

## Part One

“Ahhh!” The man screamed a blood-curdling scream as the excruciating pain of the blunt knife injected into his back, mostly likely nipping his spine on the way. Fluke winced and wanted to cover his ears and shut out hearing someone’s life ending before his eyes; but he didn’t dare and just focused his eyes and thoughts on the wall ahead of him. Fluke could feel the victim’s pain with him as it happened, remembering how this same scene had happened to him not so long ago. Fluke was just lucky enough to have lived. Lucky being subjective to who was asked of course.

“Well, that’s the last of him I would say,” the evil, manipulative, Bic sneered, wiping the knife off with his handkerchief.

“What?” Fluke asked, Bic’s comment pulling him out of his thinking. “Oh, yeah, I’m sure.” Fluke, astonished, replied through chattering teeth unable to take his eyes off the motionless body of the broad, muscled man slumped in front of him in a pile.

Fluke remembered when he’d gotten caught and thrown into the van and taken to this horrible place. It had ultimately been the decisions he made that got him into this trouble, and Fluke has told himself that it was all for his brother, so he could save Tommy. Fluke was a big brother and all his actions were to keep Tommy alive even if for just a few more months. He never expected it all to escalate to this. Certainly never expected to get this far into Bic’s ‘business’.

Fluke was pulled out of his thoughts as a shovel was flung towards him, narrowly missing his head.

“You know what to do,” Bic drawled in his Mexican accent.

Fluke did know all too well, he had done it too many times not to. Bic always trusted his intimidation, and Fluke’s desperation, enough to let Fluke do it alone after these ‘incidents’ but this time he hesitated in the doorway, his sharp eyes,

dark as death, watching Fluke's face. Bic wasn't stupid, he caught everything, including the brief flash of panic that Fluke had a few moments before. Fluke kept his mask of indifference on as he dropped his eyes to the man's body. Satisfied Fluke wouldn't do anything stupid, Bic left after throwing him a smile full of gleaming teeth that would've rivaled those of a lion. Left alone to his thoughts, Fluke began to dig.

Thinking of homes trailed Fluke back to Tommy and his childhood home while his body subconsciously kept digging. Tommy was twelve and had been dependent on Fluke for five years, ever since their parents were killed. They had both been home when it happened, but Fluke managed to shove Tommy in his closet with loud headphones on and keep him quiet until the men left. Every scream was still permanently etched in Fluke's mind on that fateful day but he had always kept himself sane with the determination that he would always protect his brother. That was probably why he had gone to such unnecessary measures; the possibility of losing Tommy too brought out a part of craziness that Fluke had kept hidden, even from himself, since that day.

A slight shuffle brought Fluke back to his immediate problems at hand. Usually basked in dead quietness, the noise was cause for alarm because it was out of the ordinary. Then, despite being alone, save the dead guy, he heard a soft moan of pain. Whipping around so fast that he almost lost his balance, Fluke seen that the guy Bic stabbed a few minutes ago flutter his eyelids open and try to take in a wrenching gasp of air. Fluke hesitated a moment, not knowing what to do. However, his flash of hope to escape from earlier came back with a vengeance as he stared at the man in front of him. This could be his one way to repent the sins he's committed, by helping save this man. It was a long shot, of course, and very risky. If he were to get caught Bic would try to kill him again without a second thought, and make sure he stayed dead this time, but the risk was worth is.

It occurred to Fluke, while he tip toed to the door to make sure the hall was

clear, that Bic had screwed up, something he seemed to never do; and this was the second time if you counted Fluke as well. That is how Fluke got his nick name, it was because he was Bic's one fluke he ever made while in the business.

Clearing his thoughts, Fluke grabbed a hold of the man and began to drag him out of the room. The man let out a small cry of pain that seemed like a sonic boom to Fluke's ears and Fluke froze, listening to see if anyone was coming. They weren't. He set the man back on the dirt packed ground and glared at him intensely.

"If you want to live you better not make one more sound. I am the only chance for your survival you hear me?" The man nodded his head fiercely. "Good."

Fluke, after filling in the hole he dug, he picked the man up in his arms, with muscle he earned digging graves for the past three months, and scurried him into his room and put him in the closet, knowing Bic never went through his stuff because really, he wasn't worried about him escaping. Bic knew he had Fluke right where he wanted him, well he did until now.

