

Eddie

Pg 18-20

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LOST IN YONKERS

you want is what you're going to get... Start thinking now.

**ARTY.** I started! I started! I want a big ice cream soda with a sundae with whipped cream and hot-fudge sauce. Is that okay?

**BELLA.** Sounds perfect to me. And don't give any to Jay. He missed the deadline.

*(She puts her nose up to JAY and goes into Grandma's room.)*

**ARTY.** *(To JAY.)* Don't be mad, I had to say it. I was afraid she was going to strangle me with the towel.

**JAY.** It's up to Pop. We'll see what Pop says.

*(ARTY lies on the sofa. The bedroom door opens. EDDIE comes out. He looks strained... He crosses to the open window and takes a deep breath of air.)*

**EDDIE.** Jay! Get me a glass of water, please.

**JAY.** Right, Pop.

*(He rushes into the kitchen.)*

**EDDIE.** It must be over a hundred in here.

*(He looks at ARTY.)*

Get your shoes off the sofa, what's wrong with you?

**ARTY.** *(Moves shoes.)* I'm feeling kind of faint.

**EDDIE.** What do you mean, faint? Kids your age don't faint.

**ARTY.** Maybe I'm getting older.

**JAY.** *(Comes in with the glass.)* Here you go, Pop. Nice and cool.

**EDDIE.** Don't spill it on the rug.

*(He takes the glass and drinks. Puts the glass down.)*

All right... Time to talk. Sit down, Jay. Next to Arty.

*(JAY sits on the sofa next to ARTY. EDDIE sits on the stool. He is thinking about how to start.)*



I er... I wanted to tell you boys -

*(And suddenly he breaks and tears come to his eyes. He quickly tries to stifle it. He wipes his eyes. He goes to the window for some air.)*

**ARTY.** Is anything the matter, Po-

**EDDIE.** It's so damn hot in here, isn't it? ...So, I just had a talk inside with your grandmother... Because I've had a problem... When your mother and I had a problem, we always tried to keep it from you boys because we didn't want to worry you... Well, you can't keep cancer, a secret forever... You knew without me telling you, didn't you, Jay?

**JAY.** Yes, Pop.

**EDDIE.** I did everything I could. The best doctors, the best hospitals I could get into... She had a nice room, didn't she? Semi-private, no wards or anything...

**JAY.** I know, Pop.

**EDDIE.** We're not rich people, boys. I know that doesn't come as a surprise to you...but I'm going to tell you something now I hoped I'd never have to tell you in my life... The doctors, the hospital, cost me everything I had... I was broke and I went into debt... So I went to a man... A loan shark... A moneylender... I couldn't go to a bank because they don't let you put up heartbreak and pain as collateral... A loan shark doesn't need collateral... His collateral is your desperation... So he gives you his money... And he's got a clock... And what it keeps time of is your promise... If you keep your promise, he turns off the clock...and if not, it keeps ticking...and after a while, your heart starts ticking louder than his clock... Understand something. This man kept your mother alive... It was his painkillers that made her last days bearable... And for that I'm grateful... Jay! Remember what I taught you about taking things from people?

**JAY.** *(Nods.)* Never take because you'll always be obligated.

**EDDIE.** So you never take for yourself... But for someone you love, there comes a time when you have no choice...

There's a man in New York I owe... Nine thousand dollars... I could work and save four more years and I won't have nine thousand dollars... He wants his money this year. To his credit, I'll say one thing. He sent flowers to the funeral. No extra charge on my bill...

JAY. Pop -

EDDIE. Let me finish... There is no way I can pay this man back... So what'll he do? Kill me? ...Maybe... If he kills me, he not only loses his money, it'll probably cost him again for the flowers for *my* funeral... I needed a miracle... And the miracle happened... This country went to war... A war between us and the Japanese and the Germans... And if my mother didn't come to this country thirty-five years ago, I could have been fighting for the other side... Except I don't think they're putting guns in the hands of Jews over there... Let me tell you something. I love this country. Because they took in the Jews. They took in the Irish, the Italians and everyone else... Remember this. There's a lot of Germans in this country fighting for America, but there are no Americans over there fighting for Germany... I hate this war, and God forgive me for saying this, but it's going to save my life... There are jobs I can get now that I could never get before... And I got a job... I'm working for a company that sells scrap iron... I thought you threw scrap iron away. Now they're building ships with it... Without even the slightest idea of what I'm doing, I can make that nine thousand dollars in less than a year...

JAY. That's great, Pop.

EDDIE. Don't say it till I finish... The factories that I would sell to are in the South... Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, even New Mexico... I'd be gone about ten months... Living in trains, buses, hotels, any place I can find a room... We'd be free and clear and back together again in less than a year... Okay? ...So now comes the question, where do you two live while I'm gone?