

# WEST OF WINSOR

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by  
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## Chapter 1 “The Green Light”

### Part 2

The leak in Juliette’s bathroom was barely a drip and Charlie was thankful. He could fix it just not tonight. He placed an empty plastic container under the drip and vowed to get to it tomorrow.

“Dad, we found grandma’s cookbook,” Juliette said as Charlie descended the stairs.

“All of them,” Tina said with a smile. “I put them in the kitchen instead of in the book case.”

“Great! I may bring them with me to class to show my students what recipes looked like before computers.”

“That doesn’t make any sense,” Juliette said. “And that’s so limiting. Don’t you want your students to know the skies the limit? Or should I say, the internet?”

“I do. But I also want them to know the value of family recipes passed down from generation to generation with secret ingredients and best of all, stories behind them.”

“You mean like when Grandma wrote down vodka but she really used whiskey for the recipe?”

“Exactly.”

“Mr. Wynn, are you a professor?” Jacob asked.

“I’m head of catering for the university but am also teaching a restaurant management class. Just one class. If you have any family recipes you’d like to share with us while you’re here, you’re more than welcome to.”

“Do hot dogs and frozen tater tots count?”

“Not really.”

Will’s phone rang in his pocket.

“Hey Megan,” Will said.

Tina shot Charlie a disapproving smirk. Will purposefully walked out of the crowded living room and into the den.

“Miss me?” Megan asked.

“Yeah, I do. What are you doing?”

“I’m in my room hanging out. Trying to finish this stupid book for English. Supposedly we get tested on it as soon as we start. This book sucks.”

“What is it?”

“THE CATCHER IN THE RYE. The main character is a loser.”

“That’s a great book.”

“Whatever,” Megan’s voice drifted for a moment then came back. “Come back. I miss you. You’re too far away.”

“I know.”

“You know your parents moved just so you wouldn’t be by me anymore.”

“No, they didn’t.”

“Whatever, your mom hates me.” Megan did not wait for an answer from Will. “Hey, my first break is in early November. I could come visit you then.”

“Okay, I’ll let my parents know. That would be cool.”

“I love you, Will.”

“I love you too.”



It was just before six when Tina started to pull the pans she needed for dinner. She had not heard from Danny and assumed his flight may have been delayed or perhaps he was stuck in traffic.

Tina was starting to fade. They had all been up since before dawn that morning so they could be at the new house as early as possible to unload the truck and unpack. Classes were starting Monday for Ludington University and Juliette would start high school that Wednesday. There was still a lot to get organized and only one more day to do it. As long as the bare necessities were in place she would be happy, and luckily so far so good. Jacob was a God send, helping unpack boxes and move furniture. Tina was happy and relieved that he seemed like a nice young man.

“Are you really cooking?” Juliette said as she entered the kitchen to dispose of yet another pile of crumpled up newspaper.

“Everyone will enjoy a home cooked meal,” Tina said.

“We could order pizza. Wouldn’t that be easier?”

“Yes,” Tina said smiling. “But not better.”

Juliette took a breath of bravery and asked, “Is it because of money?”

“What?”

“Are we eating in because of money?”

“Juliette, I cook all the time.”

“I know, I just thought... never mind.”

“Did you pick out what you’re wearing for the first day of school.”

“I think I’m going with my blue skirt and yellow top.” Juliette paused. Her eyes squinted in concentration as her mouth twisted to the side. “Or jeans and my pink top.”

“I love the blue skirt if you go with that one.”

“Any chance I can wear full make-up and lashes?” Juliette asked with wide eyes and a huge smile on her face. It was her typical ‘look how cute I am’ face used to plead a long shot.

“You just turned fifteen. Let’s hold off a little bit longer for the full effect, okay?”

Juliette sighed. “Okay.” She knew the answer before Tina said it.

“You are so beautiful. There’s nothing make-up or fake eyelashes are going to do to make you look better. Besides, makeup ages you faster.”

“You are such a mom.”

“Thank you.”



Cecelia and Joe had a busy and profitable day which was typical for the weekend before school started. Exhausted and hungry parents and kids flocked to the cafe from open until close and then some. CC’s remained open an hour past normal closing time to help out the families, offering prepackaged dinner specials and platters so those on the go could keep going until they finished their unpacking and settling in.

