

Fire, something David Stryker admired the most. It was beautiful, yet dangerous. One of the most destructive forces but so necessary in many things. For so long, he planned on utilizing this force of nature and as he gazed off into the night, watching flames that consumed a dilapidated warehouse, a broad grin formed. *Who needed that rotten old building anyway?* He thought. *Curse this city, keeping hazards like that around. It's called NEW York after all. Destroying the old would make it so much better.*

After a few moments of admiring his work, he heard a menacing growl. He took a few steps away after witnessing the source of it. It was a dog, and a massive beast it was. He couldn't place the breed but he didn't want to stay and find out. With its fur bristled and its teeth bared, this was one seriously pissed off animal. Stryker backed away slowly but the animal wouldn't have it. It dashed towards him, teeth sinking into his arm as he tried to defend himself from the attack. He collapsed from the weight of the animal. Fearing for his life, he whipped out his switchblade with his free hand and plunged it into the beast's side. Thankfully, it released him, and ran off, blood dripping from its wound. Panting heavily, he stood up and examined his arm. Luckily, his leather jacket prevented the teeth from penetrating the skin. The thing probably had rabies. He tensed as he heard sirens in the distance. He now had more than enough reasons to leave.

Two Days Later...

The arsonist had struck again and the media was driving the police department up the wall. There were more deaths this time than the latest warehouse incident. Only one person had come forward, saying they had a detailed description of the criminal. James Rafferty was in charge of interrogating this witness and, in truth, wasn't expecting anything damning. Witnesses had a knack for leaving out details or giving conflicting stories if there were more than one person who came forward. He sauntered into the break room and poured himself a cup of coffee, anticipating a long day. He lounged against the counter, giving his mind a rest for a few precious moments. The moments were too few as one of the other officers strode into the room.

"Thought I'd find you here. Man, you better do something about that caffeine addiction." he chuckled.

"Oh please, Curt. No such thing as a caffeine addiction." Rafferty scoffed.

"Yeah...right. Listen, your witness is waiting for you."

"Right, right. I'll be there shortly." he muttered in response as he set his drink down then proceeded to the interrogation room where a woman had patiently waited for him. He could tell that she was exhausted and stressed. He wanted to get this over with as quickly as he could. "Alright, so Mrs...Kelly Schmider?" he asked as he attempted to read the form on the desk.

"Kali." the woman corrected.

"Sorry, the officer who filled this out probably has bad handwriting."

"...It's mine."

Now this was awkward. “So, you say that you saw someone you believed committed the arson the other night? What was your reason? Did you see him do it?”

“He was standing there just...smiling. Who smiles when a building is burning down?”

“So, you didn't see him do it?”

“No, I hadn't. I was happening by when I saw it.”

“Can you describe what he looks like?”

“Average height. Probably around five foot eight or nine. Caucasian. I'd say he's between 35 and 45 years old. His hair is short and light brown.”

Rafferty nodded as he wrote down his own notes on the notepad left by a previous officer. “And where were you in relation to him? Did he see you at all?”

She took the notepad and pen from him, ripped out a blank sheet of paper, and hastily scribbled on it. “This is the warehouse. This is a few buildings away and right about where he stood.” she said as she marked a little 'x'. “I was here.” she said as she marked another small 'x'. “He was paying too much attention to the fire to notice me.”

“Okay. And what happened then?”

“He left. I didn't see where he had gone, I was...preoccupied.” she murmured in hesitation.

“Preoccupied?”

“I was attacked by someone. I didn't see his face but he cut me. I ran for my life.”

“You didn't...call for an ambulance?” Rafferty asked skeptically.

“I had enough excitement for the night. I was distraught and wasn't thinking clearly.”

“But you were thinking clearly enough to get the information on this arsonist..?”

It was then that she stood, placed her hands on the table, and leaned forward menacingly. Rafferty knew he could easily take her on his own, but he still couldn't help but feel a chill run down his spine when she spoke. “When someone murders someone close to you, someone you love, you don't forget their face. Nothing will make you forget.”

“But you don't know-” he protested until she cut him off.

“I know a monster when I see one. I guarantee it.” It was a few more excruciating seconds before she composed herself. “Are we done here?” she asked coolly.

“Yes, yes you can leave. We'll call if we need you again.”

“I'm sure you will.” she said as she left the room.

Rafferty breathed a sigh of relief. She certainly was intense and sure of herself, but her story seemed as sketchy as her chicken scratched, make-shift map. The pieces didn't seem to make any sense to him. This woman just 'happened' on an arson and was able to get a good look at a man who was a few yards away but not a good look at an assailant who was not even within a foot of her? There had to be more to this. Perhaps getting the team out to this area and expand their search might uncover a few pieces to this puzzle. He gathered his notes and the make-shift map then left the room, his desire for a cup of coffee now stronger than ever.