

Chapter 10- Daisy

When I first started to take care of my guests, I was so scared. I remember waking up every day surprised that I hadn't had a visit in the middle of the night to screaming SWAT teams with hunky muscles and handcuffs.

OK, scared and a little excited. Doesn't that sound kind of fun?

But as time went on, and my guest list became more and more Hotel California, I realised:

Police are really stupid.

Like if you want to get caught, it's going to take more than a few really very obvious puzzles to send them to you (looking at you, Zodiac, you little minx.) And if you don't want to get caught, as long as you don't kill someone close to you... like... say... your soulmate's girlfriend... they're really not going to find you.

Tonight really demonstrates that beautifully.

I have the janitor's keycard- he left it on his desk like an idiot. The maintenance exit at the back of the parking lot has one camera. So all I really needed was a white van and a big box.

Getting out of the van with my cap on (because showing your face on CCTV makes it a little too easy) I grab the long box and perch it on my shoulder, grabbing a toy toolbox that I'd swiped from a doctor's waiting room earlier this morning because I hadn't had time to go to the DIY store to pick up a real one.

Not that it matters, no-one's going to spot that it says 'fisher price' on the side.

I swipe into the building with a satisfying bleep, and walk into the station, the box on my shoulder concealing my face from the camera. Another bleep and I'm into the darkened offices of the precinct. The only light comes from the door to the reception, where two- very grumpy and sleepy officers sit through their night-shift.

And that's it. That's all you need to break into a police station. Granted, it helps if you have a well-meaning-but-still-not-that-smart uncle who leaves his computer open when he goes to the toilet for forty-five minutes so you can look at the security plan and blueprints of the building.

I saunter over to Cole's desk. Ah, my sweet Cole, it's still covered with stickers from his last little punishment from when he kissed Eliza in front of me. Some are gone, for sure, and some are half ripped in frustration, which makes me chuckle.

I check my watch as I saunter through the darkened room. Three minutes to go. The murder wall - My murder wall stands proudly in the centre of the room, a little c-shape of Post-Its, pins and red string. Really, though, what is the string for?

I look over the collection of a small portion of my guests, all displayed in a collage of beauty. He's figured out more than I thought he had- the strand of my hair has a note on it in permanent ink saying 'Eastern European - hair insert?' and I have to fight the urge to correct him that they're called extensions.

He's also figured out that I killed the priest for the women he had tied up and tortured. As I think about him, I can feel my face pinch, my nostrils flaring. Should have killed him slower. He died for over three hours. Kept talking to his mother.

Fucking mama's boy.

He's cottoned on to the self-help book that I crushed Li with had something to do with why she was killed. But not quite that her book glorified self-harm and suicide pacts. And not that her book was gifted in thousands to schools all over the country.

As I look her over, I remember the warm satisfaction I got when the first of her ribcage cracked under the weight of book number 154. Of course, it took nearly two hundred more to kill the bitch.

The other three, however - the teacher, the farmer and the social worker are all gathered together in the middle of the board with an enormous pink post-it note with the word "WHY?" in ink.

Good man, Cole. Figured out I'm not some psycho who goes around killing whoever I want. If that were the case, Eliza would most definitely be worm food by now. Curse a damn moral code.

I check my watch as I hear movement and talking in the direction of the front office, and walk back to Cole's desk. Timing this right has to be perfect. I freeze, my finger poised on the on-button.

As the night shift greets the early morning 3am starters, I press. The laptop doing its cheerful little bing-bing-bing as laughter rings out from the crossover. The next shift will see the light of the laptop through the frosted door and assume that it's been on all night.

I plonk my bottom in his chair with a spin of glee. I've had to watch him put his password in only once. He types with one finger, so breaking in is easy as pie. The only issue is that his calendar is blank- he does love his hard copies, but he's taken his Filofax (isn't he to die for?) with him. Which, given he's doubled his security at his house, poses some issues.

Sighing at Cole's oblivious intelligence here, I close his computer and leave him a little reward for thwarting me, taking a post-it I write 1043822) on the paper and pop it on his laptop.

Unless he's a complete moron, that should answer one of his minor questions.

Leaning back, I sigh. I miss him. Surrounded by his desk, the stickers I gifted him, the little marks of his frustration. I miss his smell. I look at my phone - he'll be up, he's always up.