Cecelia also knew what tomorrow would bring – tears. Worn out parents would come to CC’s for coffee and breakfast – some with their students and some without. Most of the mom’s would be wearing red around the eyes from crying and most of the dads would don sunglasses to hide their eyes. Then they would say goodbye to their child and head home to a different house – one that was a little bit quieter and much emptier. Whether it was their only child going away or their fifth – it didn’t matter. It was the same excitement and the same heartache every year.

Joe finished mopping the dining area floor while Cecelia wiped down the counters and racks. It was around five thirty and they were pretty much done.

“I’m pooped,” Cecelia said. “After all these years, you’d think I’d be used to it.”

“I put the last of the potato salad and some bread in the bag for Chris,” Joe said.

“Did you find the soup cans?”

“Yes, they’re in there too.”

A knock on the window turned their focus to the front of the cafe.

“Right on time,” Cecelia said. She walked over to the door and unlocked it while Joe went into the back to retrieve the bags.

“Hi, Chris,” Cecelia said.

“Hi Cecelia. How are you?”

“Good, good. Joe’s getting the bags. Are you sure you don’t need anything else?”

“You and Joe always give plenty. I don’t know what we would do without you.”

Joe returned with two large reusable grocery bags stuffed with food.

“Here you go,” Joe said. “You need a hand? They’re heavy.”

“I have a ride today for the pick ups. Thanks again for your donations.”

“Anytime,” Cecelia said. “Have a good night, Chris.”

“You too.”

Joe and Cecelia returned to finishing up their cleaning routine. A few minutes later they emerged from the back, turned out the lights, and headed for the front door. Cecelia stopped dead in her tracks when she saw Lenny peering in through the glass door. Cecelia rolled her eyes.

“It’s Lenny,” she said then turned around and walked into the back.

Joe looked at Lenny’s skinny frame. He looked like he hadn’t showered in days. The street light made his skin look pale or at least Joe wanted to think it was the street light and not a true representation of Lenny’s sickly nature.

“Lenny, what are you doing?” Joe asked after opening the door a crack.

“Come on, Joe. Come out with me.”

“You know I can’t.”

“It’s been so long. Can’t you come out for one drink? It’ll be quick.”

Joe sighed. He had been through this a hundred times before.

“I can’t Lenny. You need food?”

“No, I’m not hungry. I just want some company.”

“Lenny, go get a shower, go to bed.”

Joe reluctantly shut the door with a pang in his heart. His eyes stung with tears just like they always do when he has to walk away from Lenny. He took a deep breath and walked into the back office where Cecelia was waiting.

“Did he leave?” she asked.

“Yeah. Come on, let’s go.”

“Did he ask...”

“Not now Cel. I’m not in the mood.”

Cecelia knew not to push Joe when it came to Lenny but she also knew she could not ignore the pang of worry in her stomach.



“You’re up!” Charlie said to Tina as she was tossing the veggies in garlic and oil. “Will wants you to see our room and tell them where to place the furniture. I’ll finish dinner. You get furniture duty.”

“Okay,” Tina said. “The Italian bread is over there. I haven’t put the garlic and butter on yet.”

“Roger that.”

“Do you care where the furniture goes?”

“Not really. You’re better at designing than I am. Whatever you like will work for me.”

“I love it when you’re easy.”

Tina was just about to ascend the stairs when the door bell rang.

“I got it,” she called out.

Standing at the front door was a young woman with dark brown eyes, flawless brown skin, tight blonde curls and the face of a supermodel. Three large suitcases and multiple shopping bags sat at her feet like obedient dogs waiting for a command.

“Can I help you?” Tina asked.

“Hi, I’m Danny Mackenzie,” she said while politely extending her hand.

Tina’s eyes went wide and her jaw dropped.

“Excuse me?” Tina said.

“I’m Danny Mackenzie. This is 1114 Lamarr correct? I have a room here.”

“Uh, um, I’m sorry there must be a mistake. Danny Mackenzie is a guy.”

“I’m pretty sure I’m a woman but you know, whatever floats your boat.” Danny was confused by the woman standing in front of her. Was this Tina Wynn, the woman she had emailed about the room?

Will came down the stairs to fetch his mother. His parents room was the last one that needed to be set up and he just wanted to get it done.

“Can I speak to Ms. Wynn?” Danny asked.

It took Will a second but then he recognized Danny from Starbucks. Then she recognized him.

