

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH by Barry Finlay

EXCERPT

The row of cars started again, and as he approached a park near his home, he noticed a startling sight through the barren trees. His headlights reflected on something as he turned the corner. Any faster and he would have missed the lone figure hunched over on a bench. For a moment Jake thought the individual was a drifter and concern swept over him, leaving a dull ache in his stomach. Nobody should be sitting outside as the temperature plunged, and the snow accumulated. But the troubled feeling turned the ache to churning in the pit of his stomach. The small person on the bench in a snow-covered toque had an unsettling familiarity.

Jake slowed his car and stared at the figure to confirm his fears. A horn blared, and a car swept around him, too fast for the conditions. The angry driver's mouth moved rapidly as he shot a single finger into the air. Jake barely noticed.

No, it can't be. But it was. The person on the bench was Dani's daughter, Emilie. Jake was sure of it. *Why would she be sitting on a bench in the middle of winter?* He had seen the way she dressed. She probably wore scarcely enough clothing to keep her warm on a summer evening. He pulled onto a side street and located a parking spot between two cars. He didn't bother buying a ticket to allow him to park there; this was too serious. He held his arms out like airplane wings for balance as he slipped and slid on the snow-covered icy sidewalk, rounded the corner, and peered through the white curtain to see that the figure hadn't moved. Ice pellets battered his face and bit his skin like a swarm of black flies at a picnic as he rushed to the park.

She's going to freeze out here with what she's wearing! I hope she's okay.