

# Bad Christmas



Chapters IIII & V

*Confiscation*

*Father*

A. A. A. Hartvisen

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*Chapters III & V: Confiscation / Father*

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Bad Christmas, Chapters I-III

## BAD CHRISTMAS

### CHAPTER IIII : CONFISCATION

There were only two police cars at the station when Meagan arrived. He went up and hit the buzzer. After a moment, the little grille by the door spoke to him:

“What do you want?”

“I’m looking for my father,” said Meagan. “I’m Paullus Meagan.”

After a pause there was a loud *buzz* and the door unlocked. Meagan pushed through and went in. Officers Bassiti and Marcolina stood at the other end of the small room, evenly spaced between each other and the walls around them. *Some kind of law enforcement feng shui thing*, thought Meagan.

“Where’s my father?”

Bassiti held up his hand.

“Mr Meagan, just calm down.”

“I’m waiting,” said Meagan. “Why did you break into my father’s house?”

“Mr Meagan,” said Marcolina. “Your father is dead.”

Meagan’s hand clenched involuntarily.

“Why?” he said.

“Well, Paullus,” Marcolina continued. “We’re not exactly sure. We came across him leaving Andy’s place, and he appeared to be intoxicated, so Officer Samson Bassiti asked Subject to stop the vehicle. Instead, your father shouted a series of incoherent threats profusely in the general direction of our peace car, so we gave pursuit to Subject, and he went home and locked himself inside. We asked your father to open the door and he responded with series of threatening sounds and gestures, so we were finally forced to finally force entry into the house for his own protection. Subject’s threats decreased shortly before we entered the building and we found Mr Meagan lying prostrated in the floor.”

He nodded to Bassiti. Meagan stood stonefaced watching them.

“I dispatched Officer Johnnie Marcolina,” said Bassiti. “To call for medical assistance, but then I discovered through normal means that Mr Montgomery Meagan was not breathing and had no heartbeat or brain activity. So we cancelled the ambulance and called Norm Vincik for Subject’s body and waited until he arrived to remove the body from the premises and after securing the premises returned to the station to make a report.”

“Hmm,” said Meagan. “Sounds like a fat load of bull *crap* to me!”

“Sir, sir, sir,” said Marcolina.

Bassiti began hunching his shoulders forward in an threatening manner. Meagan

stepped back against the wall.

“Okay,” said Meagan. “So why, then, is his entire gun collection missing from the house?”

“We secured the weapons to prevent them from being stolen or used in the commission of a felony or drug-related criminal action,” said Bassiti, taking a step toward Meagan.

“I’ll take them,” said Meagan.

“Okay,” said Marcolina very seriously. “Sam, can you get the necessary paperwork?”

“Sure, Johnnie,” said Bassiti and went through the door that led deeper into the station.

Marcolina and Meagan spent the next five minutes staring at each other. Finally, Bassiti returned with a sheet of paper. He held it out to Meagan.

“Fill these out and bring them back, and we’ll run a check. There’s no hurry. Take your time,” said Marcolina.

Meagan took the paper, glanced over it briefly, crumpled it up and threw it at the policemen’s feet. It made a flat sound. Bassiti started forward. Marcolina put an arm on him and held him back.

*What is it with these jokers?* thought Meagan. *They know I can’t pass any criminal check. They just stole the fucking guns, and they know it.*

“Forget it,” said Meagan.

He turned to leave. The door would not open. Bassiti said something over his radio, and the door buzzed again. Meagan pushed, and it came open. He departed.

## CHAPTER V : FATHER

Meagan paced the office of Ratlow Muffin Funeral Services while he waited for Norman Vincik to get off the telephone. He arrived almost ten minutes ago and asked to speak to Vincik. The secretary said that Norman was busy with an important long distance telephone call, but that she would let Meagan in to see him as soon as the call was over.

So Meagan paced around the waiting room angrily, and Urraca Mordini sat at her desk watching him pace and the orange line A indicator light on her telephone console flicker nervously. Finally the light switched off. She called Vincik's office.

“Sir? There's a man here to see you. I think it's important... Yes, Sir.”

She hung up and turned to Meagan.

“Go right in,” she said.

Meagan pushed through the heavy, solid door into Vincik’s big, carpeted office.

Vincik sat behind a large wooden desk. It looked expensive. He was a small, thin, dark man, with a tight black moustache and big bulging eyes. The whites of his eye were grey. He stood up as Meagan approached the desk and held out his hand.

Meagan waved him off.

“I’m here about my father. I’m Paullus Meagan.”

“Please, Mr Meagan, sit down,” said the little undertaker.

Vincik clasped his hands together and sat down in a heavily padded, black, leather office chair. He fumbled with the wooden buttons on his Christmas-coloured cardigan.

“Your father was Mr Montgomery Meagan?” he asked.

“Yes,” said Meagan. “The police told me you took the body. They said he was found dead.”

Vincik made a face at the word *dead*.

“Yes, unfortunate, Mr Meagan. There *are* arrangements that must be made, but there is no rush. Have your lawyer—”

“Let me see him.”

“Excuse me?”

“Let me see the body, Norm. He’s my father.”

“This is most irregular, Mr Meagan. We’ve barely finished filling out the death certificate—”

“*You* filled out the death certificate?” asked Meagan.



“Why, yes. That is standard procedure.”

“Are you a doctor?”

“I am not a medical doctor licensed to practice medicine, but I have been trained in these matters. It is customary for us to fill out the certificate, which will then be turned over to Dr Simeon. We will then answer any questions he has, and we will then accept any corrections the medical doctor may chuse to offer. Dr Simeon will then sign it. But I won’t expect the matter to be delayed with respect to your father. The matter is pretty straightforward.”

“Then let me see him.”

“The body is not prepared for viewing, Mr Meagan.”

“You didn’t *cut him up*? He’s still in one piece?” asked Meagan.

“Yes, yes,” said Vincik. “I mean, no.”

“Then let me see him!”

Vincik’s face turned downward and hardened. He stood up from his desk.

“Alright, Mr Meagan. We shall view the body. Follow me.”

Vincik shot Mrs Mordini a disapproving glance as they past through the waiting room. She was unmoved.

Vincik led Meagan through a series of side-doors into a cold, white room. Partitions projected into the room from the outer walls, making the edges of the room into a series of smaller, doorless cells. In the cells were rolling tables with blankets. On some of them were bodies. Vincik stepped up to the entrance of the second cell on the right and turned to face Meagan.

Meagan entered the cell along the narrow pathway between the table and the wall. A brown-green canvas blanket was drawn over the body up to the neck. There was something

like a blue towel wrapped around the dead man's head. Meagan recognised the face immediately. It was his father, Mathew Montgomery Meagan.

Paullus reached up and touched his father's face.

"Please, Mr Meagan," Vincik protested.

Montie's face was cold, much colder than Paullus expected. *The life drains out so fast.* And his face was pale and bloodless. The room around them grew colder as well, and Paullus started to shiver.

"I have to ask you to please not *touch* the corpse, Mr Meagan."

Meagan turned to the undertaker.

"Can you give me a minute *alone* with my old man?"

Vincik pursed his lips like he would say *no* and his eyes flickered up and down. He let out a painful sigh.

"I'll wait outside. I trust you can find your way back. Please don't *disturb* anything!"

The sound of Vincik's footsteps receded down the hall and vanished through a door.

Meagan looked at the body and ran his fingers through his hair.

"Dad," he said. "I'm going to miss you."

He looked away and then back again.

"Dad, I'll get you out of this mess, if it's the last thing I do. It's like a big freezer in here!"

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