“I’m Tina Wynn. Will, this is Danny Mackenzie.”

“You’re not a dude,” Will said.

“I’m getting the sense that, for some reason, this is a problem?”

“I’m sorry,” Tina said. “Come in.” Tina opened the door. “Will give her a hand with her stuff, please.”

“You won’t get mad now, will you?” Will said to Danny. “If I help you out? You know like, open the door or grab your bags?”

Danny smirked at Will’s sarcasm.

“That box isn’t mine,” she said. “It was at the door when I arrived.”

Will picked it up and read the label.

“It’s for Jacob,” he said. He gave the box to his mother then grabbed a handful of shopping bags.

“Looks like shopping was more important than being on time,” Will said.

“Is this the house of judgment or something?” Danny tried to laugh but was becoming increasingly uncomfortable. She was starting to think this was a big mistake.

“No, no. I’m so sorry,” Tina said. “Come in. I’m sorry the place is a mess but we just moved in today. It’s been quite chaotic. It’s just...we were planning on having a guys...dorm type-thing, not a co-ed environment. I mean we have a daughter who is fifteen but she goes to the high school and I thought that your paths really won’t cross that much so the big kids could go do their thing and Juliette would do her thing and...” Tina stumbled on her words. She looked at Will for help but even he had a confused look on his face.

“I just want to get settled and start classes,” Danny said. She was starting to panic that Tina would change her mind and not let her rent the room. “I wanted to be off campus so I could concentrate on school and not be distracted by people partying and stuff like that. I did pay for the whole semester up front.” Danny paused wondering if she was making her case. “If you send me away I have no where to go. It’s too late to get into the dorms and I’m not going home, I can’t go home, so...” Danny’s voice cracked.

“Mom,” Will said. He gave his mom a look like ‘what’s the big deal?’ and shrugged his shoulders. Tina swallowed hard. Maybe the idea of a beautiful young woman living just a door away

from her son and Jacob wouldn't be an issue. It's a different generation, she thought. Then her stomach twisted. Oh God, she thought, it is a different generation and Juliette is under the same roof. Tina took a deep breath. She knew she could not send Danny away, after all, it wasn't her fault for the miscommunication. And it was Tina's own insecurities about the situation that was presuming things would happen, feeding into her adult mind's fears. She was judging her son, Jacob, and Danny unfairly. So what if memories of her own college days were flashing through her mind. Tina's facial expressions left little to the imagination as to the conflict swirling inside her.

She could lay down the law, she thought, Victorian style, and keep it innocent. She could set up strict curfews and rules like; no one in someone else's room with the door closed, guests had to be signed in, no hugging – stuff like that.

Or, she rationalized, she could just say a prayer and let the young adults in her house be young adults. Tina took a deep breath and looked at Danny and Will.

“Danny, I think what we should do,” Tina began, “is get you settled into your room. Jacob, our other boarder, is already upstairs. There's two bathrooms. Will, I think you and Jacob should share one and Danny can take the other.”

“Saw that one coming,” Will said.

Danny followed Will upstairs to her knew room. It was small - very small, at least to her standards. Her room back home was half the size of the entire upstairs. The bathroom wasn't much to look at either with a small shower stall, toilet and sink. She chalked it up to minimalist design and left it at that. She was grateful she was not sharing it with anyone, especially the guys.

“Everything okay?” Will asked as Danny stared at the tiny room.

“Everything is great,” she said but it was obvious she didn't mean it.

“It's bigger than your average dorm room,” Will added.

“So it is.”

Will knocked on Jacob's door which was already ajar.

"Hey, Jacob, this is Danny our other housemate."

"Oh," Jacob said.

"I know, I'm not a dude. Thank God," Danny said with a bite.

"Relax," Will said. "It was a miscommunication. I'm sure it will all work out fine."

"Do you guys have a problem with me being a woman?"

"Nope, not at all," Will said.

"Fine with me," Jacob said.

Danny rolled two of her large suitcases into her room while Jacob and Will grabbed the rest of her stuff. So what if the room was small, she thought. She was there out of necessity not luxury. This is what she wanted – no distractions and a fresh start. For Danny this was quite fresh.

Jacob had a handful of shopping bags that he placed at the foot of Danny's bed.

"Where you from?" Jacob asked as Will entered with the other suitcase.

