

DELETED SCENE – Gold’s Guitars

Ori and Jane

“Nick told me you were here. I tried to text and call but I think your phone’s dead. It went right to voice mail.”

I pulled my cell out of my pocket. Totally blank. “Sorry about that.”

“You’ll have about ten texts from me. Sorry.” She walked around slowly, her head rotating back and forth, taking it all in. “So this is the inside of the famous Gold’s Guitars.”

“Famous?”

Jane smiled. “Well, since they sponsor your Rockmania site, they’re kind of famous.”

“Oh, right.” I finished with the drums and walked over to her. “Hey, Ed!”

“Yeah, OT?”

“This is Jane. Jane, Ed. Boss, fellow guitar freak, and person instrumental in my musical path.”

Ed laughed. “He gives me too much credit. I got Del going with the guitar and Ori jumped in on his own.”

“Nice to meet you,” Jane said.

“You too,” Ed said. “Got to get back to the register. You should give her a demo in the Jam Room, OT.”

“Is that okay?”

“Sure. We’ve only got ten minutes to close.”

He walked back to the counter, nodding to Jane before giving me a thumbs up behind her back.

Feeling my cheeks warm, I turned and carefully lifted a Rickenbacker down off the wall.

“Wow,” she said when we entered the Jam Room. “This is so cool.”

“I wish I could have played something on the Les Paul that’s a lot like mine,” I said, plugging the guitar into the amp. “But somebody bought it.”

“You’ll sound good no matter what guitar you use.” She sat down in a corner while I pulled the guitar strap over my head, trying to hide my smile at her compliment.

“Any special requests?”

“Nope,” she said. “Play whatever you want.”

I furrowed my brow as I tuned the guitar.

We used to be friends.

I frowned. Why did *that* song pop into my head? I didn’t want to think about Del right now, not with Jane sitting just a few feet away from me.

“What is it?” she asked.

“Nothing,” I said. “Just thinking about a song I started awhile ago and never finished.”

“Do you remember it? Want to try it out on me?”

I shook my head. “It’s about my brother.”

“Oh.” She bit her lip, watching me.

“He came by the store today, asking Ed for a job.”

“Are you serious? What happened?”

“Ed would never hire him, even if he needed people right now.”

She nodded, wrapping her arms around her knees. “He must be pretty desperate if he’s coming to the place you work, knowing how you feel about him.”

Desperate. That was the same word Ed had used. Though he’d said Del seemed “not quite” desperate.

“Or he wants to piss me off.”

We used to be friends.

We used to be brothers.

“Do you really think he’d do that?”

I sighed. “I don’t know what to think when it comes to Del. Can we talk about something else?”

“Why don’t you just play.”

So I did. Not knowing why, I jumped into O.A.R.’s “Shattered (Turn the Car Around,” hitting the lyrics pretty hard when it came to “But I’m good without ya, yeah, I’m good without you.”

When I was finished, Jane was looking at me curiously.

What was it with people and weird looks? First Ed, now Jane.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing,” she said. “It’s just—well, I wondered if you were talking to him.”

“Who?” But I knew who she meant. And maybe I was, which pissed me off because he should be completely off my radar, not taking up valuable mental and emotional real estate.

I groaned, turning off the amp and setting the guitar in a stand. I slid down next to Jane.

“I don’t know. I’m so mad at him, at how he’s ruined everything and won’t admit it. He’s mad at everyone and we didn’t do this to him. He did this to him, you know?”

“I know.”

“I don’t want to be mad,” I said. “I want to not care. It would make things a lot easier.”

Jane smiled. “Yeah, those robots have it made.”

“Huh?” Then I got it. “Funny,” I said, shoving against her.

“I’m glad you care,” Jane said. “He’s your brother.”

“Yeah, well, he’s not acting like one.”

“How are brothers supposed to act?”

I was beginning to wish I hadn’t said anything. Jane was getting all psychoanalytical on me. “Not like this, okay? Let’s just leave it.”

She looked down at her hands, biting her lip.

“I’m sorry. I just don’t want to talk about it.”

She was about to say something when there was a knock on the glass behind us.

“Time to go, rock stars.” Ed’s voice was distant and muffled.

“Great sound proofing,” Jane said, standing up. She didn’t look at me as she opened the door and strode toward the front of the store.

“Thanks for stopping by,” I said as I rolled my bike out onto the sidewalk.

She sighed and turned around. “I’m sorry, Ori. I know it’s a hard situation for you. I didn’t to push.”

“It’s okay.”

She patted my arm. “It’ll work out, Ori. Somehow.”

I couldn’t help smiling. “That’s very profound and completely vague and unhelpful.”

She laughed. “I know. I do better when I’m writing it down.” She glanced up at the sky. “You want a ride? It’s kind of dark to be riding your bike.”

I was about to point out the light on the front of my bike and the reflector jacket draped over the seat, but instead I said, “That would be great.”