

Decent

Yasmine Beverly Rana

CHARACTERS:

COREY DAY: Attractive Mid-Twenties Female

BRAD SMITH: Early Forties Police Detective

TIME:

The Present. Dusk. Summer

PLACE:

A Motel Room in New Orleans

The room is small, dark, filthy. Piles of takeout food cartons cover the floor and bed. Clothes are everywhere. Newspapers and newspaper clippings cover a desk in the center of the room. The room is sparse with only a desk, double bed, bureau, and small television set. COREY DAY is sitting at the table cutting out newspaper articles. She is disheveled. She looks as if she hasn't slept in days. The curtains in the room are closed. There is little light, except for a slight neon light streaming in from across the street. There is quiet.

COREY: (*clipping articles*) One, two, three, four... Poor girls. No more. It should stop now.

(A knock at the door. Corey doesn't move. We hear the knock again. Corey still doesn't move. Brad enters. He is wearing a suit and appears quite put together.)

BRAD: Oh, you are a bad girl! Leaving the door unlocked in such a dangerous place.

COREY: I don't like keeping people out.

BRAD: Some people should be kept out.

COREY: Like you?

BRAD: (*puts his hand over hers with the scissors, preventing her from clipping*) Quit for a while.

COREY: (*pulling his hand away*) If you don't like it, don't watch.

BRAD: You'll have more pages to clip tomorrow. Two more today.

COREY: Where?

BRAD: River.

COREY: It should've stopped by now.

BRAD: The bodies emerged from the water.

COREY: Like a baptism.

BRAD: (*laughing*) Yeah! Never thought of it that way, but sure. All we needed was a preacher.

COREY: Did she look like she was just baptized?

BRAD: She can't come back from where she is.

COREY: Where is she?

BRAD: Either one of two places.

COREY: And you know which one it is.

BRAD: I have a pretty good idea.

COREY: Just because of how she got a hot meal?

BRAD: Selling oneself puts one into a bad place.

COREY: Because good places are reserved for only the decent.
And she wasn't decent?

BRAD: I saw the body.

COREY: So did I.

BRAD: But I saw it first. When it was fresh. I was assigned to handle the evidence. So I touched it, and felt it. I know.

COREY: You saw all the bodies?

BRAD: It's my case.

COREY: You had to touch them all?

BRAD: They're all mine.

COREY: Do you like that?

BRAD: Sure. Who wouldn't?

COREY: I saw her differently, when I had to identify her in that cold, gray room.

BRAD: That must have been difficult.

COREY: No. "Yes. That's my sister." That part was easy. It's reading and clipping all these articles. That's hard.

BRAD: Don't do it.

COREY: I have to.

(Brad tries to force her to stop. Corey holds the scissors up to his neck. He backs off.)

COREY: I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it.

BRAD: You had better watch yourself.

COREY: I know. But I have to do this. It's not just my sister anymore. It's all these others. There are so many It's so much work.

BRAD: But it's all the same story. They just change the name. Hell, they don't even have to change the face!

COREY: The faces do look the same. Different tones and different features. But it's all the same. Hardened, disillusioned, pained.

BRAD: We all have choices.

COREY: Some of us don't.

BRAD: You didn't choose your sister's profession.

COREY: I could have.

BRAD: But you chose not to. So you're still here, sittin', talkin' to me, and she... isn't.

COREY: All these women...

BRAD: Every day. One, maybe two of these women are found, naked, bound, bruised, cold, kinda like ice.

COREY: And what do you do about it?

BRAD: You should leave this place.

COREY: Not yet.

BRAD: It could take weeks, months, possibly years before we know.

COREY: I can wait.

BRAD: No one's waiting home for you?

COREY: Not anymore.

BRAD: For Christ's sake! You hadn't spoken to your sister in five years!

COREY: That doesn't matter! She's gone! And I'm still here, alone, without her!

BRAD: She left you a long time ago.

COREY: Why aren't you doing your job?

BRAD: I'm doing the very best I can.

COREY: By sitting here? Talking to me?

BRAD: Work is work. What do you want anyway?

COREY: From whom?

BRAD: Him.

COREY: It's a him?

