

We are very proud to share a story, written collectively by the Creative Writing Club. Thank you to Ash B, Emily W, Isla M, Thomas L for sharing their work with us. Are you sitting comfortably?

Another case. Charlie Violet stepped forward through a grandiose archway onto the chequered marble black-and-white tiles. Laying sprawled over a mahogany chair, the limp body of Guy McMan was still fresh- discarded like litter on the side of the road.

"Hey, Purple." Captain Mauve came up next to them, using the nickname Charlie had had since their first day on the police force.

"Any news?" Charlie inquired.

"You might want to check in with Beige for that one."

"I'll get to that, thanks."

They strode over to the body where Dave Beige stood, jotting notes on a small spiral-bound notepad. He glanced up at Charlie, acknowledging their presence before immediately retreating to his notes to retrieve a page.

Eyes still trained on the pages, Beige began, "Just got the results back from forensics- definitely a poisoning," he tapped nonchalantly on a small shot glass that lie next to the chess board on the table Guy McMan had died at with the tip of his pencil, eliciting a sonorous hum.

"Arsenic?" Charlie enquired.

"Cyanide."

"Huh, that's a new one."

"We're going to wrap it up pretty soon, why don't you do a final sweep of the place?"

"Good thinking."

Little by little, people began to filter out whilst Charlie scanned the room. After a while of snooping, Charlie drifted back to where the body had been. Guy's seat laid vacant as the body had been transported to the morgue but the pieces that had served him his final game of chess remained. Guy seemed to have been playing on the black side.

Charlie was gazing quizzically at the board before them when they noticed something peculiar: all the pawns had been extracted from play and banished to the tableside, surrounding one of the two kings (specifically, the one Guy had been opposing) who had suffered a similar fate.

From what little Charlie knew of chess, this was a curious- and indeed impossible- occurrence. For a moment, they pushed the thought aside, instead heading forth towards a regal set of double doors that guarded the adjacent room.

An abrupt, ominous ambiance radiating from the room struck Charlie as they were met with piles of files and damaged paperwork strewn across the floor- but one particularly stuck out to them. At their feet laid a file; inscribed with words that seemed to glare back at them. One page lay open to them, entitled Captain Mauve and below was a subtitle: Corruption. Files scattered the floor as they dropped from Charlie's hands.

They felt sick.

One night had passed since their haunting discovery and the agency office had taken on a sinister air. Questions ricocheted around their mind like a swarm of disgruntled bees. Mauve? Really? This was the man who had accidentally called them "Purple" instead of "Violet" on their very first day. This was the man who had promoted them through the ranks, the reason Charlie had made it so far. As their head ached with thoughts, more and more anger and confusion dredged up from the very pits of their mind- one searing question bubbling up to centre stage. Was captain Mauve responsible for the murder of Guy McMan? Surely not, but even still, with McMan having dirt on the captain, the presence of a motive was undisputable.

Struggling to evict the idea that trapped them in their own mind like shackles, Charlie sighed a breath of relief as Dave Beige approached.

"Did you put this on my desk?" He asked, producing a small black pawn from his pocket.

Charlie staggered back slightly. "Give that to me," they demanded.

Beige complied and passed the pawn, which Charlie held at eye level.

"Is it just me or is this a bit..." Beige searched for the word, "Unsettling."

"Yeah, that's one word for it." Their hand dropped to the side. "I'll take this to forensics," they lied.

"Beige! I need you in my office." Just the distant sound of Mauve's voice sent ripples tension of through Charlie's body as they dropped the pawn into their pocket. Without a moment of hesitation, Beige began mindlessly to his office, and at that moment, Charlie understood something vital. Pawns, they thought, we are all his pawns. Holding out their arm, Charlie bought Beige to a halt and looked him in the eye.

"Don't- I'll go."

Before Beige could disagree, Charlie had already set off towards the door, its only window wearing closed blinds.

Hand gripped firmly around the handle, they opened the door with more vigour than intended and let it slam closed behind them.

"Ah, Purple" Mauve's tone was jovial, He spoke like an old friend, "you aren't who I was expecting." Mauve seemed to ponder something for a moment. "Why don't you sit down, play a game of chess? Maybe have a drink?"

It was as if Mauve wanted them to know. As if he was planning something. He pulled up two shot glasses from beneath his desk and set them on the table.

"That's not what I'm here for." Charlie wasn't going to play games.

"You know, don't you?" A baleful grin spread across the traitor's face like blood soaking into cloth.

Charlie nodded gravely.

"Bad move, Violet. You shouldn't have said that," he scolded.

Mauve's hand twitched for his holster and in the same moment, Charlie grasped for the shot glass set up beside them. In one fell swoop, Charlie bashed the glass over Mauve's head knocking him to the ground and sending shards of glass slicing through the air. That was it. The gun would have Mauve's fingerprints and combined with a motive he stood no chance. Charlie slumped back into the chair and pulled out their phone, shards of glass still falling from where they were embedded in their hand. Red clung to their palm, Charlie was unsure if it was Mauve's or their own blood that stained their fingers. Taking care as to not further damage their hand, they typed in a number. They had a report to file.