

Chapter 105

In Chapter 105, Patch enters the Merchants National Bank under the oppressive weight of a steel-gray sky, which sets a grim tone for the events to unfold. He moves swiftly, his heart pounding with anticipation, unaware of the additional security detail lurking just outside the side door. As Patch pulls out his gun, prepared for what he perceives to be a routine robbery, he fails to notice the guard who mirrors his actions and takes aim in response. The tension in the air is palpable, but Patch remains focused, thinking he has complete control of the situation. The teller, visibly nervous and flustered, hurriedly fills an envelope with cash, her hands trembling as she glances nervously over Patch's shoulder. Her fear is evident, and she practically thrusts the money into his hands, all while attempting to keep her composure under the mounting pressure.

However, the situation takes an unexpected turn when a single shot rings out, louder than Patch anticipated and sharp against the silence of the bank. It shatters the glass divider, creating an explosion of noise and chaos that sends everyone into a frenzy. The loud crack of the shot is followed by the sudden eruption of screams that fill the bank's lobby, heightening the already tense atmosphere. Without a second thought, Patch drops to the floor, his body reacting instinctively to the chaos unfolding around him. As the sound of panic reverberates through the air, the shrill sirens of alarm bells ring out, signaling that the bank's security has been triggered. At the same time, the sprinklers activate, drenching the floor and adding to the pandemonium. The cold, icy water dripping from the ceiling amplifies the growing sense of fear and urgency, as the situation spirals out of control.

Patch crawls swiftly across the wet carpet, seeking refuge behind the nearest desk. The sounds of terror continue to echo in his ears, but he manages to find a moment to breathe, his chest heaving as he tries to calm his nerves. His mind races as he attempts to assess the situation and regain control. The chaos surrounding him feels

overwhelming, and yet he knows that staying hidden is his only chance. Every second counts, and Patch knows he must remain vigilant if he wants to make it out alive. The noise of the chaos in the bank becomes almost deafening, but in this moment, Patch focuses on the only thing that matters: surviving.

Meanwhile, the guard, who had been caught off guard by the sudden eruption of violence, recovers quickly and advances toward Patch's position. His weapon is drawn, his movements sharp and determined, as he navigates through the wreckage of the bank's interior. Patch, with a calm that belies the situation, calculates his next move. He's aware of the Model 36 revolver he's up against, noting that it only holds six rounds, and by his count, only five shots have been fired. The tension rises as the guard moves closer, the weight of the moment pressing down on Patch. The sound of a sixth shot rings out, ricocheting off the floor and embedding itself in the desk behind him, and Patch recognizes the urgency of the situation. The guard is closing in, and with that, Patch knows he has no time left. Without hesitation, he makes a break for the exit, darting through the chaos, his heart racing as he sprints toward the door.

Up until this moment, Patch had thought of the robbery as a calculated game—a way to redistribute wealth for a cause he believed in. In his mind, the stolen money wasn't just taken; it was meant to be given to the Forever United charity, a cause that was dear to him. He convinced himself that the ends justified the means. Yet, as he seals the envelope containing the damp, stolen cash, reality begins to sink in. The gravity of what he's done, the violence he's incited, and the risks he's taken suddenly feel all too real. The exhilaration of the heist, which had felt almost righteous at the time, now gives way to a sobering realization. Patch can no longer ignore the truth—his actions were not as justified as he once believed.

As Patch takes a moment to reflect on his choices, he feels a mixture of regret and confusion. His mission to help others, to aid the Forever United charity, now feels like a distant and misguided justification for the chaos he has caused. The tension from the bank, the violence, and the near escape weigh heavily on his mind as he drives away, the stolen money still damp in the envelope. The more he thinks about it, the clearer it

becomes: this wasn't a noble cause, and his theft wasn't some heroic act. Instead, it was the product of a twisted mind, fueled by a need to feel in control amidst the storm of his own emotions. As he drives into the night, Patch understands that the consequences of his actions have only begun to unfold. The path ahead is uncertain, and the stakes are higher than he ever imagined.