## Part Two

Weeks passed, and Fluke kept on with his usual duties of attending to Bic's every demand. He would smuggle food during each of his meals and bring it to the man, who's name he learned was Duke, to revive him. Duke got stronger by the day and the two men became very close, their hopes hanging on to one other as someone would a life raft in the sea. Fluke told Duke all about Tommy, and the reasons why he was stuck doing a lot of Bic's dirty work.

Tommy was sick with cancer, something a twelve year old should never have to endure. Fluke didn't have a lot of money, and worked two jobs to pay the bills, but getting treatment for Tommy was way more expensive. So Fluke looked to selling drugs out of desperation. The Mexicans were the best people to get it from which is

how Fluke met Bic. Even with the drug money coming in, Fluke got behind on payments since every cent he got went to Tommy and Fluke had to quit his other jobs to be there for him. Bic heard about Fluke's reasons and offered him a deal, payment for Tommy's condition in exchange for his services. Fluke agreed, not knowing what was in store for him. Fluke ran around and did all sorts of jobs for Bic like finding other people who wanted to sell but it wasn't nearly as bad as being an accessory to murder like he is now.

Tommy grew up too fast for his age and knew what Fluke did for him. After almost a year of begging, and the doctors saying that Tommy was clear, Fluke tried to break the agreement with Bic, wanting no more. Bic, of course, didn't like that. After failed attempts at persuasion, he kidnapped Fluke and made him do what he is doing now. Fluke was able to smuggle a couple of letters back and forth with Tommy and knows that he's safe at their Aunts but he would give anything to be back with him, and enjoying their lives together, able to have some kind of silver lining in their lives. They could never seem to get a break.

So, it being almost six weeks later, and Duke feeling much healthier, they decided to act on their escape.

"Good Morning my Fluke!" Bic exclaimed as Fluke walked into his living corridors. Of course here, it was like a prince's room with plush carpeting, red and gold trimmings on the walls with a big comfortable bed and comforter. It was like heaven to Fluke compared to the cell like room he slept in with just a cot, night stand, and lone toilet and sink. Fluke was pleased to see Bic already had a whiskey bottle out, making it easier to execute their plan.

Twenty minutes and a ton of fake, cheery conversation later, Bic was already heavily intoxicated and dozing in his chair. Fluke hurriedly snuck around Bic's room to look for the key to the door outside; but after upturning everything Bic had, Fluke didn't find it. That only left one other place he might keep it.

Slipping into the 'office', Fluke gagged on the horrid smell of all those

innocent people compacted in the dirt under his feet. Fluke had that deep, raw feeling of guilt that he experienced every time he stepped into this room, thinking about how he helped dig the graves they laid in. Fluke couldn't bear the thought of Tommy ever finding out about what he's done, knowing the disappointment and disgust would hurt more than Bic stabbing him.

Thinking of Tommy, Fluke swallowed his fears of that and looked around. Behind the big tin gray desk that sat in the office was a set of keys. The jingle of them as Fluke held them in his hand reminded him of Christmas and it felt like it too. Taking off the ones he knew he'd need, he put the ring back on its hidden hook and fled back to his room.

Fluke opened the door and, without a word, Duke and Fluke walked as quickly and as quietly as possible down to the vault like door Fluke has tried to open so many times. After a hesitation, where Fluke took a second to see if this was real, slid the key into the lock and twisted. A soft click echoed and seemed like it bounced off the walls loudly in a sort of song from the heavens.

With salty tears of utter amazement and rejoice, Fluke and Duke pushed their way through the first door. Another layout of corridors spread before the two and they thought they were doomed. After a little prodding, however, this new section proved to be the exact same as the one Fluke lived in. They fought their way to the last hallway, often having to slid in between boxes to avoid other men on guard and facing a few fights. Nevertheless, they eventually came to the door they were in pursuit of. They opened this door then came face to face with nothing but another one exactly like it, well, almost exactly.

This second door had light streaming through it from the cracks. Fluke and Duke exchanged a look of pure joy at the sight of it. Fluke shoved the last key in the hole and twisted, holding his breath. It clicked open.

The two stepped out and were immediately basked into the hot sunshine. They had no idea where they were but Fluke knew just around the corner would be a truck

idling there for them with no one inside, complementary of the only man with Bic who had a heart and had helped with his letters. After feeling the sweet bliss of freedom, Fluke and Duke took a moment to exclaim their joys in spurts of incomprehensible blabbering to each other. Unfortunately, with all their happiness, they never heard the thunderous steps of men behind them.