"Los Angeles. You?"

"Michigan. This house is pretty cool isn't it?"

"Um, yeah, sure. It's... charming, homey, stuff like that. So, I guess I'll unpack now. Thanks for the help," Danny said walking towards the guys. They took the hint and left her room as she closed the door behind them.



"What is that look for?" Charlie asked Tina as she entered the kitchen. He was finishing up putting the garlic butter on the bread.

"Danny is here."

"Great! Now it's a party."

"Danny is a woman."

“Oh! It’s that kind of party.”

“It will be fine.” Tina tried to convince herself. “Now we’re even – three guys, three gals.”

Juliette bounced into the kitchen.

“I’m starving,” she said.

“Dinner will be ready in a few minutes,” Charlie said. “Here, put the plates on the table.”

“Did you guys meet Danny? I thought we were only boarding guys? She’s really pretty. I bet Will is happy,” Juliette added then walked into the dining room.

Tina smiled at Charlie.

“She’s pretty?” Charlie asked.

“No, she’s gorgeous.”

“Oh.”

“It’s all good,” Tina said with optimism.

“We met when we were eighteen and in college. Do you remember?” Charlie teased.

“Do not, Charlie,” Tina said, cutting off Charlie’s teasing as she walked into the dining room.

“Juliette, please let the others know it’s time to eat and give this box to Jacob.”

“Do we have napkins?” Juliette asked.

“They’re in the kitchen in the pile of stuff on the table,” Charlie said.

“I’ll get them,” Tina said. Juliette exited the dining room with the box and headed upstairs.



The table was dressed like it was ready for a holiday feast complete with plates, napkins, silverware, glasses, and a center piece. Tina and Charlie wanted the house to feel like a home right from the start. They felt the first meal together was important – a way to get off on the right foot as they all had to deal with starting a new.

Jacob entered the dining room first, stopping dead in his tracks. What he saw was beautiful. A table cloth, real chairs not plastic outdoor furniture, napkins folded and placed under the silverware, a ceramic bowl filled with steaming pasta and vegetables. It was surreal. Tears stung the back of his eyes. He never imagined a life like this, at least not for him.

Danny entered next. She stood next to a chair wondering where to sit since there were no place markers. Looking at the mound of pasta, she determined she would ask for more veggies than pasta to avoid the excess calories. The “homey” look of the table fit the “homey” feel of the old house.

Charlie and Tina took a seat at the head of the table.

“Please sit,” Charlie said.

Will and Juliette sat on one side of the table while Jacob and Danny sat on the other side.

Juliette’s phone dinged.

“Juliette,” Charlie said. “No phones.”

“I’m on a streak.”

“Juliette.”

“Fine,” Juliette groaned.

“Let’s pray,” Charlie stated.

Danny’s eyes went wide. Were these people for real? Jacob scrunched his eyes in confusion.

Charlie and Tina shot a look at each other and smiled.

“Feel free to join us if you’d like,” Tina said. “It’s completely up to you.”

Charlie, Tina, Will and Juliette bowed their heads while Jacob and Danny smiled awkwardly at each other.

“Ti?” Charlie said. Tina smiled at Charlie.

“Dear Lord,” Tina began. “We thank you for bringing these two young people into our lives. We thank you for the blessings you’ve bestowed on us, the food you have provided to nourish us, and the

challenges you lay before us. We pray that you watch over Juliette, Will, Danny, and Jacob as they start their new life, in a new home, and help them become the amazing people we know they can be. Amen.”

“Who wants garlic bread?” Charlie asked lifting the basket in the air.



Juliette nervously made her way onto the bus. Tina was forbidden to wait outside with her so she watched from a window. Tina was proud of her daughter. She knew what it felt like to start a new school in a new town. Juliette and Tina had spent the day before putting the finishing touches on Juliette’s room and picking up last minute school supplies. And now Juliette was on the bus starting her first day of high school.

Jacob, Danny, Will and Charlie had kicked off their semester two days earlier. So far, so good. Charlie was pleased with his class and happily had all his teaching material ready prior to the first day. Tonight was the faculty mixer, which he was looking forward to. He wanted to get to know his coworkers and staff and get his bearings around campus. Will and Danny unknowingly had the same math class on Tuesday mornings. It wasn’t a pleasant surprise, not for Danny anyway. She rolled her eyes at Will and sat on the opposite side of the classroom. Will found her attitude irrelevant to his life. Jacob could not be happier about his current situation. He was absorbing the present like an intoxicating elixir.

