

The Turning Shadows

Chapter Four

Long, fluorescent bulbs in couplets bathed the hallway to interrogation in an unnatural off-white, light that made healthy individuals appear sickly. As the detectives and agents walked down the hallway towards interrogation, Detective Miles summoned up the boldness to throw out a question.

“So, Agent Lewis, what is your relationship with the suspect?”

Lewis continued forward, looking straight ahead as he walked.

“What makes you think I have any relationship with the suspect, Detective?”

“Well, for starters, you knew her name.”

Detective Beck stutter stepped and snorted out loud. He’d missed that point.

“Hainey showed you pictures of the first two victims and the intended, third victim,” Miles stated flatly, “but,” she said, taking on a quizzically tone, “he never showed you Beldam’s picture or volunteered her name.” After a pause, she added emphatically, “You already knew it.”

Agent Lewis nodded, but continued walking without replying.

“That, plus the security lock on her file suggests your interest in this investigation is in her, not the killer she apprehended tonight,” Miles added.

Again, Lewis only nodded and continued walking.

They came to a pair of doors along the left side of the hallway. The first led to a viewing room with a large, one-way viewing window. The second opened into the adjoining interrogation room. Detective Miles opened the first door and with her left hand, she directed the agents inside. With her right, she removed a manilla folder from a hanger on the other door.

“If you don’t mind, agents,” she said, “before you interview the suspect, I have a couple of questions of my own to ask her.” Turning to Beck, she waved into the open door and said, “You stay with the agents, while I have a word with Miss Beldam.”

Beck nodded and followed the agents into the viewing room. They had already taken positions in front of the mirror, so Beck followed suit, gazing through the mirror at the scene on the other side.

The sparsely decorated room featured a rectangular table in the center. Two simple, steel armchairs sat on the side of table nearer the window. A single chair sat on the other side. Beck looked at the girl in the chair and found her staring back at him intently, as if the one-way mirror in the window did nothing to conceal his presence. He took an involuntary, half-step backwards and a cold chill shot through him as the girl's eyes visibly narrowed at his motion. He opened his mouth, likely to say words inappropriate for Sunday school, when the door moved, and Dailyn Beldam turned her gaze from him to it.

Detective Miles entered the room, focusing on the manilla folder in her hands. She sat down slantly in one of the empty chairs, still studying the file. After a moment, she set the file down on the table and shifted her position and her gaze upon the only other person in the room.

"Dailyn Beldam," she said conversationally. "May I call you Dailyn?"

Beck saw the girl sitting opposite his partner smile, and her blue-grey eyes lost the intense edge that just unnerved him.

The girl began to raise her hands, but matching handcuffs halted their ascent. She wiggled her fingers instead, saying, "I'd offer to shake hands with you, detective, but...." Her voice trailed off.

Miles shrugged. "I am sorry about the cuffs, but assaulting a police officer is a serious offense in the Big Apple."

The girl's expression soured a bit, but her eyes remained soft, betraying what Beck thought might be humor. "That was his own fault," the girl said rapidly. "I requested a female officer, and he refused, and then..." the girl paused. "Well," she said in a huff, "No man puts his hand where he did without consent, badge or not." She glared at Miles, turning her head slightly to the side, either in question or challenge.

Before Miles could reply, the sound of synthetic jazz interrupted them, and the detective scowled and reached into her jacket pocket. Beck knew his partner was internally berating herself for forgetting to silence her stupid phone.

Detective Miles looked at the screen, swiped once, and quickly raised the phone to her ear. Beck couldn't see her expression as she sat facing the opposite direction, but her body language betrayed intense agitation.

“Detective Miles,” Beck heard her say. Her only other words over the next thirty seconds were “Yes, sir,” spoken repeatedly and finally with resignation.

As Miles dropped her phone back into her pocket, the agents beside Beck slid by him to the door and through it. Beck suspected they knew both the caller and content of the message Miles had just received. The interrogation-room door opened, and Agent Lewis said from the hallway, “If you wouldn’t mind excusing us, detective, we need a word with Miss Beldam before she is released.”

Detective Miles stood and waved one hand as if to say, “Whatever,” and paced quickly through the door, walking immediately into the viewing room to stand next to Beck.

Beck shot a glance towards his partner, seeing the angst in her expression. Before either could speak, motion inside the room grabbed their attention. The younger agent, Special Agent Kirkland had entered the room, and with an excited cry of “Jimmy!” the girl leapt from her chair, danced over the table, and wrapped up the agent in a hug.

A sudden jangling of metal on metal pulled Beck’s attention back to her chair, as matching sets of now-open handcuffs came to a halt, dangling down with the other end still affixed to the chair’s armrests.

“What the...” Beck began, but Miles put a single finger over his mouth, blocking the escape of the profanity within. Her attention was not on her partner; however. She craned her neck, listening intently to the occupants of the interrogation room.

The appearance of Special Agent Kirkland had transformed the girl completely. The interrogation room may as well have been a bar or club based on her reaction.

The taciturn special agent allowed a smile of his own to escape in response to Dailyn Beldam’s enthusiasm.

Still holding her by the shoulders, he said, “It’s great to see you again, Day.”

Patting his shoulders with a broad smile, she replied, “How long has it been?”

Kirkland released her shoulders, lowering his hands to his sides. “Since Quantico?” He sighed. “What’s that been, six years?”

She nodded, “That sounds about right, I’d say.”

Their revelry was interrupted, and both looked towards the doorway as a voice said, “Agent Kirkland, would you please introduce us?”

Kirkland pivoted, making room for the senior agent to enter. With a deferential bow of his head, he said, “Dailyn, this is Agent Tyler Lewis.”

She reached out and grasped his hand, shaking it like they were meeting at a dinner party.

“Pleased to meet you, sir.”

Lewis returned the shake and smiled at the young woman somewhat reluctantly, as if unable to suppress the impulse.

“And you, Miss Beldam,” he replied.

She nodded, and as she did, a little bit of the laughter left her eyes, replaced with something more calculating.

“What can I do for you, Agent Lewis?” she said. “I presume you didn’t come all this way just to bail out a former agent, did you?”

Lewis’ smile broadened. “Actually, we did. My office received a call from 1 Observatory Circle, informing us that we needed to get over here and run a little interference. We, of course, we’re most happy to oblige.”

Kirkland added, “We might also have a little piece of evidence in the car from a missing-person’s case.”

Beldam smiled and nodded. “I would be happy to offer any assistance I can provide, of course.”

Agent Lewis turned and exited the room, making his way back down the hall to the squad room and elevators.

From the viewing room, Detective Miles watched as Dailyn Beldam took Special Agent Kirkland’s left hand and pulled him along behind her. They looked like a couple of mid-twenty-year-olds about to step onto a dance floor and nothing at all like.... Miles huffed.... like whatever they were.

As she approached the doorway to the interrogation room, Beldam looked back at the one-way window, and Miles could have sworn, she saw the girl wink.