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Opening extract from

On the Edge

Written by

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For Sara

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Chapter 1

He's Coming to Get Us

Dillon was in the middle of a game of *Storm Fury* when the phone rang.

"Robbie – get the phone," he called.

"I'm reading," Robbie yelled back.

"I can't stop my game," Dillon shouted. "Get it!"

There was a groan, then Dillon heard his younger brother stomp down the stairs and answer the phone.

It was probably Mum checking that they were OK. Nan always came round to look after them in the holidays but she was ill. Mum had wanted to stay home but Dillon had said that would be stupid.

"Come on, Mum, you've got loads of work. Anyway, I'm 15 next week. Robbie's ten. It's not like we're little kids."

Mum hadn't been happy about it but she'd given in. So it was probably her on the phone, worried the house was on fire or something. She'd calm down when she heard Robbie.

Then a word cut through the noise of all the shooting on *Storm Fury*. The word was "Dad".

Dad?

Had Robbie really said that?

It couldn't be their dad on the phone. He wasn't allowed to contact them now. He wasn't even allowed within a mile of the house since he'd beaten Mum up so badly two years ago. Anyway he was still in that place, wasn't he? They wouldn't have let him out, would they? Would they?

Maybe Robbie had said 'Andy'. Or maybe he'd called Andy 'Dad' by mistake. Dillon had done that a couple of times. Andy had been seeing more and more of Mum and next month he would be moving in with them. And he was a nice guy so it was easy to slip up and call him 'Dad'. Andy always laughed when that happened but you could see he was pleased.

But Robbie wouldn't make that mistake. He didn't dislike Andy but he wasn't very happy about him living with them. Robbie still hoped that Dad would come back.

"He's our real dad," Robbie always said when Mum couldn't hear them.

That was probably because Robbie was younger than Dillon and couldn't really remember all the things that had happened – the rows, the fights, the mad bursts of temper. Plus, Robbie was Dad's favourite and he never hit him, not the way he hit Dillon and Mum.

Even when Dillon tried to tell Robbie what Dad was like, Robbie always shook his head. "I don't care, he's our real dad."

It was true. He was their real dad. And, nice as Andy was, he could never take Dad's place. Even Dillon knew that, deep down.

Dillon clicked PAUSE on *Storm Fury*. Robbie wasn't saying anything. He must be listening. Then there were a couple of short mumbles. Then the word "OK".

A moment later Robbie came into the room. He had a big smile on his face and he was almost shaking with excitement.

"That was Dad!"

"Our dad?" Dillon asked. Lame question.

"Of course our dad."

"What did he want?"

"He's coming to get us."