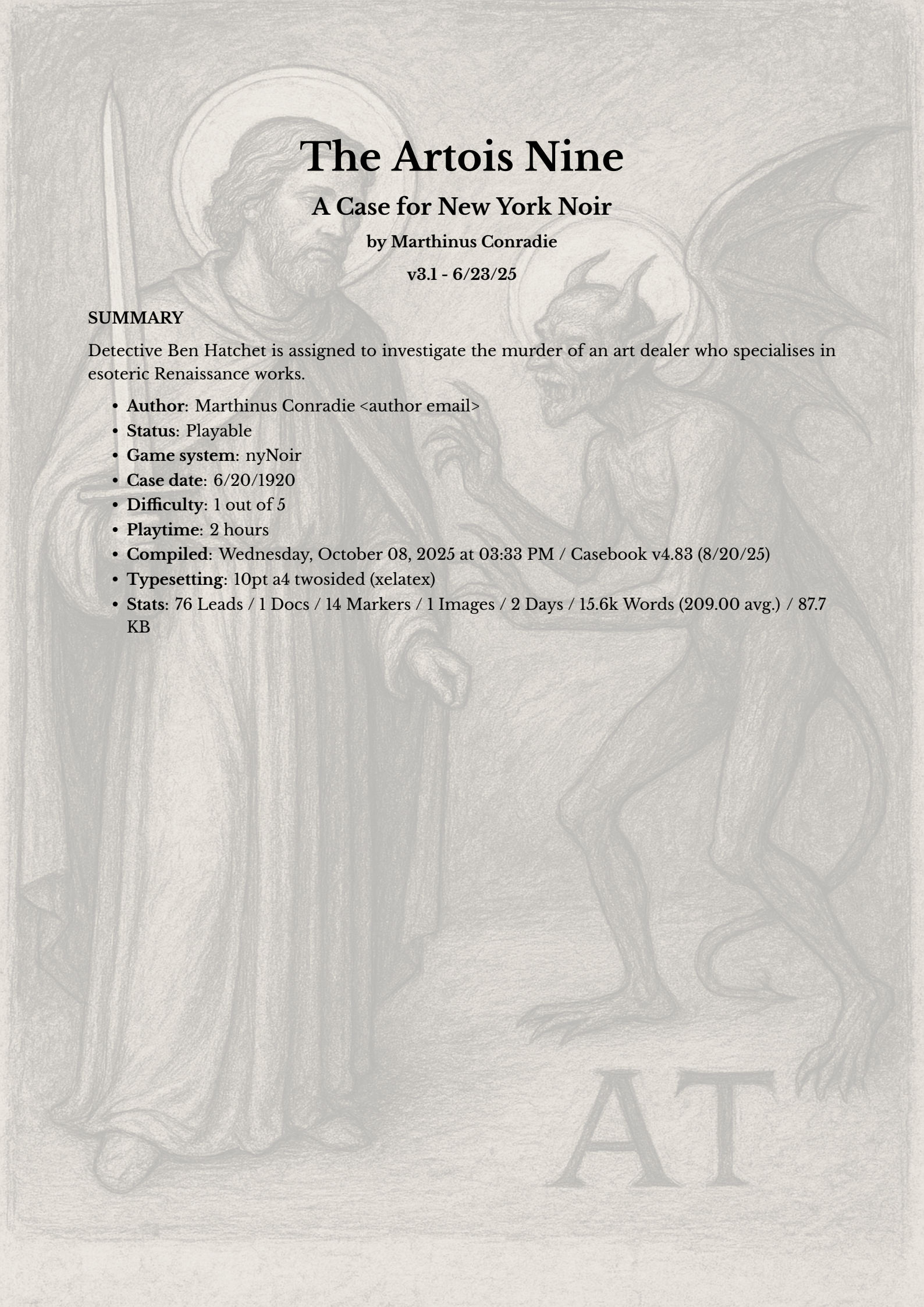


A faint, artistic background illustration. On the left, a saint with a beard and halo, wearing a long robe, holds a sword. On the right, a devil with horns, wings, and a tail, also with a halo, is depicted in a crouching, shouting pose. The title 'The Artois Nine' is centered over the saint's figure.

The Artois Nine

A Case for New York Noir

by Marthinus Conradie

v3.1 - 6/23/25

SUMMARY

Detective Ben Hatchet is assigned to investigate the murder of an art dealer who specialises in esoteric Renaissance works.

- **Author:** Marthinus Conradie <author email>
- **Status:** Playable
- **Game system:** nyNoir
- **Case date:** 6/20/1920
- **Difficulty:** 1 out of 5
- **Playtime:** 2 hours
- **Compiled:** Wednesday, October 08, 2025 at 03:33 PM / Casebook v4.83 (8/20/25)
- **Typesetting:** 10pt a4 twosided (xelatex)
- **Stats:** 76 Leads / 1 Docs / 14 Markers / 1 Images / 2 Days / 15.6k Words (209.00 avg.) / 87.7 KB