BRAD: Yeah. I know it's a him. So what's going on in that pretty little head of yours? What kind of torture plans are you making for the monster once you get your hands on him?

COREY: I haven't thought about it.

BRAD: Come on! I find that awfully hard to believe. Sitting in this steaming crap motel room, all day and night. Never leaving. Reading and cutting out these articles about all the girls. Memorizing each detail, each piece of evidence. Going to sleep with their faces dancing around in your head every night. What are you going to do to him once you get him?

COREY: Nothing.

BRAD: Nothing?

COREY: That's up to you.

BRAD: I've got no say. I just gotta catch him.

COREY: Why is that so hard?

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BRAD: He's good. He's real good. Very fast. Quick! It's like one moment he's there and the next... snap! Gone! Poof! Into the air. Like magic!

COREY: Is he even real?

BRAD: Oh, he is. I can smell it. It's all there. Flesh and bone.

COREY: But no one's ever seen him?

BRAD: Never.

COREY: How then?

BRAD: Like I said, magic.

COREY: You seem to read him very well.

BRAD: Oh, I have to. It's my job.

COREY: You have to get close to him?

BRAD: Under his skin.

COREY: Aren't you afraid of getting too close?

BRAD: I don't have time to worry.

COREY: You have time for me. I'm sure the other victims had family members too.

BRAD: I like you. You're different than the others.

COREY: How?

BRAD: They rant and rave and cry and beat themselves up about their dearly departed sisters or girlfriends or mothers. You don't.

COREY: I can't. I don't feel enough to cry.

BRAD: You want her back?

COREY: I want him.

BRAD: But you have no plans of punishment?

COREY: It's the eyes. I want to see his eyes.

BRAD: And look for what?

COREY: Something sinister, not human, unreal.

BRAD: You're still wondering if it's a real human being. Man, flesh, and bone. Blood pumping through the veins! And everything that goes along with it! You can't believe it's real.

COREY: I don't want to.

BRAD: Leave it to me. Let me do my job, catch him, bring him to you, so you can see for yourself. Maybe I'll even let you touch him.

COREY: You can't even touch him.

BRAD: You don't know me very well, then. I am very good at my job. A case becomes mine and I live it. Every second of the day, I see it all.

COREY: I see it too.

BRAD: Cause you got your nose in those newspapers.

COREY: I can't help it. I have to know everything. They wanted to live. They made promises to themselves, maybe even to some higher power.

BRAD: Didn't make a difference.

COREY: Not in her life, or death.

BRAD: She wanted to go home to you.

COREY: How did you know?

BRAD: She put up a great struggle, even to the very end for a purpose. It wasn't to stay here.

YASMINE BEVERLY RANA

COREY: That's what they told me. She fought him. For herself.

BRAD: For you. She scratched his skin away.

COREY: How do you know?

BRAD: Evidence.

(Corey gets close to Brad.)

COREY: I like being close to you. I feel like I'm close to him.

BRAD: You want to be close to him.

COREY: I have to be. I have to see.

BRAD: Nothing to see.

(Corey touches Brad's skin. He pulls her away.)

COREY: I just want to feel.

BRAD: Nothing to feel.

COREY: You're cold.

BRAD: Stay back.

COREY: I have to feel him.

BRAD: He's not here.

COREY: You've felt him. You've felt his work. What he left behind. You've felt his skin under my sister's fingernails.

(Brad's nervous and walks away from Corey.)

COREY: I'm sorry.

BRAD: I am scared. Of him. Of gettin' too close.

COREY: How close are you? Why was your skin so cold, and so hard?

BRAD: Corey . . . go back to your clippings.

COREY: I want to feel again.

(She tries to touch his face. He gently pulls away.)

BRAD: I don't want you to.

COREY: Why are you so afraid now?

BRAD: Don't look at me!

COREY: *(She gently touches his face.)* It's different.

BRAD: No! Everything's the same! It's just like when we first met! When you came down to this place and I was your only friend! There's no one else here but me.

COREY: Who are you?

BRAD: I'm what's right.

COREY: The eyes are different.

(She follows him. He backs away.)

BRAD: I'm what's true. I'm just and lawful. Good. Pure. Decent.

COREY: Is he here?

FADEOUT