

Being alone can kill you, but not me.

I sit quite still, slow my breathing and look at the four walls surrounding me, studying them as if for the first time. I'm not in a big space. If I tried, I could touch the two side walls at the same time, but what's the point. The measurements are an irritating irrelevance. Instead, I study the texture and surface of the walls. Not a colour identified in a Dulux colour chart, or even Farrow and Ball with their ridiculous shade descriptions, these walls are a dirty white or a hopeful grey bearing the scars of a thousand souls with shattered dreams.

The surfaces are pock marked with short names and dates from previous inhabitants, desperate to be remembered, if only in long forgotten graffiti. I won't be adding my name to the wall. I have made my mark in the outside world and will continue to live in memories, albeit those select few who have crossed me. Apparently, I can't be trusted with anything sharp that could carve my name into the wall, or perhaps, into somebody, including me. It's for my own good, I was informed. Those same self-righteous guardians of the law and moral standards seem to think there's a limit to doing harm and I have fulfilled my quota. But it's only a matter of opinion and I have always upheld my duty to only do harm to those who truly deserved it.

I shake my head to remove these negative thoughts. If I am to survive here, I must remain positive and clear headed. My isolation, although allegedly for my own good, remains a strong weapon in my armoury. My superiority and self-awareness are the tools I need to thrive, and I now need to draw a mental map of my strategy. Pacing the area, I discover that the space allows me to take ten short steps along the length of the room. Thus, I will be able to exercise, breath and practice mindfulness to a post graduate level. I realise that my goal now is to grow from this experience and not to let this situation beat me. Defeat has never been an option in my career.

I have always been ready and able to meet a challenge. I survived an abusive childhood; I honed my skills on the streets of south London and joined the organisation where I moved through the ranks using whatever methods would get the job done. I found in the gutters and underbelly of the Capital every low life scum that ever lived. A slimy, evil group that existed in the shadows, in places people don't talk about at parties. Where policies, designed to promote politicians, didn't touch the consciousness of the perpetrators and had no effect on crime rates. This dark world was my finishing school, the villains became my contemporaries, for a while at least, when they were useful.

Others were caught, tried and punished, pathetically accepting and always deserving their fate. But not me. I was always one step ahead. I was well trained and had accepted accolades for my methods and achievements. I realised, earlier than most, that you must forensically understand the system and use it. The law exists to help you, if you embrace it. And if not, then circumnavigate it. Focus on the end result.

I invested in my career, polishing every job, relishing every challenge, to such an extent that promotion boards became more of a nuisance than a hurdle. I seized opportunities and developed contacts to ensure I was always one step ahead of both sides.

But there is always one slip, one breach of trust, one fibre of DNA that escapes the most fervent quality control. Corruption exists on many levels and irritatingly, two ranks above me was a duplicitous cop who needed a fall guy and had the power to make that happen. I could almost have been impressed with the thoroughness of his stitch up, if I hadn't been the target.

And so it was that my career and my life has been condensed into a small grey box in a large soulless institution. I may be in a prison, but my mind is free, and I have twenty years to plot and perform my perfect revenge.

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