

Chapter 29

The chapter opens with Nate and Pryor arriving at Wylie Frye's home in Encampment, a small town surrounded by the Sierra Madre range. The setting is vividly described, with snow-covered streets and wood smoke hanging in the air. Pryor knocks on the front door while Nate circles to the back, observing Frye's garage, which doubles as a workshop and man-cave filled with hunting trophies and unfinished projects. The tension builds as Nate unzips his parka to access his weapon, anticipating a confrontation.

Frye exits the back door, and Nate immediately confronts him at gunpoint, forcing him back inside. The interior of the house is messy, reflecting Frye's solitary life after his family left. Pryor joins them, and Nate orders Frye to disarm, discovering an expensive pistol and two cell phones—one of which is a burner phone. The discovery of a cryptic text message—"He knows"—hints at Frye's involvement in something clandestine, raising suspicions about his loyalty and activities.

Nate's interrogation intensifies as he presses Frye about the text and his connections to unknown individuals. Frye's fear is palpable as he reveals that "these guys" scare him, implying involvement with a dangerous group. Nate's ruthless tactics escalate when he retrieves a frozen trout from his SUV and uses it to strike Frye, demonstrating his willingness to employ brutal methods to extract information. Pryor watches uncomfortably, distancing himself from Nate's violence.

The chapter concludes with Nate forcing Frye to send a misleading text to his associates, claiming the delivery is back on. Frye, injured and terrified, complies but expresses doubt about whether his contacts will believe him. Nate's cold demeanor and threats underscore his role as an unrelenting enforcer, leaving Frye at his mercy and setting the stage for further conflict. The scene highlights themes of betrayal, coercion, and the harsh realities of their world.