Tina walked outside as soon as the bus left and placed the recycling bin at the curb. She noticed her neighbor watching from the front porch. The neighbor was a lean older woman with bleached blonde hair. She had the air of a woman brought up in comfortable surroundings. The woman walked from her porch and up to Tina.

“Hello,” Tina said.

“I’m Abigail Morris, your neighbor,” she said with an air of disappointment.

“Nice to meet you,” Tina said.

“I wanted to let you know, that I know you have boarders,” Abigail said with her chin raised.

“Yes, we do. We are zoned for boarders since the house used to be a B&B.”

“Well, that never thrilled me either. Anyway, teenagers are noisy and rude. I want to let you know that I will not tolerate noise or obscene behavior.”

“That’s great! Neither do we.”

“In any event, if I *am* disrupted, I will not hesitate to call the police. This a quiet street, despite being in a college town, and I want to keep it that way.”

“I understand,” Tina smiled. “Feel free to let me know if you have any concerns.”

“I plan on it.” Abigail turned and walked away from Tina.

“It was nice meeting you,” Tina said to the back of Abigail’s head. “Have a nice day.”

Abigail gave a halfhearted wave and walked back to her house. Tina sighed.



Charlie perused the banquet table taking stock of the selection, the presentation and the quality of the food. He was expecting cafeteria style selections but this spread was definitely a higher caliber, reminiscent of an upper east side banquet than a college soiree. He was impressed with the attention to detail and the budget for the banquet.

“I heard the pumpkin ravioli is amazing,” the dark haired woman said to Charlie.

“I haven’t had it yet. Now I’ll need to give it a try,” Charlie said.

“Under Dr. Kellar?” she asked.

“I am. How can you tell?”

“Are you an English professor?”

“Nope.”

“Hm,” she contemplated. “You have that English professor look about you – stylish, relaxed, paying attention to the details of your environment. You’ve spent some time checking out the table so I would not peg you as a physicist.”

Charlie reached out his hand. “I’m Charlie Wynn, your new Director of Culinary Arts.”

“Dr. Mina Martin. Psychology in the written word. Understanding our authors and the societies they create.”

“Are you under Dr. Kellar?” Charlie asked.

“Yes. He is an interesting man. Wait until you see his syllabus. But really, all of these professors are interesting,” she said raising an eyebrow. “You are surrounded by some of the most popular literary masters of the moment.”

“The moment?”

“I’ve read their work. Some of it *is* great, but the authors themselves – the relationships, the scandals, the egos. Sometimes I wonder how they got here.”

“I think we are all here, at this point in time, standing where we are standing right now, for a reason.”

“What reason?”

“To inspire.”

“To inspire who?” she was trying to see where Charlie was going to take this conversation.

“Everyone and anyone. The scientists, the politicians, the couch potato... each other.”

“How do you plan on inspiring your students? That’s much easier said than done.”

“There’s no plan. Just be me.”

“Wow, that’s a huge ego you have, Professor Wynn.”

Charlie laughed. “I didn’t mean it that way. The people in my life that have inspired me did it by their actions and deeds - the positive words that came out of their mouths, the encouragement they gave to others. I try to be the best person I can and hope that can inspire others.”

“So you don’t scream, yell, and throw pots in the kitchen when the pressure gets to you?”

“I have. I’m not proud of it. But, thanks to the wisdom and graciousness of others, my wife especially, I’ve learned there’s a better way.”

“So you say. I guess I’ll have to wait and see for myself.”

“I get the feeling everything I say is being analyzed. You don’t just shrink books, do you?”

“I confess, people too. I like getting to the heart of the matter. Truth is, not only stranger than fiction, sometimes it’s better.”

“Oh, I know. I know.”

“There is a lot to be found in an author’s work. See the gentleman in the gray suit with the champagne glass? He is having an affair with one of the University Chair’s, who is a man. His clueless wife comes from one of the wealthiest families in America and spends her days spending money and adoring her husband.”

“You figured that out from reading his work?”

“No, administrative assistant. See Dr. Kellar over there? Years ago he was investigated for tax evasion which somehow tied to his doctoral thesis.”

“Assistant?”

