

EYE FOR EYE, Book 1 of the Talion Series

by JK Franko

EXCERPT

When I try to piece together how this whole mess began, a part of me thinks it may have started over thirty years ago. At least the seeds were planted that far back, in the early 1980s. What happened then, at that summer camp in Texas, set the stage for everything that was to come.

Odd, how something so remote in time and geography continues to impact me here, today.

Sometimes I try to imagine her, how she felt—that eleven year-old girl—as she ran, stumbling and tripping through the woods that night. I try to put myself in her shoes. When I do, I wonder if she was frightened.

Did she understand the consequences of what she'd gotten herself into? I imagine it felt otherworldly to her, like a dream. But not a good dream. No, one of the bad ones—the ones that make your heart machine-gun as you try to outrun some dark thing that's chasing you. But the faster you try to run, the slower you go, your legs feeling leaden, clumsy, useless.

Panic sets in. Tears of frustration form. Fear takes hold and won't let go. You open your mouth to scream but realize, to your horror, that you're paralyzed. It's not that you can't scream; you can't even breathe. Not a dream—a nightmare.

Then again, all that may simply be my imagination. It could just be me projecting what I might have felt onto Joan. Maybe she wasn't scared at all.

True, it was dark out. The night smelled of rain, but there was no lightning, only the far-off rumble of thunder hinting at a distant storm. There were no trail lights, no visibility but for the moon peeking out intermittently from behind a patchwork of clouds. But, Joan had been down this trail before. She was running toward the main cabin.

She had been at Camp Willow for almost two full weeks. She had been up and down that trail at least ten times a day, every day. Of course, that was during the day, and always with her buddy, or a camp counselor (the children called them troop leaders). Joan had never been on the trail at night. And never alone.

Maybe I imagine Joan was scared because, as an adult, I believe that she should have been. I would have been terrified.

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