

A photograph of a window with a dark frame. The window is divided into four panes. The text "NO WAY TO RUN" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the panes. A hand is pressed against the glass in the bottom-left pane, with fingers spread. The background behind the glass is a solid blue color. The window frame and surrounding wall are dark and appear worn.

NO WAY  
TO RUN

**QUICKREADS**

JANICE GREENE



“**D**arn!” Jasmine muttered under her breath. The business card she’d been holding had slipped from her fingers and fallen under the desk. Making sure her wheelchair was locked, she pushed forward on the seat and slowly slid down to the floor. Her useless legs folded under her.

She snatched up the card and began to pull herself back onto her chair. Then she looked out the door to see if anyone was watching. She hated for anyone to see how helpless she was. But Patty and Shauna were busy with customers. And it was near the end of the day. Soon they’d be taking the watches and necklaces and earrings and bracelets

from the display cases. De Lanza Jewelers would be closed for the night.

Jasmine went back to her computer, entering suppliers' names in neat rows. She tried not to yawn. Accounting wasn't work she loved, but it paid the rent. In fact she was very grateful to have her job. Most employers wouldn't consider hiring people who were paralyzed from the waist down.

She hardly noticed when the door chimed and someone walked in. Last-minute customers were not unusual. But then she heard a sound—half-gasp, half-sob—that made her scalp prickle.

Peering through the window at the front showroom, Jasmine saw a man in a ski mask standing close to Shauna! He poked a pistol with a long extension—a silencer, she knew from TV—into the girl's ribs. Her hands shaking, Shauna opened a display case.

Jasmine stared at the phone on her desk. "Move!" she told herself. "Call 911!" But she was frozen, helpless.

There was a click as the display case opened. Then the man shoved Shauna aside and neatly swept a pile of jewelry into his backpack. But just then Patty made a slight noise as she reached under the counter. Jasmine knew exactly what she was doing. That's where the silent alarm was hidden!

The man whirled around. Patty jerked her hand away from the counter, her eyes wide with terror. He knew what she'd done! The man aimed the gun and fired. There was a muffled pop. Then Jasmine saw a dark stain spread across the center of Patty's blouse before the wounded woman crumpled to the floor.

The man turned and hurried to the door, pulling off his ski mask. But just as his face was revealed, he glanced into the back office and saw Jasmine!

For a long moment, she stared at the light blue eyes and the cleft chin in his narrow face. He stared back fiercely, and Jasmine felt as exposed as if she were naked. Then

suddenly he was gone.

Jasmine turned to Shauna. She was bent over the counter, as if holding herself up. Her body shook with sobs.

Jasmine wheeled over to her quickly. “Move it, Shauna! Go check Patty’s breathing,” she said. “I’ll call 911.”

“Her breathing?” Shauna’s voice was little more than a whimper.

“Tip her head back a little,” said Jasmine. “Then put your ear next to her mouth. Tell me if you can feel any air coming out.”

Shauna bent over Patty and did as she was told. “I can’t feel anything!” she cried. “Jasmine—she’s *dead!*” In panic, Shauna’s hands fluttered to her face.

Jasmine grabbed Shauna’s wrist. “Calm down!” she ordered. “You’re going to check her pulse now.”

Shauna pulled away. “I can’t touch her! She’s—she’s *dead*, Jasmine!”

“Get the phone and do what I tell you,” Jasmine ordered. Then she slid onto the floor and pulled herself over to Patty. The young

woman had a weak pulse, but she wasn't breathing at all.

Shauna called 911 while Jasmine began rescue breathing.

By the time the paramedics arrived, Jasmine's neck ached and her upper body was shaking with exhaustion.

Quickly, the two young men lifted Patty onto a stretcher. "Will she make it?" Jasmine asked.

"I can't tell until we have a look at her," the man nearest her said sternly. Then he noticed Jasmine's empty wheelchair and his look softened. Smiling, he patted Jasmine on the shoulder. "Good for you—you did all right," he said.

Jasmine heard the harsh wail of more sirens. Then two police officers walked in. Jasmine's heart sank. She longed to be out of the store. More than anything, she wanted to close her eyes and never look at this place again.



One officer sat down with Shauna, another with Jasmine, and the questions began. “Tell us what you remember about the shooter, Ms. Deang,” the officer said to Jasmine.

“He was kind of tall,” she said. “At least five foot ten. He had long, thin arms and really white skin. His hair was short on the sides and long and spiky on top. He wore navy blue gloves.”

The officer smiled slightly. “You’d recognize him in a line-up?” he asked.

“I’d recognize that guy *anywhere*,” Jasmine said confidently. She was certain she’d never forget that face.

Jasmine left the store three hours later than usual. Waiting for the bus in the growing darkness, she watched for the gunman. She half expected him to come around every corner. On the long ride home, she watched every new passenger who got on the bus.

The robbery replayed over and over in her mind. How surprised she was at the way Shauna and Patty had acted! Shauna was usually *bold*. She went to dances and clubs alone. She sassed impatient customers and flirted with men she liked—even if they were shopping for engagement rings. Yet Shauna had fallen apart in an emergency! It had been Patty—shy, quiet Patty—who’d been brave enough to push the alarm. Patty was afraid of birds and horses and loud noises. She wilted when customers were rude. But Patty had been the one to risk her life. It was something to think about.

“Third Street!” the driver called. It was Jasmine’s stop. As she wheeled down the sidewalk toward home, she looked around anxiously. But the street was deserted. Jasmine lived in a cottage at the back of a house belonging to a large family, the Forresters. Sometimes the noisy family got on Jasmine’s nerves. Tonight she would have been glad to hear their loud TV and barking dog. But they were off camping somewhere,



and the house was dark and silent.

As she opened the door, Spanky jumped in front of her chair, meowing loudly. Her cat was obviously outraged that she was home so late.

“I’m sorry, Spanky. I’m *sooo* sorry,” said Jasmine. For a special treat she gave him a can of tuna.

Too tired to eat anything herself, she watched while he ate. When he finished, the big cat jumped onto her lap, purring noisily.

As she stroked his fur, Jasmine began to cry. She cried and cried until Spanky finally jumped off her lap and shook himself.

“Oh, I got you wet!” said Jasmine.

Spanky gave her such an offended look that Jasmine laughed in spite of herself. Spanky was a comfort.

She wheeled though the kitchen and into the bedroom. The house was dead quiet. Wanting to hear a human voice, she phoned Ben, hoping it wasn’t a mistake.

“Hi,” she said.

“What’s wrong?” Ben demanded. He could

always tell instantly when something was bothering her.

Jasmine told him about the robbery.

“It’s like I was frozen!” said Jasmine. “The phone was right there on my desk, and I couldn’t call 911.”

“Maybe your instincts told you it was too dangerous,” said Ben. “*You* could’ve been shot instead of Patty.”

“But I was just *helpless*, Ben! I couldn’t even make a move to save her,” Jasmine cried out bitterly.

“Jasmine—just listen to what you’re saying! You gave her mouth-to-mouth!” said Ben. “You’re too hard on yourself.”

“You always say that,” said Jasmine.

“Yeah, well—you sound really tired,” said Ben. “Why don’t I come over? I’ll watch TV and stand guard while you sleep. I’ll make sure you’re safe.”

Jasmine felt slightly annoyed. “Ben, I don’t need your protection,” she said. “The police know where I live. They’ll be patrolling the neighborhood.”