

“Out For Good”

Today was no ordinary day, today was the day Jake had waited three long years for, today the awe and anticipation would finally conclude; today Jake would be released from prison. He was surrounded by the same four walls that had confined his mind and spirit for so long, but no longer. As he examined the walls he realised that aesthetically they were no different from any other walls; they were just ordinary. Why did they cause him so much anguish and torment? All of that was irrelevant now as today Jake would be ‘out for good’.

Jake heard a cacophony roar through his door as the deafening sounds of banged doors and indistinguishable shouts flooded his room like a hole in a ship which drowned out his senses. His door opened and there stood his least favourite prison officer with his bald head, fat belly and grotesque face yet in that instant he didn’t see the man who stole his freedom from him on a daily basis just by the simple turn of a key, he saw his liberator; the man that would end his torture that once felt like it would last an eternity. The man said with a harsh and aggressive tone “it’s time”. Regardless of the man’s tone those words had never been more welcoming. He had longed to hear those words. He followed the man down a hall which seemed shorter than he remembered. The man asked if Jake would be back, with the words “out for good?” used as a reply, followed by a sceptical look from the man.

Jake stood face to face with the last object in the way of his freedom – the front gate. He leisurely walked out of the gate savouring every sweet second of the thought that those fences would keep him prisoner no longer. His girlfriend was waiting for him; like she had done for the last three years. Jake rushed over to her, he threw his arms around her and in that moment time stopped for a while as they just held each other, no words were said – none were needed, they both knew they had their old life back and nothing could change that.

A few days had passed since Jake was released from prison; he was smoking a cigarette outside his house when the weather changed for the worst. The sky turned grey and Jake heard the crack of a whip as the sound of thunder emanated from the distance. Despite the deafening sound of the thunder Jake’s focus was on the sound coming from his pocket, it was his phone. He pulled his phone out to see what it was and then stared blankly at the screen for a short while. Jake felt as if a golf ball was slowly and agonisingly forcing its way down his throat as he gulped with worry. He read the words “come round, stuff to do” – Jake thought that it could mean anything but deep down he knew exactly what it meant.

Jake approached a block of flats and hesitantly walked up the stairs until he was stood facing the bright red door. He was reluctant to knock but he caught a glimpse of movement as the curtain was pulled back and a face appeared to peek out of the window. Seconds later the bright red door opened. Jake began to sweat; his heart was pounding as if it was trying to escape from his chest, as he entered the derelict flat where he once spent so much time.

The aroma was intoxicating, it filled the entire flat; it was easily recognisable smell of his past – marijuana. Three men were sitting around a coffee table with piles of money, scales and drugs next to them. The instigators of Jake's torture in prison stood before him but he knew he didn't come here to confront them so he sat down. Of course he didn't want this life but it was all he knew and he didn't know how he could escape from it.

Several hours had passed by in the flat when time came to a sudden stop as the sound of a huge crash echoed through the flat and police stormed through the space where the door used to be. Jake knew he was done, he would go back to prison, yet all he could think about was why he even came to the flat in the first place when he had everything he wanted at home.

He couldn't spare a thought for the Armageddon that awaited him. Why didn't he learn his lesson the first time? Was he destined to do this for the rest of his life? Jake closed his eyes and inhaled deeply.

Jake's eyes opened slowly to the sight of four ordinary walls. He was back in his cell, perplexed. The reason for his confusion was because today was no ordinary day, today was still the day Jake would be released from prison. He wondered if what had happened was a premonition or a bad dream.

Once again Jake heard the same sounds roar through his door, his door was opened by the same fat baldy, grotesque man, who said the same thing to him, followed by the same walk down the hall. Jake left through the same gate, he greeted his girlfriend in the same manner and finally he received the same message on his phone. If everything happened the same then why were Jake's next actions so different? He pulled out his phone and read the text from his friend, he stared deeply into his girlfriend's eyes; all he saw was a reflection of himself, much like the reflection he had looked upon for the last three years in the cracked mirror above his sink. The reflection in her eyes was different, it was filled with jubilation and freedom.

Jake knew he had to break the shadowy and suffocating grip that crime had on him. Jake pressed a button on his phone and another one and then read the words "message deleted".

Today was the day: today Jake was out for good.