

LAUREN
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INT. SOCIETY HILL MAGAZINE - DAPHNE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON acrylic nails. A pair of hands folded together. They belong to Lauren, who sits before Bud, distraught. She wipes a tear.

LAUREN

Daphne was a force of nature. I can't believe she's dead.

BUD

How long did you know her?

LAUREN

Seven years. I was the office manager when she came on as editor.

BUD

And you'd say you were friends?

LAUREN

Best friends.

BUD

Then you want to explain what your nail marks were doing on her body?

Lauren stares at him, stunned.

LAUREN

Daphne had her demons. A temper was one of them. Last Friday I had to pull her off the copy editor over the font for our "Best of City" cover. She put a dent in his wall.

Which makes Bud casually look around the room as they talk. Bud's gaze eventually lands on a small BRONZE AWARD near Daphne's desk.

BUD

Outbursts like that must have caused a lot of tension around here.

LAUREN

It goes with the territory.

Bud picks up the award. CLOSE ON the base of the award -- a thin line of epoxy glue. We follow Bud's gaze to a DENT in the side table below the award. And then to a faint SCRAPE along Daphne's desk. All over --

(CONTINUED)

BUD

You mean having an abusive boss?

LAUREN

I mean high society. Daphne was the hardest working editor I ever knew, and she was completely devoted to this magazine. She transformed it from a tiny, failing rag into the king-maker of Philadelphia.

~~STOP~~

Bud smiles politely, then for the first time notices a small SURVEILLANCE CAMERA peeking out of a corner in the ceiling.

INT. M.E.'S OFFICE - AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

Megan is fully scrubbed up and goggled. It's autopsy time. Peter keeps his distance observing. Megan stands over the body, peering inside it, her hands working off-screen as she removes organs.

MEGAN

No water in the lungs, no physical signs of drowning.

PETER

So how did she die?

MEGAN

Don't know yet. But I am seeing major kidney damage. Parathyroid disease. All four glands are enlarged.

PETER

And that's bad how?

MEGAN

The body thinks it doesn't have enough calcium so it starts pulling it out of the bones, causing osteoporosis and --

She looks at him. Peter shrugs. Like he knows?

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Hypercalcemia. Symptoms include paranoia, anger and mood swings. Daphne wasn't the monster you think she was. She was sick.

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ETHAN

The owner of this hair wasn't the killer. The owner's been dead for over a century.

Megan stops in her tracks.

MEGAN

Come again?

ETHAN

The hair's coated with old shellac to preserve its form. Lovers' locks were often braided into Victorian jewelry.

MEGAN

(beat)
Jewelry?

ETHAN

Yeah. Kind of romantic, huh?

INT. POLICE STATION - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Megan watches Bud and Lauren through the glass --

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

START

CLOSE ON the bagged hair sample, which Bud patiently places on the table before Lauren. She chews on her vintage pendant nervously --

BUD

The hairs belong to a pair of late nineteenth century earrings that you bought online with your credit card six months ago.

Bud pushes the evidence over to Lauren -- your move.

LAUREN

So? Daphne let me use her pool all summer.

Bud shoots Megan a covert look of frustration. The door opens. In Megan comes. She stares at the ROSE GOLD BRACELET on Lauren's wrist.

MEGAN

May I see your bracelet?

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Lauren hesitates, then offers her arm. Megan reaches for it -- and slides it up Lauren's arm faster than Lauren can yank her arm away. Displacing the bracelet reveals a BURN MARK on Lauren's skin. Megan inspects it, triumphant.

LAUREN

I burned myself in the kitchen.

MEGAN

No you didn't.

EXT. ZIMMER HOME - BACKYARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Daphne opens the gate to greet Lauren, who enters angrily.

MEGAN (V.O.)

You visited Daphne Monday morning. You were upset over the competition for the new magazine column. ~~Seven years of service overlooked. You fought.~~

Lauren exchanges heated words with Daphne, who backs up as the argument escalates into shoves. A chair topples, a purse falls, and Daphne loses her footing as she tumbles backwards -- into the pool.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Daphne stumbled and fell back into the pool. That's when you saw your chance to pay her back.

Beside the pool stands a small SPACE HEATER with a protective front grill. In her fury, Lauren grabs it and throws it at Daphne.

Daphne lifts her left hand to block it just as it hits the water. SPARKS fly. The old lights along one garden wall flicker as Daphne is electrocuted.

MEGAN (V.O.)

You stood there and watched Daphne die. Then you must have realized your fingerprints were on that heater.

Lauren reaches in to retrieve the heater, and gets shocked herself. More sparks fly. Her earring falls into the water.

MEGAN (V.O.)

When you reached for it you shocked yourself.

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Lauren inspects the contact burn from her bracelet. She won't make that mistake again. She yanks out the space heater's power cord, then pulls the heater out. She sees her earring floating in the water and grabs that too.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Once the electricity was off you pulled out the heater, retrieved your earring, then went to the back of the house and opened a window to make it look like someone had broken in.

WE HEAR a WOMAN'S HEELS -- the same heels we heard in our opening scene. As Lauren walks away from the scene --

MEGAN (V.O.)

You thought you'd left nothing behind. You were wrong.

STRANDS of HAIR from her earring float beside Daphne's body --

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Lauren looks at Megan, astonished and defeated. Megan examines the bracelet.

MEGAN

Rose gold contains copper. Copper conducts electricity. It left an electrothermal burn on your skin.

CONTINUE

Lauren lowers her head.

LAUREN

She promised she'd promote me. Year after year. She promised me!

Bud pulls Lauren to her feet to cuff her.

BUD

Lauren Marshall, you're under arrest for the murder of Daphne Zimmer...

INT. M.E.'S OFFICE - AUTOPSY ROOM - EVENING (NIGHT 2)

Megan stands beside Daphne's body. Remember that BLUE FOLDER containing Megan's "Society Hill Magazine" article? Megan holds it in her hand as she regards Daphne for the last time.

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