

Out of Frame

by Adriana Beristáin-Márquez

Jace kneeled on the wet floor picking the frozen door lock, Hailey's squeals interrupt him. Cursing under his breath, Jace looked over, she was on the floor and a piece of her jacket hanging from the barbed wire fence. Shaking his head, he continues working on the door as she approaches him, rubbing her ached hands.

"What if we get caught?" she asked.

Hailey's shadow cascaded over the door lock, ultimately blocking his view. Sighing, he answered, "We won't."

"How do you know?"

Jace took a deep breath. "We just won't."

"But what if we do?"

"But what if you stopped talking," he said, opening the back door.

Jace walks off, taking sharp rights and lefts, Hailey stumbles to catch up. After they go through the staff quarters, they make it to the grand staircase, and Jace stares in awe at the striking architecture. Hailey looks behind her shoulder every few seconds.

"I want to go home," she said.

"And I want to go to the moon." Jace walks past her, stands in the middle of the staircase, arms open wide. "It ain't happening, sweetheart. Time to accept that."

Jace leads the way up to the second floor. They walk past Caillebotte's Paris Street; Rainy Day, and Seurat's A Sunday on La Grande Jatte. He makes his way into gallery 241.

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“Alright,” Jace said, putting down his bag. “You grab The Drinkers and The Poet’s Garden, while I take The Bedroom and the Self-Portrait.”

“How do I know which one is which?” asked Hailey

“You read the plaque.”

Jace walks up to the self-portrait of Vincent van Gogh. Even in the dimly lit space, you could see the vibrancy of his red beard and the dullness of the eyes. Jace admired the paint strokes done by the cleaners trying to maintain and restore the piece. Instinctively, he reaches his back pocket.

The sound of heels clicking startles Jace from grabbing the painting. He looks at Hailey, who hasn’t noticed, they aren’t alone anymore. Jace darts towards the grand staircase.

“Where are you going?” Hailey asked.

“To get a T-shirt from the gift shop,”

Leaving an exasperated Hailey, Jace walks out of the gallery carefully. He stills for a moment; faint sounds were coming from the floor below. Heading down the stairs, he feels up his back pocket.

Jace tracks down the footsteps to the west wing of the Arts of the Americas gallery. He pushed himself against the wall and takes a glance inside. Staring at Hoppers Nighthawks is an all too familiar figure, Inspector Hernandez.

“Hernandez!” Jace shouted, walking towards her. “Why am I not surprised.”

Never breaking contact with the painting, she responded, “Hey, kid.”

“Ah, not a kid anymore,” he said, shaking his head, “I’m 19 now, c’mon, you were there for my 18th birthday heist.”

Looking away from Nighthawks, she looks over at Jace. Hernandez stares at his face for a bit and says, “You look like shit.”

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“Don’t be so mean; this look is inspired off of you.”

“Ian”

“Hernie, if you could refrain from using my old gamer tag, I’d really appreciate it,” Jace said, making his way to the nighthawks painting. He looks at the faceless man miserably sitting alone at the dinner. Jace reaches in his back pocket and takes out his mother’s watch. He caresses its broken face, lost in thought.

“How many times must we do this, Ian?”

“As many times as it takes for you to leave me alone.”

“Ian, come on,” she says, facing Jace. “This isn’t you. You aren’t a criminal, and you certainly don’t look like a professional thief.”

Jace walks closer to one of the most well-known pieces of 20th-century American art and looks it over once again.

“That’s what makes me so damn good at it.” He grabs the Nighthawks and breaks off the frame from the painting.