

The Turning Shadows

Chapter Three

“So, let’s see it,” Agent Lewis said impatiently.

Hainey clicked a couple of buttons, and the center of the smart board resolved to play the cellphone video. The whole thing lasted only a few seconds.

“So can we see it at normal speed now?” Agent Lewis quipped. Shooting a glare at the tech, he questioned, “What’s the point of speeding up the video?”

The technician raised his shoulders, swelling in indignation, but before he could you speak, Detective Beck interrupted, “That was normal speed. The girl moves like a chetah on speed.”

Agent Lewis’ eyes widened a bit at that. He again traded glances with his partner, whose only response was to shrug his shoulders.

Detective Miles studied both agents, noting that the younger, white agent Kirkland had yet to say a single word. The agent’s hair was a bit shorter, closer cropped than typical FBI style, and while his suit did much to conceal it, Miles could see the physique underneath was lean and well-muscled. She let out a little snort, which captured his attention. She smiled, firm in her conclusion that this Agent Kirkland was former military.

As their gazes met, Agent Lewis asked, “So where is Miss Beldam now?”

“She’s in an interrogation room, handcuffed to a chair,” Detective Beck replied tersely.

Agent Lewis’ eyes narrowed. “And why, after clearly saving the life of potential victim number three, would she be treated in such a manner?”

“When uniforms arrived on the scene, they found her apprehension of the suspect to be a little suspect,” Detective Beck said.

The technician Hainey snorted. “Good one,” he said.

“So, they found it necessary to bring her in for questionings?” Agent Lewis said, bringing them back on point.

“Not initially,” Beck said with some hesitation.

Detective Miles continued for him, “One of the uniforms attempted to pat her down.”

Agent Lewis' eyes enlarged, and his mouth formed a circle as he silently mouthed, "Oh."

"She requested a female officer to do the pat down," Miles added, "but none were on scene yet, so the officer insisted."

A sour expression crossed Agent Lewis' face, like he had just cracked open an expired milk carton, and the contents had failed the smell test. He hesitantly asked, "And what is the officer's condition?"

"He's at the emergency room, having his broken wrist set and..." Detective Beck answered.

A semi-suppressed laugh, which came out as a turbulent chuckle, interrupted Beck. Detective Miles saw with astonishment that the sound was coming from Agent Kirkland. He had not said a single word since exiting the elevator, but now his eyes were watering fiercely, his cheeks were flushed red, and he was losing the struggle to maintain his composure.

Ignoring his partner, Lewis continued, "Was Miss Beldam or anyone else injured during her arrest?"

Detective Miles continued to watch the struggling Kirkland, so after a moment, Beck said, "No. After taking down Officer Hudson, Miss Beldam seemed content that she'd made her point, and offered no further resistance."

Agent Lewis nodded, shooting a look at Kirkland, who had was no longer chuckling, though his face remained red, and small, intermittent tremors suggested he was still laughing hard on the inside.

"Well," Lewis said, "If it isn't too much bother," though his tone suggested that the amount of bother did not concern him, "we would like a word with Miss Beldam."

The technician Hainey gave Beck a little salute as he stood and motioned the agents down the hall where the interrogation rooms awaited. As the two detectives and their FBI visitors walked away, Hainey hit several more keys. The video faded away and was replaced by a newly snapped mugshot, which he studied alone. The name below the picture said, "Dailyn Beldam." Hainey had brought up her file, listing her hometown, the high school she'd graduated from, the college she'd attended; all the basic information was there, but he didn't believe a word of it. Her backstory was completely normal, a simple, black coffee with no cream, no sugar, no nutmeg, no nothing. A story that vanilla didn't fit the girl in the picture, not even a little.

Hainey's mouth watered as he studied her picture and pondered. His response wasn't the lust of the flesh; it was the allure of the mystery. The girl was definitely a head-turner, he

thought. High cheekbones and a narrow nose highlighted an oval-shaped face. Her hair looked blonde, maybe dirty blonde. She wore it in tight dreadlocks in the photo, making it hard to tell for sure. Her eyes were a piercing, blue-grey color that reminded Hailey of an afternoon sky, just before a storm.

As she had just been arrested, stormy might well have described her mood as well as her eyes. This girl was ice.

As he studied the photo, Hailey quietly said,

“Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I’ve tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.”

Content with his musings, Hailey cut power to the smart board, swirled around the remnants of his coffee, and left the squad room empty as he returned to his office, where his far superior computer would allow him to work far more efficiently.