

Chapter 147

Chapter 147 begins with Saint standing in the shade of the towering Tenmile Range, gazing at the scene before her in Breckenridge. The area around the old lodge is eerily quiet, guarded by six uniformed officers. The atmosphere is thick with tension, a stillness that only comes with the tragic loss of a child. As Saint observes, the local police chief, a thin man with a horseshoe mustache and a pale complexion, approaches her. It's clear from his greenish pallor that he's had a rough night, perhaps haunted by the horrific events of the day. Saint, however, doesn't offer him comfort or false reassurances; she knows from experience that this tragedy won't fade easily for anyone involved.

Dressed in white coveralls and gloves, Saint steps carefully under the police tape. Her shoes are covered with protective bags as she makes her way down a steep slope, following the chief. They reach a flat area where construction workers stand idly by, their helmets in hand, watching her intently as she approaches the site. The chief gestures to the scene, mentioning casually, "New homes." But what Saint sees is far from any sign of progress or renewal; instead, it's a field of felled trees and damp earth. Among the mess, the remains of the child lie buried under the weight of time and construction, her bones the tragic remnants of a life that was cut short. This is why Saint is here—she came to find answers, to give the child back a voice.

Saint's hands tremble slightly as she handles the remains. Despite the protective gloves, the sense of reverence and care in her actions is palpable as she unearths a small set of rosary beads. Holding the marbled blue beads to the light, she inspects the medal attached, deep in thought. The child had been buried with her school clothes, shoes, and even her schoolbag, a poignant reminder of her life before the violence took it all away. As she uncovers a purse in the debris, Saint runs her thumb over its polyester shell, carefully unclasping it. The sight is heartbreaking yet familiar

to her, a painful but necessary part of the search for justice. The chief, standing a little ways off, asks if she recognizes the girl. Saint's answer is simple, yet heavy with experience: "I know all of them."

This moment encapsulates the emotional toll of Saint's work. Her ability to remain composed and focused despite the harrowing circumstances is a testament to the dedication she brings to each case. However, beneath that composed exterior is a woman who knows the pain of loss all too well. The chapter illustrates not just the grim reality of the work that Saint does, but the personal cost of uncovering the truth in a world where so much is buried and forgotten. As she continues to unearth the past, she's not just recovering bodies—she's trying to recover the lost pieces of lives that were never meant to be taken. She couldn't shake the unease that had settled in her stomach, the raw sense of grief and loss filling her as she focused on the small details that others would overlook. As Saint moved closer, she noticed the wear on the clothing; the fabric was weathered by time, the shoes scuffed from use. There was a certain sadness in the forgotten items scattered across the ground, each a small token of the life that had been lived and then brutally interrupted. Despite the overwhelming sorrow, Saint pressed on, determined to uncover the truth that had been buried here. The scene was a painful reminder that the answers she sought were often hidden beneath layers of time, violence, and silence.