the physical assault flooded her mind again, threatening her tenuous hold on composure. She forced herself to focus on other things...the upcoming homecoming dance at school...shopping for a party dress...the sweet little Pekinese puppy Daddy had given her for her birthday...anything to fight back the hysteria.



Hutch sat patiently watching the police artist working to create a sketch of the kidnapper based on little Bobby's description. The boy was trying so hard to remember every detail, and had revised the description so many times that Hutch was concerned he may be getting confused. He realized this was a lot of pressure for an eleven-year-old kid.

Starsky went in search of coffee and discovered that although the dinner hour had long passed, the Reynolds' cook and servants had all volunteered to stay on duty. A large silver urn of coffee, two trays of sandwiches, and a tray of cookies and brownies were set out on the counters for the law enforcement personnel to help themselves. It was apparent that everyone was buckling down for a long night.

Bobby was finally happy with the artist's rendering and was waiting with Hutch for his Dad to pick him up. Starsky fixed himself and Hutch a plate of food, grabbing an extra cookie for Bobby, then rejoined them in the living room just as the child's father arrived.

"Here ya go, sport," Starsky said as he slipped a large chocolate chip cookie to the tired boy. "Thanks for comin' through like a trooper. There's a nice girl out there somewhere who'll be really grateful to you."

“Aw, it’s okay,” the redhead said, blushing a dark pink. “Just one thing though…”

“Yeah?”

“Can I keep the money?”

Starsky smiled and ruffled the boy’s hair. “Don’t see why not; I think you earned it. Now you go on home with your dad, okay?”

“Okay. See ya.” He waved goodbye to Hutch and followed his father out the door.

“Here ya go, blintz.” Starsky handed Hutch the plate of sandwiches and cup of freshly brewed coffee. “Well, looks like the girls at school saw Jenny leave with the same guy that gave Bobby the note,” he said, looking at the drawing on the coffee table.

“Without a doubt,” Hutch agreed. He picked up the finished drawing and took it to where Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds were waiting with Captain Dobey. “Could you take a look at this, Mr. Reynolds?” Hutch handed the paper to him.

At first the man’s face was blank, but slowly, realization dawned and his eyes went wide with surprise. “My God, I know this man. This is Stanley Bowman, Charles Bowman’s son.” He handed the picture to his wife.

“Yes, you’re right, Martin. It is Stanley.”

“What’s his connection to your family, Mr. Reynolds?” Starsky asked. “Does he work for you?”

“Oh, no. I purchased Bowman’s business last year. Bought it because Charles was in debt over his head. He begged me to take it off his hands,” Martin Reynolds explained. “A sad state of affairs. Only a couple of days after we finalized the deal, Bowman went home and killed his wife then shot himself in the head.”

Hutch’s eyes met Starsky’s. “Sounds like a motive to me.”

“And this is Bowman’s son? You think this man could be capable of kidnapping?” Starsky asked.

“I hardly know him. I can’t begin to imagine what he could or couldn’t do. His father isn’t dead, you know.”

“Wait a minute,” Hutch interrupted. “Didn’t you just say he killed his wife then committed suicide?”

“He tried to.” Reynolds shook his head sadly. “Poor Charles. Never could do a good job at anything he started. He’s been in a some sort of vegetative state ever since that night; he’s in a nursing home...have no idea where. I haven’t seen the boy since his mother’s funeral.”

“I’ll put out an APB on him.” Dobby took the sketch and summoned one of the uniformed cops to take it downtown. “Get this out to the TV news agencies too. Maybe we’ll get lucky and someone’s seen him.”

“Wait Cap’n.” Dobby looked back at Hutch.

“Maybe we better wait until he contacts Mr. Reynolds.”

“I agree with Hutch. We could scare ‘em off, Cap,” Starsky added. “Maybe we should wait and hear his demands. Once that picture hits the media, he may get desperate.”

“We should hear from him soon. Mr. Reynolds, do you think you can talk with this man without letting on that we know who he is?” Hutch asked.

“I’ll do whatever it takes to get Jenny back in one piece.” Martin Reynolds’ eyes shone with fear, despite his efforts at bravado in his wife’s presence.



Gina and Sam walked out of the VA building and headed for the car, enjoying the pleasant evening air after being confined in class for the past two hours. Sam paced his steps to walk directly beside her through the dark parking lot, ever vigilant of any strange sounds or sights.

He’d had a good time tonight and gotten a lot of nice attention. The stuff Gina wanted him to do was fun. The stocky man with broad shoulders had talked for awhile, then had gone around the room and collected a piece of clothing from each human. Gina gave him a scarf she wore around her neck sometimes. The man then had each dog and his human leave the gymnasium. After sniffing around out back and leaving his mark a dozen different places, they’d been allowed back in. It soon became pretty clear that Gina wanted her scarf back, and expected HIM to find it.

Some of the other dogs had already lost interest; but he thought this game was fun, and had no problem picking up the scent of Gina’s scarf. After sniffing around the area where Gina was sitting, he barreled across the gymnasium floor and headed for the bleachers. It took a little effort, but he soon located the scarf, wrapped around one of the steps in plain view. The best part was the happy look on Gina’s face when he barked to let her know he’d found the darn thing!

Yep...all that was missing tonight was his two friends. He wasn’t sure who he missed more—Starsky or Hutch. He just knew things weren’t quite right when they weren’t around. But Gina ran a close second, and tonight he knew he’d pleased her. She smiled at him affectionately when he jumped into the front seat and moved over to the passenger side.

“You were such a good boy, Sam,” she praised. “I wish Starsky and Hutch had been here to see how well you did.”

He only recognized ‘good Sam’, ‘Starsky’ and ‘Hutch’ (although sometimes she seemed to get confused and call Starsky ‘David’, and he wasn’t sure what *that* was all about). But he knew from the tone of her voice she was very happy with him. And when Gina was happy, so was he.

She patted him on the head before fastening her seatbelt and starting the engine of the car. Sam reached over and gave her a slurpy kiss on the face then settled in for the trip home. It took so little to make a human happy. Maybe, he hoped, Starsky and Hutch were at the house waiting for him and Gina. *That* would definitely be a great ending to a great day.



As the evening wore on and no call came, the strain began to wear on everyone. Because Martin Reynolds was concerned about his wife’s frail physical condition, the family doctor was called. He came by to check on her and prescribed a sedative.

“I think we ought’a hit the streets,” Starsky whispered. “I mean, who knows when the guy’s gonna call. It’s already 9:30.”

Hutch glanced at the kitchen clock. “You’re right. Maybe someone out there’s heard something. I called Huggy this afternoon, but he didn’t have anything.”

“Yeah, but that was hours ago. What do you say we make the rounds? Dobby can have the dispatcher call us if somethin’ breaks loose here.”

“Okay. I’ll tell them while you bring the car around.”

Starsky fished the car keys out of the pocket of his snug-fitting jeans and headed for the Torino.

End of Chapter 8