

A Rose in the Dark

By Inforiel

The moment she had walked in, I'd known she'd be the death of me. It was one of those fog ridden nights; anyone in their right mind would've stayed indoors, minding their own business. Just like I had been doing, kicking back behind my desk at the office – Until she had knocked and come in, sweeping away the moisture and replacing it with a summers breeze of blooming roses.

The memory was crisp and clear as if it were an hour ago, how she stepped across the threshold dressed in a long red dress, her eyes not sharing the soft smile that was on her lips. No, she had seemed distraught and before she spoke; I knew she meant business and nothing else. But she was used to getting what she wanted and her trade had taught her all the fine workings on how her body could be used for that without an actual effort.

My gut had told me not to listen, my body that she was a foxy lady though her heritage was clearly draconic... But my mind, in the end, had won. Simply logic, a client or I wouldn't be paying rent. And she carried numbers. Stacks of numbers on bills as pretty as her face. Numbers that would turn my own spot of red into green at the end of the month – So I had invited her to take a seat, poured myself a drink and offered her the same. I learnt she was a songbird by trade, down at the Meridian.

Thinking back, it was a far too sweet song she had sung. One where her manager had ties with the darker sides of town and had killed all in the name of money, threatened her and her associates... Oh yes, it left a nagging sensation that the puzzle had already been laid down and glued in place for me.

The fancy payment had been as good as mine a mere week later, but I took the time to follow up my hunches and dig a bit further – try and find what laid beneath the pretty picture presented to me. I should've realized it sooner, but I found traces suggesting there was more to her than she'd said. The pretty lady in red was more than just a face, more than just a pretty voice, but just who was she?

She had called me the next Friday and after a brief discussion, she was invited over to finish the contract the following day. Which brings us to today... Not even half an hour ago, she strode into my office again, brightening it with her presence. We talked briefly and I tried to sneak in some careful questions to obtain new leads, all too curious. I was no feline, but this time it seems curiosity may kill more than just the cat. The only warning I had gotten that she caught on was that comment she tossed across her shoulder when she had turned for the door.

“You should've stopped digging.”

Some unseen force had wrapped it's way around me at that point and the next moment, with a feeling of tickles racing across my body and confusion fresh in mind, I found myself on my desk, miniscule as she uttered the next sentence.

“All you've uncovered is your own grave, dear detective.”

I raced into hiding as I heard her turn and approach the desk, rummaging across it. I heard the soft scrape as she hoisted my mug up, carelessly spilling the aged bourbon inside it before a massive hiss came just behind me, a cigarette being snuffed out. The death of me, she'd be..