

DELETED SCENE AND FLASHBACK – Gold’s Guitars

Ori, Ed, flashback with Del

Ed took out a bandana and wiped the neck of the guitar. “So, I saw your brother yesterday.”

I couldn’t get away from Del. Even at Gold’s, which was supposed to be my sanctuary.

I sighed. “Yeah? Where?”

Ed straightened up, tucking the bandana back in his pocket. “At Car Toys. I was looking at a new GPS.”

“Oh.”

“He seemed pretty...I don’t know. Down. Not his usual cheerful, smartass self. Is everything okay?”

I shrugged. “He got mad at our parents and took off a couple of weeks ago. He’s staying with a friend.”

“So he just up and left?”

“Yeah,” I said, running my finger down the strings of the Fender.

“You okay with that?”

“It’s fine.”

“Huh.” Ed reached out to adjust the other guitar – a Yamaha - in the display window. “I’ve always been amazed at how close you two were. My older brother lived to yank my chain and never let me do anything with him and his friends. You’re lucky.”

I stared at him, a memory tugging at the corner of my mind.

[REWIND BUTTON image] Spring. Del-age 18, Ori- age 15. “You guys are our lucky charm,” Del said to Ori and Nick. They had won the state championship and Del was still

celebrating the next day. He took them out for burgers at two in the afternoon. They ate mountains of bottomless fries at Red Robin until the waiter had to cut them off or risk not having enough for other customers.

Del did impressions of a set of parents at a table across the restaurant; they both used their napkin after every bite and made their kids do the same.

“Just a little spot right there,” he said in a fake English accent, dabbing a catsup-drenched French fry at the corner of Ori’s mouth. They laughed so hard that Coke ran out their noses. And on the way to the car, Del slapped Ori on the back before pulling him toward him in the closest thing to a hug Del Taylor would ever give another guy, especially if that guy was his younger brother.

“Thanks for being a part of this, guys,” Del said, putting his arm around Ori and Nick. “What a way to go out, eh? State championship, decent grades to end my senior year and you both are headed for rock stardom. Doesn’t get much better than this.”

[PLAY BUTTON IMAGE]

My eyes traced the outline of the Fender, the gleaming blue body taking the place of the Les Paul that had been there two days ago.

“Yeah,” I said, thinking of the anger in Del’s eyes before he drove away from Chipotle. “Lucky.”