

Cigarette smoke drifted upwards and was swept around the room by the slowly rotating fan blades. The blonde woman sat upright in the bed, leaning on the backboard as she smoked. She looked around, taking in the sights and smells of the cheap motel room. The male next to her finally stirred, grabbing the old television remote control from off the bedside table. Clicking the TV on, the news channel filled the screen, presenting the stories of the day. Text scrolled across the bottom of the screen as the news caster spoke.

"Police are investigating yet *another* homicide case where the corpse is missing several of its vital organs. This is the eighth case this year, and officials still have no leads to who is responsible for these deaths. If anyone has any information concerning these cases, they are asked to contact the proper authorities." The female reporter spoke in an even tone, barely covering the unease she felt about the happenings in the city. The blonde woman slipped her legs out from the ratty sheets, picking up her lingerie from the floor, as well as her dress, green fabric with a revealing cut to it. As she began to slip her clothes back on, she placed her purse on the edge of the mattress.

"It's bullshit. Probably just some gang shit. C'mon babe, let's have some more fun." The man remarked, scoffing at the news as he turned the TV off. He leaned over and pulled her over to him, forcing her to let go of her dress. His lips found her neck and travelled down her arm, as he caressed the soft curves of her body.

The woman thought back to the night previous, and why she was currently involved with a complete stranger in a bad part of town. She had visited a bar, a total dive, in the low-end area of the city, for a simple purpose, really. All she needed was a meal. She sat alone at the bar, sipping cheap vodka from a grungy glass and observing the rowdy men that crowded the bar, majority watching the provocative dancers on the stage. Her violet eyes scanned the room, looking for a possible candidate for that night. She settled on a man, perhaps somewhere in his late 20s or early 30s, who sat further down the bar. Sliding off the bar stool, she strode over to him, fire burning in her eyes, as she sat on the seat next to him.

"Hello there, handsome. Mind if I join you for a drink or two?" She purred. The man scanned her up and down, before replying.

"Sure thing."

Drink after drink was poured, and drink after drink was consumed by the two. After who knows how many drinks, the man leaned over and kissed the mysterious woman who had joined him, a sloppy, drunken kiss. The taste of cigarette smoke washed over him as his tongue pressed into her mouth. Pulling apart, she looked at him from underneath her long eyelashes.

"You wanna get a place babe?" He slurred.

"Why not?" She answered, as the man grinned and dropped more than enough money to pay for both his own, and his unknown companion's, drinks. Stumbling out of the bar, the two took a cab to a motel, where she told him that she would wait outside as he went to rent a room for the night. The man, not thinking straight due to excessive alcohol consumption, made his way to the front desk and took the most inexpensive room they had, at the back of the building. As he walked to the room with his prize, he took a few moments to truly take in the figure of the woman. She wasn't overly curvy, but she certainly had quite the attractive shape to her body, and the way she walked, with such purpose in each step, drove him mad with desire. Her blonde hair cascaded down her back in soft, curving waves, and a gentle hand tightly grasped her purse. Her dress was a beautiful shade of green, the neckline scooping low to reveal perhaps a bit too much of her chest. The second the door was closed, they both kicked their footwear to the side and began to quickly attack each other, passion driving their movements.

Lady Luck was on the female's side that fateful night, as there was practically no one else residing at that motel. However, the male's luck was about to take a sharp nosedive into the ground.

The woman gently shifted herself out of her strange lover's arms, stifling a morning yawn as she pushed him down, pinning him to the mattress. He grinned, thinking about how erotic it was that she was taking charge this time. She ran one hand down his chest, distracting him as she reached for her purse. A glint of a silvery object caught the male's attention, and his grin spread wider, eyeing up what he thought to be handcuffs. In her hand was indeed a pair of handcuffs, and she swiftly looped them through the openings in the headboard of the bed, clicking them shut around his wrists. Her hand slid back to her purse, and she returned with a simple mouth gag. She slipped it on him, keeping him from talking. Just after the gag was on securely, she paused, as if in thought.

"Do you mind if I, perhaps, get something to eat before we continue?" She asked, her voice a hushed whisper. The man furrowed his brows in thought for a moment, before nodding.

"Try not to scream."

The man's eyes widened as he saw her flick open a stiletto knife, with a simple but elegantly designed blade and hilt. The knife bit into his chest, eliciting a muffled scream from deep within his throat, as a hungry look flashed in her eyes. She dragged it down towards his hips, the flesh being torn apart by the blade. The man coughed and sputtered, as his breathing became more and more laboured as life slipped away from him. Removing some choice organs from the now-deceased male's torso, she delicately placed each one in a plastic bag. Swinging her legs off of the bed, she finished redressing, and gathered up her belongings as she prepared to leave. An old, moth-eaten blanket was taken from the worn-down cupboard and flung haphazardly over the cooling corpse. Applying a fresh coat of lipstick, she gently kissed his hand, leaving a new calling card for the police to find. She

slipped her heels on and walked out the door, blowing a kiss back towards the room, almost taunting the police to come after her.

The Mantis strutted away from the scene of the crime, as she made her way back to a dreary apartment she called home, looking forwards to a proper meal at long last.

"It really is a pity..." She sighed, carefully cutting servings of flesh from the organs and seasoning them with her preferred herbs. Pausing, she picked up a bottle of ibuprofen pills, and tipped it into her hand, letting a few pills roll out. Quickly swallowing them, she returned to her task of preparing a proper meal. "He was quite skilled with his hands. I suppose then, maybe I should have eaten those too, but they looked so callused and rough. That would probably render the meat quite tough and unsavory. No matter – there's always more where he came from."