

## **REVELATION**

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—Sheree Whitelock

IT SEEMED LIKE EVERYONE WAS GETTING IN MY WAY TODAY. My brother Derek took forever in the bathroom this morning, Mom's attempted lecture slowed me down, I got stuck behind Grandfather Time driving to school, and now I managed to get myself stuck walking behind Jimmy, the cripple who insisted on rolling his wheelchair at the slowest speed possible. I nearly pushed him out of my way to get to my locker.

Jimmy spun his wheelchair around towards me and asked, "Good morning, Jeanie. Did you have a good weekend?"

I just glared at him and continued by. One more tardy and I was looking at a Friday school. There was no time for me to spend on a loser like him. He'd probably just try to convert me again to Christianity. Some people just don't understand the concept of butting out of peoples personal lives. I opened my locker and grabbed my books for first period English with Mr. Williams.

Suddenly I heard a familiar voice yell, "Jeanie!" Finally, someone worth my time. I turned around to see Kelley skipping towards me.

"Hey, Kelley. How was your weekend?" I asked.

"Awesome." Kelley said flicking her hair back. "I hooked up with Kyle at Morgan's party."

"No way! Were you guys drinking?"

"A little, but we weren't drunk. He's not as good of a kisser as I thought" Kelley leaned in close, cupping her hand around my ear and whispered, "But he made up for it later."

"I wish I could have gone. Mom made

sure I stayed home and studied for this stupid English test that's isn't even 'til *tomorrow*." I rolled my eyes and added, "Can you believe Williams is giving me a D?"

"Seriously? He must really not like you. I'm getting a B- and I don't do anything in that class... speaking of which, did you read that assignment?"

"No, but I looked it up on Cliffnotes. It's about some guy in the army talking about all the stuff the soldiers carried. The one guy is obsessed with a girl back home that he's not even dating and carries pictures of her and is jealous about everyone she might be hanging out with." I said with a sigh. "He sounds really pathetic."

"What? That sounds so cute. I wish I had a guy that liked me that much."

"Maybe Kyle will start liking you like that." I said, meandering towards the classroom.

"I'm over Kyle. Didn't you see the new kid from Crestview?" Kelley said, stopping and looking around. "Paul? Now he's hot."

Glancing up at the hall clock I gasped, "Hurry up, Kelley." I said, grabbing her arm. "I can't be late to class again. We can talk about this more at lunch."

Hurrying Kelley off to-

wards English, I tripped over someone's bag and their books went everywhere. Groaning, I looked back and saw Jimmy faintly smile at me as he started reaching for his books. "Sorry Jimmy," I called back towards him, "I've got to get to class. You shouldn't leave your bag laying where people can trip over it."

The bell rang the moment I walked into class and I smirked at Williams as he raised one of his bushy eyebrows at me. Glancing around I couldn't believe how many people were missing from class. Did someone schedule a senior skip day and not tell me about it? It was mostly the goody-goodies missing from class though, so whatever they were doing probably wasn't interesting at all anyways.

The best thing about English class is the morning announcements that cut into ten minutes of Williams' teaching time. Apparently the only thing interesting enough to talk about lately is the potential war between the US and China, and the Drug Resistance group that needs more members or else they have to get rid of the program. It's not like either of those announcements really affect me anyways, so neither bother me at all.

Twenty minutes into the lecture I was starting to fall asleep. To save myself from a detention I decided to ask for pass to the bathroom. Begrudgingly Williams gave me the pass. You can't deny a teenage girl the right to use the bathroom these days, it's against school policy. And Williams knew I'd be the first to turn him into the school board for anything I could get my hands on.

Time seemed to stand still as Williams scribbled his initials onto my planner verifying my pass to the bathroom. Kelley popped her gum obnoxiously in the back corner and Kyle was passing notes with Emilie, the slut from France.

"No detours Ms. Wright. Hurry back, our test will be starting shortly."

"Absolutely Mr. Mercury. Oh, I mean Mr. Williams." I said with a sneer. He hated when I compared him to Freddie Mercury, but he looked just like him. I scurried out the door and into the halls towards my locker to get my gum. Stopping abruptly, my eyes looked towards the mess in the hallway. And that's when I knew something was wrong. Jimmy's books were still all over the floor and his wheelchair was turned on its side against the locker. My shoes

suddenly felt as though they were filled with lead as I attempted to walk towards the books and wheelchair. Where was Jimmy?

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"Excuse me," I cleared my throat and pushed my bangs out of my face, "Mrs. Martinez?"

"Yes, Jeanie?" Mrs. Martinez said, looking up from her paperwork.

"Jimmy Tapple..." I stammered, cleared my throat and rearranged my bangs again. I looked down and noticed the edge my shirt was curled up; I tried to smooth it down.

"What about Jimmy?" Mrs. Martinez asked, setting down her pen.

I tried to say everything as quickly as possibly "Jimmy's gone and I don't know where he is. I was walking to my locker and I saw his stuff lying all over the hallway and his wheelchair is just leaning sideways against the lockers."

"Calm down Jeanie. He can't have just disappeared into thin air." She said shaking her head, picking up her pen again and reaching for her papers.

"I'm not lying!" My voice rose. Pointing to the video moni-

tors I said, "Check the hall tapes. He's gone."

"Jeanie," She said firmly, setting her pen down again. "let's get you back to class dear. Mr. Harris and I will look into this, I'm sure it's all a misunderstanding."

I just stood there shaking my head back and forth until finally she got up and walked me back to class. I stood at the doorway of Mr. William's classroom for a while watching her pick up Jimmy's belongings. Why was she smiling? What were they going to tell Jimmy's family?