It doesn't get a full ring before he picks up, his greeting not even a little hushed.

"Hi Detective," I purr. I know my voice cloaking app is hiding my voice on this phone, but I like to pretend he can hear me for me.

"Heartbreaker," he states, and I can hear rustling in the background as he gets up, probably pulling on trousers over the tight black boxers he wears to bed.

Great.

Now I'm wet.

"Only for you, Cole." I say back. "Did you miss me?"

"Like a plague."

I laugh, I wish he could hear me laugh for real at his joke- the AI must sound tinny to him, creepy. But he's just not ready for the truth yet.

"Why are you calling me, Heartbreaker?"

I spin on his chair, running my fingers over his desk gently. "Thought you could do with a hand. You don't seem very close to getting me behind bars."

In truth, I'm pretty damn close to being behind bars. Geographically. They're just two doors away.

"I'll get you, don't you worry." I hear a door close as he lets it shut behind him.

I smile as I stand and walk towards Uncle M's office. "Oh, I hope so, Detective."

A key on his side of the call. He's coming straight to the precinct. Straight to me, like a bee to a flower.

"Why do it, Heartbreaker? Is it some control thing? Or is it about being famous- do you like having superfans?"

Like someones just flipped a switch, I darken. He's pretty damn close to pissing me off right now, and now is not a good time for us to be having our first fight.

"You're talking about that asshole online? Give me some fucking credit, Cole."

I reach Uncle M's office and sit down at his desk as I take a breather while Cole starts his car.

"So you're not after fame and fortune."

I give a snort of annoyance, focussing instead on the task at hand: breaking into Uncle M's computer. Of course, Uncle M, sweet little Uncle M doesn't remember passwords so well and so he has them stuck to his computer screen.

"No. Not I'm not digging for fame. What about you? After a serial killer to make your career, Detective?" I say as I type in the password he's labeled as "Open It" on the outside of the screen. It's my name, which is adorable.

And, like magic, there's the precinct intranet.

As Cole drives on the other end of the line, he mutters, "Just want to make the world a better place."

I pause my clicking through Uncle M's computer to answer, probably too genuinely. "Who's to say I'm not doing the same thing?"

I type in the security codes that are pasted to the desk around me and there I am, in the personnel files, looking straight at the man who's voice whispers in my ear.

"Is that what you think, Heartbreaker?" I almost roll my eyes. I don't really like this Cole. The one who hasn't yet admitted that he loves being the cat to my mouse.

He's boring me. I turn my attention to the screen in search of whatever made him leave the armed forces.

Cole Maddox, 38 - officer in the army. Left ten years ago... blah blah... know all this... honourable discharge. FUCK.

"I have my truth, Detective. You have yours." And with that, I hang up, letting him stew. I have a job to do. It takes twenty minutes for him to get to the precinct, fifteen without traffic.

I click through the files furiously, trying to find what happened in bloody Rhaduat. Anything, any information on what happened... and just as I'm about to hurl the machine through the window, I see one small note right at the bottom:

"Mandatory Counselling with Hariet Ingleman." And I release a breath of calm. Ah, Hariet. It's going to be a pleasure to get to know you.

It's not as quick as I wanted. It might take me another night to find out exactly what happened in Rhaduat but I know I'm on the right path. I have seven minutes left before Cole arrives to track my phone call, so I shut down Uncle M's computer and go to my last stop of the night:

Eliza's desk.

Hers is clear, clean and tidy. Everything as it should be. Even the password: her own birthday. Narcissist.

Four minutes left.

Her emails are predictable, yoga, promotions, Cole (bitch), this case that she needs evidence in...

People always forget that when you delete an email, it's not really deleted. I can hear the hum of Cole's car arriving in the carpark when I find it in the trash file:

Sent: AJ Winkleman.

Date: 12th September

Subject: Clarification ASAP

Eliza,

I need confirmation on the thing. Is he sure? If I run with this and it turns out it's not the case, it could ruin me. Make sure. Because if the Heartbreaker is a woman, that could make my fucking career.

Also, talked to my editor, and he agreed to the money you want.

See you tomorrow,

Andy.

Oh, Eliza.

My sweet little mole.

Got you.