

## Westcrest

### Pilot — Something Unexpected

It starts with a *crunch*. The world spins sickeningly and a teenage boy named Jeremy stumbles forward. The thing Jeremy has stolen is tucked into his jacket and presses against his chest.

For a moment he's blind as his eyes adjust to the dark street. Most of the streetlights here are broken, except for one that flickers weakly on a distant street corner. Turning away from it, Jeremy steps into the shadows.

He knows they're behind him, but he ignores them. Dashing down the cracked pavement he spins on a heel and ducks into a side alley. He reaches the far end and steps out into the open street without stopping to check for traffic.

He passes into another alleyway, comforted by the press of the red brick walls on either side of him. The object tucked against his chest rattles as he ducks to avoid a length of twine strung out between buildings as a makeshift clothesline. He leaps across an overturned trash can and steps over a pool of half-dried vomit. From the shadows somebody groans, but Jeremy is already gone.

The alley splits into two before him and he turns down the left fork without hesitation. The darkness fades to light as he steps out of the alley and slows his steps. Perspiration trickles down the side of his face and as he moves to wipe it off with the back of his hand he realizes that something is wrong.

"No," he says aloud, because this isn't supposed to happen. An amplified voice rings out at him and the street explodes with flashing red and blue lights.

"Stop right there!" Says the amplified voice, but Jeremy doesn't plan on stopping. Tonight's job came from DuPont himself—a man far more dangerous than the police.

So he doesn't stop moving, his feet skirting the gutter as he twists his body around and dashes back into the dark alley. As he runs, he imagines that he can hear the creak of leather holsters as the police draw their pistols.

Every breath is scorching now and the muscles in his legs feel weak. The footsteps of the police echo around him as he struggles forward.

With a *crack* Jeremy's body strikes something solid. His neck whips backwards as a pair of strong hands grab him. He tries to cry out, but a rough hand clamps down over his mouth even as the stolen musical instrument—a maraca—tumbles free of his jacket and hits the ground rolling.

*This isn't supposed to happen*, Jeremy thinks to himself as the alley blooms into light.