

EXCERPTS

THE BOY

CHAPTER 1

A pathetically gray sky held Christmas Eve in St. Louis captive. Snowflakes clung to fifteen year old Jamy Chance MacGregor like a blanket. They mixed with the tears streaming down his cheeks and dripped from his patrician nose. Pulling his thin coat closer around him did nothing to warm him. He watched as they lowered his mother's coffin into the sodden black earth.

*Chatelaine Chambers
Born 1934, Paris, France
Died 1969, St. Louis, Missouri*

Simple words etched into the small brass plaque fastened to the plain wooden coffin. Not much of a legacy for the woman who stood up to society by giving him life. She had been segregated from the 'good Christian' families by keeping him and he had been segregated from 'good people's' children by being illegitimate. A heavy burden to bear for all his years, it proved more difficult now that no friends stood by his side.

His dark chili spice colored hair hung in damp ringlets about his shoulders from the snow, falling faster now. Shoes, a size too small, pinched his cold numbed feet as he slid in the muck formed by the mud and snow. He reached for the silver guardian angel pendant his mother gave him with the consoling words, "Ils protégeront et te garder." ("*They will protect and keep you.*") The pendant barely touched the emptiness he felt while clumps of mud thudded against the cover of the coffin. The hollow sound dredged a moat around the walls already surrounding his heart.

His strong square jaw worked as he clenched and unclenched his teeth. "Why couldn't God let her be with me one more day? Why not one more Christmas together? Why did she have to die? She never did anything wrong." He said the words quietly as his anger collapsed into hurt. The tears flowed again.

THE SEARCHER

excerpt from Chapter 4

Paul Linders, just returned from overseas duty in Vietnam with the narcotics special team, set out early Christmas morning with gifts for Chatelaine and Jamy. He hadn't called, wanting to catch them unaware. His own excitement sent him driving too fast and ignoring traffic lights as he envisioned their surprise at him standing before them. Then, in a few days, Chatelaine would be his wife, and Jamy would take his name. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Linders and their son, Jamy. They would be his, finally. No more waiting. Eight long years he had waited but no more. Not one day more.

Knocking lightly at first, no one answered. His knock intensified. He tried the door, it opened easily. *Chatelaine must have finally gotten the landlord to fix this. How many times I said I would do it but no, it was the principle of the thing. I guess she finally won.* Stepping inside, the quiet caught him. At so early an hour, he felt sure they would be home. Glancing around, he saw bureau drawers open in Jamy's room. No evidence of people. No breakfast. No dishes stacked. No gifts under the little tree covered with tinsel. He heard a sound behind him. Turning he saw an older lady he remembered vaguely.

"Are you looking for the kid?" she asked, coming into the room.

Paul looked down from his six foot six inch frame to the wrinkled figure before him. He stepped closer. Her squinty eyes opened wide.

"You! You've been gone a long time, but I remember you."

"Where are Chatelaine and Jamy?"

"She died without confessing to a priest. A sinner damned to hell."

He reeled as though hit with a fist in the belly. "Died?"

"Died with her sin. God sent her a cancer to make her repent, but she never did."

Chatelaine dying of cancer. No! No, God wouldn't hurt my sweet Chatelaine. He stared a moment then wanted nothing more than to strangle the woman and squelch her words but she hadn't mentioned Jamy. "Her son. Jamy. Where is he?" Paul forcefully said the words falling back on his training as an agent to get information.

"He was there yesterday. A social worker went to the funeral with him. They came here to get his clothes. He's a bad boy. Always saying 'fuck you' and 'bitch' when I told him his mother was a sinner. He's gone. Out the window."

THE ADDICT/KILLER

Jamy cooked up his heroin in a bottle cap, tied off his left arm and mainlined. The pain of the wounds disappeared in the warm cocoon the drug created. His frustration ebbed. Maman walked in the colorful world of the dream. Griff appeared menacingly at her side. A slim blade moved toward his mother's throat. She raised her chin offering her slender milk-white throat to his knife. Blood red filled the dream but it was not his mother's blood. It was Griff's. Jamy stood over his lifeless victim, his guardian angel pendent driven deep into Griff's heart. "I have saved you, Maman," Jamy proclaimed. No thanks or accolades emanated from his mother, only a single tear slid down her face to mix with Griff's blood.

* * *

Late the next morning when he woke, Jamy looked for his morning jump start of heroin to quiet the nerves in his body screaming themselves awake. He wanted them to sleep again, to leave him numb to his emotions and guilt, to keep the voice of a now dead but constantly scolding mother at bay. "Where's my stuff, Nick?"

"No, you can't do that much."

"Give me my stuff." Jamy grabbed Nick's shirt. His nervous agitation flew into anger as he shook Nick back and forth.

Nick pointed to the bed. "Inside the mattress."

Jamy mixed the powder in a bottle cap, and lit a match to warm the solution, dropping a piece of cotton in it, he dipped the needle into the cotton then slowly filled the syringe.

Nick pleaded, "Don't do it. It's too much, man."

Jamy, immersed in the horror Griff's death etched in his brain and beginning to hear his mother's voice again, snapped. "Shut up. I need this. It let's me find peace." He inserted the needle pushing hard past the scar tissue and released the liquid into his vein.

THE NARC

CHAPTER 49

Jamy, stone-faced stared at the figures on the black and white television. Captain Kangaroo and Mr. Green Jeans busily toiled over their latest shoe box creation. Jamy held one of Linde's many shoe boxes, the glue and JamyNick's fat crayons in his hands.

The bright paper covering the wax tore when the crayons broke as Jamy's long tapered fingers crushed them.

If JamyNick had been there, they would have made the new fangled shoe box wagon together. Now Jamy didn't have the heart to do any more than stare at the laughing characters.

Syl hadn't contacted him since they met in the museum and tonight Granges' men would meet the French contacts at Leclède's Landing. The idea of anyone finding out he talked to a Fed sent his 'fight or flight' intuition in high gear.

Does he make it?

Join Jamy in his journey - CHOICES MADE: THE STREET YEARS