

7.

She had stopped on the way to work to buy more cigarettes and some throat lozenges, a contradiction, but she found it impossible to function and refrain from getting moody unless she had her cigarettes. The minute she had walked into the building at work, she had been told that the Chief Superintendent had wanted to see her to be briefed on the case, so she had spent two whole hours going over all the aspects of the case with him. Although it took two hours away from what time she could have spent preparing for when the criminal profiler arrived, she was glad that at least she had a boss who bothered to take an interest.

As he watched Inspector Jane Wilson leaving his office, his eyes ran over her backside. She was a good looking woman, very attractive, but more importantly she was his best inspector. He had never seen anyone with such talent for investigation; he had seen inspectors twice her age with twice the experience, yet only half of her ability. No one could question her statistics; she had always caught the criminals. This time though he was concerned about her. Although she always took her work seriously, she seemed to be taking this specific case very personally, and he was not sure if that was a good thing. Maybe once this case was over; he would try to convince her to take a holiday, some time away from Scotland. She had family in the south of England, some time in London could do her good, get her to relax a little. He could tell she seemed tired, and when she was briefing him she had not seemed quite herself. He couldn't help but worry about her; although she always came across as a confident woman, she also had the vulnerability that made men want to look after her. However, what he had seen had given him the impression that she didn't seem too interested in the attention men showed her.

She was sitting in her office looking over the case files one last time before the Profiler arrived. Her throat had gotten increasingly worse over the morning, and she was struggling not to cough every time that she spoke. She sat up as someone knocked on the door, WPC Kennedy stuck her head in the door before she had time to say come in. "I brought you some coffee ma'am, and the man's here now, would you like me to send him in?" Her thick Irish accent was distinctive amongst the flutter of thick Glaswegian that was buzzing in the background from the other offices. "Thanks Kennedy, you can send him in." She couldn't hold back her coughing and she was struggling to stop as the WPC turned around to leave her office. "If you don't mind me saying, ma'am, you don't sound too well. Maybe you should go home after the meeting, curl up in bed with some hot chocolate and Sleepless in Seattle on DVD." She managed a smile to Kennedy before she disappeared behind the door. She meant well bless her, however she did not think being curled up in bed feeling sorry for herself and watching some unlikely, and quite sickening, love story would make her feel any better. If anything it would probably make her feel much worse.

When she looked up she looked right at someone she never thought she would have to see again. She did not appreciate it when her past caught up with her, be it memories of her family or something else. The man standing in front of her was the worst kind of something else. "Hey Jane." Two words alone had never made her feel that sick to her

stomach as these did when they came from him. “When they say they were going to send the best profiler they had, I really did not expect it to be you.” The ice in her voice surprised even her, as she quickly looked away from him refusing to look into his warm brown eyes that she knew would make it impossible for her not to want to be in his arms. “You really shouldn’t smoke you know, it’s not good for you.” She let the cigarette smoke rest between her lips before she blew it in his direction, measuring him, top to bottom. He was a very attractive man, she could not deny that. She used to find him irresistible. He was still just a man though, and it was going to take a bit more than a nice body and a cute face to make her fall again. “I know. Smoking kills. See, says right there on the packet. However, if smoking does not kill me, I will just have to try and find something else. Besides, since when do you care?” Her morbid joke did not seem to be to his amusement, as she studied his face whilst putting out her cigarette in the black glass ashtray standing next to her computer screen. “There is a copy of the case file on the desk in front of you.” She gestured towards the corner of her desk closest to where he was sitting. “There have been three victims this far, all female, all brunettes. The first girl was abducted and killed 18 weeks ago...”

She hadn’t stopped until she had gone through the whole file, not as much for his sake but for her own. When reading it out loud the details sometimes made more sense to her, plus it saved her from having to make polite conversation with the man who broke her heart. She lit another cigarette as she spun around on her chair staring out the window whilst she waited for him to finish reading. “I want to see the body” She spun back around on her chair and looked into his eyes, “I assume you want me to come with you.” She regretted it the moment she had said it, this was work, she should never let anything personal get between her and doing her job properly. Whilst he was there it was her responsibility to assist him and do everything possible to help him understand and assess the case and their killer. She picked up her car keys and cigarettes from the table whilst nodding at him to get up and follow her. As he picked her jacket up holding it out for her so she could slip it on she had a flashback to happier times. He would always hold her jacket or coat when she was putting it on to go out, he would open all the doors, pull out every chair. He was intelligent, interesting, athletic, kind... And he had left her. All the good things had been wiped out the day he did. She took the jacket from him, and then stormed out the door before he had time to open it for her.

“Hey, Kid.” Dr Kelly had called Jane ‘kid’ since she could remember, at first because she was young and new to the job, it had kind of just stuck since then. Just as Dr Kelly was about to go over the autopsy the door opened again and Detective McCullough appeared in the doorway, with his coat pulled up to his ears and a dark brown hat he looked like Kevin Costner in one of the scenes out of *The Untouchables*. He gave the other two a nod of recognition before turning to her and smiling “Would have been here sooner if you had asked me to come with you in that cute little car of yours, gorgeous.” She rolled her eyes whilst turning away from him, “I would have done, but I didn’t want to disturb you in the middle of talking to your endearing fans.” When they had left the headquarters, James as usual had been surrounded by three or four of the WPC’s who were always lusting after him. She had told one of the other detectives to get him to meet them at the morgue, she couldn’t stomach running the risk of having to actually talk to one of those supposedly

intelligent and independent police officers who at the sight of James turned into giggling teenage schoolgirls. “Detective James McCullough, this is Criminal Psychologist Dr. Michael Dean. He has been sent up from Scotland Yard to assist us in creating a profile of our killer. Dr Dean, Detective McCullough is my partner on this case.” That’s it, keep it professional. She didn’t even look at Michael when introducing him to James, the less time her eyes would spend wandering over his attractive features the better. She turned to Dr Kelly gesturing for him to start going over the autopsy with them. “The girl, as the previous victims, has marks around the ankles and wrists indicating that she has been tied up, judging by the marks by some sort of a plastic tie-wrap. I will not bore you too much with all the details, but she had a fairly light lunch, consisting of pasta and salad, she had not eaten anything since lunch of the day she was killed. Unlike the first two victims, this girl has not been sexually assaulted, so I am guessing the killer was forced to get rid of her before he had time to fulfil sexual intercourse with her. There was no alcohol in her blood; she was around 6weeks pregnant so I would guess that to be the reason why she was not drinking anything but lemonade. Although she hadn’t eaten much, the dosage of Xanax administered by the killer must have been given to her under the assumption that she was already intoxicated and so she did not remain unconscious for as long as our culprit anticipated her to be. This one put up a fight, forcing the killer to tighten his hands around her neck till the girl suffocated not giving him the chance to inject a lethal dose of Xanax, as he did with the other victims. The good news however is, she scratched our killer, and we should be able to get DNA off the tissue sample we have retrieved from underneath her finger nails. You still have to find whoever did this, but when you do we will have the forensic evidence to put him away.”