“No, internet. See the pleasant blonde speaking with the other two ladies?”

“Yes.”

“Total hippy. She goes beyond existential,” Mina sighed. “I love her. She’s great.”

Charlie laughed at all the information suddenly placed in his lap. “Anything you want to tell me about me?” he asked.

Mina squinted her eyes while scanning Charlie from head to toe. “Are you divorced? Closet homosexual? Nephew to a board member? Raging racist?”

“Wow!” Charlie said. “You are not shy.”

“I’ll figure you out. Oh, wait, your wife is overly controlling and demanding?”

“Not at all.”

“You are overly controlling and demanding. You torture your family.”

“I can confidently say, no.”

“Chefs have a reputation. Something will bubble to the top,” Mina teased. Charlie smiled.

“I’m probably going to disappoint you.”

“That’s what they all say, especially the one’s hiding something.”

“Of course.”

“It’s going to be a fun year,” Mina said.

“I’m counting on it,” Charlie replied.



Will knocked gently on Danny’s door frame. She was sitting at her desk with the door wide open.

“Hey,” Will said.

“Hey,” Danny said without looking up.

Danny’s room was much neater than Will’s. He was impressed at how she managed to find a place for everything. The closets in the rooms were small relative to current home building standards but she had made good use of storage containers, Ikea shelves and closet organizers.

“Did you start the math problems yet?” Will asked.

“I finished them.”

“Oh,” Will paused. “Did you get stuck on any of them?”

“Nope.”

Will noticed THE CATCHER IN THE RYE sitting on Danny’s neatly made bed. Paperbacks and college books looked like they had been arranged in a certain order, awaiting placement somewhere else in the room. Will walked over and picked it up. He was casually flipping through the book when an inscription on the back pages of the book caught his eye. Before he could read it, Danny snatched it from his hands.

“Excuse me! You should ask before you touch someone’s personal belongings,” Danny chided.

“It was sitting on the bed.”

“Don’t touch my stuff.”

“My apologies Ms. Mackenzie. I didn’t realize you were such a stickler for manners seeing how you were so late on Saturday and didn’t even manage a phone call. We were expecting you at four but I guess the bargains were too good to pass up.”

“Get over it. Like it matters.”

“Obviously not where you come from.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“It means if it doesn’t affect you then it doesn’t matter. So which sorority are you pledging – the smart one or the pretty one?”

“Which frat are you pledging – the jackass one or the jackass one?”

“Real nice.”

“Get out!”

“What?” Will laughed. “I’m just kidding around.”

“Get out! This is my room. I paid for it and I don’t want you in it. Ever!” Danny asserted, pushing Will towards the door with her hand on his chest. Once he was through the door frame she closed it.

A moment later Will knocked and Danny reluctantly opened the door.

“What?”

“Reminder, there is a house meeting at eight. Will you be able to make that or is there a sale you need to catch?”

Danny swung the door shut in Will’s face. Before Danny could turn around Will knocked again. She opened the door.

“What?”

“Call me if you find any good sales.”

Danny slowly closed the door again. Will knocked.

“I’m not opening it,” she called through the door.

“If you need help with any math problems, let me know.”

“I’d rather fail,” Danny said with a smirk.

Will walked to his room talking to himself. “If I help you with math, you probably will fail. I should be asking her for help. I need to work on that.”



Jacob knew it was too soon to figure out how school would go, whether he would struggle or not with classwork and tests. He didn’t feel overly pressured like he did his senior year of high school when he spent every waking hour studying to make sure he got into a school, any school, away from home.

He felt comfortable in the house with his new “family” and his new housemate. Danny seemed to keep mostly to herself which he could relate to. She was nice for the most part although they really hadn’t had a conversation yet. Will was helpful and kind. Other than move in day, he hadn’t spent much time with Juliette, Charlie or Tina. Everyone was running in different directions getting ready for classes, high school and everything in between.

The box Juliette had brought to Jacob the day they moved in, remained on Jacob's desk unopened. The return address read Michigan Department of Corrections, which meant, he knew who it was from. He was torn between throwing the box in the garbage and opening it to see what could possibly be inside. He hadn't received any mail from that address in months. He assumed their contact was over but apparently it wasn't. Now the ball was in Jacob's court.

Jacob picked up the box and spun it in his hands. After a moment, he opened his closet then stuck it on the top shelf safely out of view.