"Jeanie." Williams voice shattered my thoughts and I turned back to face him. "How about you join the rest of class in our discussion on Tim O'Brien's book *The Things They Carried*? You seemed to have an excellent time roaming the hallways; I hope you've gathering some insightful things to share in class."

"Sorry, Mr. Williams. I had to go to the office to inform Mrs. Martinez of..." I trailed off looking towards where Mrs. Martinez was just standing. She vanished. There was no way she could have walked by me while Williams was speaking to me. All of Jimmy's things were still lying on the floor too. Something was happening.

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I'm not sure how many times Williams called my name before I actually heard him.

"Jeanie." Williams stood beside me, glaring down at me. "Do I need to issue you a Friday school?"

"Mrs. Martinez is gone." I pointed towards the mess. "She... she was standing there just a moment ago."

"I don't need to listen to your fantasies, Ms. Wright." He said, his eyes boring into mine, not even taking a moment to look where I was pointing. "Take yourself to the office."

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It didn't matter that Williams didn't believe me. I knew what I saw. Well, what I didn't see. Where was everyone going? At least almost all of my friends were still here, but what about my family? Anxiety hit me. I broke into a sprint towards the office.

Mrs. Martinez's chair was empty; pictures of her family were proudly displayed on her desk. There was one of her young teenager getting baptized in a farmer's pond, and a group photo of a

mission trip her family went to in South Africa. Looking around for a sign of the office aids, I snatched the phone off the receiver and dialed home. Heat coursed through my veins as the phone rang. Why wasn't Mom answering? Had she told me she was going somewhere this morning? I was so rushed this morning I didn't want to listen to her. Closing my eyes, I thought back.

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"Jeanie!" my mother said as I began to rush out the kitchen door.

"Yeah?" I said without turning around.

"Don't forget, tonight Derek has his skit at church." "I didn't have to turn around to know that she was half smiling, I could hear it in her voice. "It'd be really nice if you would come to the service and support him."

Turning around I glanced at my father sitting at the kitchen table reading the newspaper and sipping his coffee. He looked up at me and smiled. I looked into my mother's brown eyes, "Mom, you know I don't go to church."

Her mouth twitched. "Jeanie, just this once. You may like it."

"No."

"Listen, if you just—" she began.

I jumped at the sudden sound of Dad's voice. "Joyce! Drop it for Christ's sake." Mother's eyes closed, her hand clenching her apron. "If she doesn't want to go to church, she doesn't have to go. You're driving me insane." He finished.

"Maybe if you would be a better example, Jeanie wouldn't be so opposed—" She slowly opened her tear stricken eyes.

"Joyce, she's an adult." I heard his fist hit the table, the silverware clinking with the shake of the table. "She can make her own damn decisions and so can I. I'm getting tired of your self-righteous attitude."

I smiled. Dad was always on my side. Mom took a deep breath releasing her apron and tucking her soft brown hair behind her ear. She turned around and opened a drawer, pulling out five dollars and turned to hand me it.

"Here's lunch money if you need it." Her eyes fixated on mine. "Service starts at 6:30 tonight if you change your mind. The world's not right Jeanie, it could be over at any moment. I just want you saved."

"Mom, chill out." I said

reaching out for the money, not willing to take the three steps over to her. "You're so brainwashed." I was tired of her end of the world speeches and I couldn't hold my tongue any longer, "Heaven's not real. You know what? I'd rather spend an eternity in hell than an eternity of nothing anyways. So maybe you'll be right and I can just burn in hell for all eternity."

She didn't even wait to see if I would take the money; she just set it down looking at me, tears welling up in her eyes and she walked out of the kitchen towards the living room. I almost felt bad.

"Bye Dad" I said, picking up the money and heading out again.

"See ya Jeanie. Don't worry about your mom."

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Mom had to still be at the house. Hanging the phone up on the receiver I turned towards Derek's classroom. My pace quickened and the blue lines on the High School floor began to blur into red as I crossed into the Middle School section. I stopped so quickly my tennis shoes left skids on the floor. Perfect timing. I saw Derek heading towards the water fountain. And

then I saw a man. A man I've never seen before dressed in brilliant white clothing. There was something different about him. It was like all the light in the room gravitated around him. His stride was fluid and graceful as he walked up behind Derek. All I could do was stand and watch, losing all control of my body and mouth. I wanted to shout at Derek and tell him to run, but I was cemented to the floor, swaying to an invisible breeze.

I watched Derek turn around towards the man; he almost smiled, but then he fell to his knees in submission. Tears welled in my eyes and they slowly trickled over my nose, and onto my lips. I closed my eyes, attempting to gain control of my body again, but it was too late. Once my eyes were open, Derek and the man were gone. Quiet footsteps approached me from behind.

Kelley's voice whispered behind me. "Jeanie, what's wrong?"

"Kelley," I whispered, barely believing what I was seeing. "do you believe in Angels?"

"What are you talking about, Jeanie?"

"I'm scared my mom was right. I think the world really might be ending." Turning around I walked towards the exit of the

school, faintly conscious of Kelley's footsteps following behind me. I had to find Dad, if he was still here. He should be. Approaching the exit I looked up towards the sky; there was something different about it. The doors swung open and a cool breeze whipped my face, drying the tears onto my face making my skin feel cracked. To the north, I saw the sky begin to open up. Fire and hail were blazing towards the town, the school, the world. Somewhere behind me I heard a scream, tears streamed down my face and everything went black.

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I woke up. How long had I been dreaming? But more importantly, where was I? Looking around, my eyes seemed to focus better. I must have been daydreaming. Why was I standing in line? I couldn't seem to shake the feeling that I was alone and had to find my mom, my dad, my brother.