AT

Table of Contents

Front Matter	1	4-0020	26
Cover Page	1	4-0174	26
Table of Contents	3	4-0407	26
Instructions	5	4-2656	27
Log sheets	6	4-3847	27
Day One	9	4-4194	28
Introduction	9	4-4668	29
Evening of Day 1	11	4-5008	29
		4-5044	29
Day Two	13	4-5640	29
Introduction	13	4-5671	29
		4-5820	30
LEADS	15	4-5994	30
1	16	4-5997	31
1-1861	16	4-6491	31
1-5029	16	4-7978	32
1-5194	16	4-9100	32
1-5860	16	4-9737	33
1-5876	16	4-9923	33
1-7595	16	5	34
1-9431	16	5-0998	34
1-9971	17	5-1768	34
2	18	5-2244	34
2-1142	18	5-2331	35
2-1193	18	5-3666	35
2-1914	19	5-4581	35
2-4772	19	5-5115	36
2-5816	20	5-6596	36
2-5973	20	5-7246	36
2-5995	20	5-7712	37
2-7145	20	5-8922	37
2-7333	21	5-9707	37
2-8505	21	6	40
3	22	6-3655	40
3-0160	22	6-4804	40
3-0962	22	6-8902	40
3-4570	22	7	41
3-4862	22	7-0527	41
3-5806	23	7-0547	42
3-6476	23	7-4809	42
3-6872	24	7-5838	44
3-7042	24	7-7082	44
3-7205	24	7-8245	44
3-8490	24	7-8820	45
4	26	8	46

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

8-0598	46
8-1095	47
8-1224	47
8-3475	47
8-6841	47
8-9210	47
8-9869	48
DOCUMENTS	49
Document 1	50
END	51
Conclusion	51
Questions	52
Final Scoring	54
Postscript: Behind the Scenes	55
Full Walkthrough	56
HINTS	57

Instructions

To play this case you will need the v3 base document set from New York Noir (<https://www.nynoir.org/downloads>):

- **Quick Start Rules (start with this!)**
- White, Yellow, and Reverse Directories
- Map Atlas w/ interleaved Neighborhood Guide
- Rulebook, Research Guide, and Navigation Guide
- A Case Tracking Sheet, Daily Log Sheets (one for each day), and a Campaign Log Sheet. Print these out; the rest can be used digitally (copies may be included in this casebook).

Looking up Leads

- Use the table of contents at the start of this casebook to look up leads.
- Remember that looking up a lead that has no entry does not cause time to pass, neither does re-reading a previously visited lead.

Tracking Time

This case unfolds over multiple days:

- At the start of each day use a new Daily Log Sheet and record the day #, date, and day of week.
- On the top row record the starting time for the day.
- Keep track of every lead you visit and the time of each visit.

Events

At the start of each day you will schedule an **evening event** that triggers at a specific time:

- Record this in the **Scheduled Events** section at the bottom of the current day's Daily Log Sheet.
- When you reach or pass this time, finish any in-progress action and then go to the event lead.
- Typically, this evening event will let you know whether to end your current day immediately, or whether you must enter **overtime** in order to find certain markers first.
- Whatever the case, you will find instructions on what to do in the evening event.

Alternative Flextime Mode

Flextime mode is an optional way to play for those who dislike having to track the passage of time:

- Continue to record each lead you visit but ignore all time tracking instructions during the game and do not bother track your current time.
- If you encounter text asking you what time of day it is, simply pick a time of your choice between the day's start time and evening event time.
- When you are ready to end your day, just read the **evening event** lead.
- Flextime mode reduces bookkeeping, but also tension; it will not otherwise reduce the richness of your experience.

Hints

There is a hint section at the back of this casebook:

- Consult a hint if you are having trouble finding a required marker that must be found before the end of the day.
- Consult a hint if you encounter difficulty working with fingerprints, criminal histories, or codes and ciphers.

Investigative Resource Points

You will occasionally receive *Investigative Resource Points (IRP)*.

- IRP can be tracked at the bottom center of your Case Tracking Sheet.
- IRP accumulate throughout the case, and you will have multiple opportunities to spend them.
- At the end of your case any unspent IRP will positively impact your score and reputation.

Wrapping-up

After the last day of your case ends, you will proceed to a conclusion section, but you will have a final opportunity to resume searching for leads without any time limit.

TIPS

- This is just a sample case.

NEW YORK NOIR - CASE TRACKING SHEET

Case Name

MARKERS

A1 A2 A3

B1	B2	B3
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
13	13	13
14	14	14
15	15	15
16	16	16
17	17	17
18	18	18
19	19	19
20	20	20
21	21	21
22	22	22
23	23	23
24	24	24
25	25	25
26	26	26
27	27	27
28	28	28
29	29	29
30	30	30
31	31	31
32	32	32
33	33	33
34	34	34
35	35	35
36	36	36
37	37	37
38	38	38
39	39	39
40	40	40
41	41	41
42	42	42
43	43	43
44	44	44
45	45	45
46	46	46
47	47	47
48	48	48
49	49	49
50	50	50
51	51	51
52	52	52
53	53	53
54	54	54
55	55	55
56	56	56
57	57	57
58	58	58
59	59	59
60	60	60
61	61	61
62	62	62
63	63	63
64	64	64
65	65	65
66	66	66
67	67	67
68	68	68
69	69	69
70	70	70
71	71	71
72	72	72
73	73	73
74	74	74
75	75	75
76	76	76
77	77	77
78	78	78
79	79	79
80	80	80
81	81	81
82	82	82
83	83	83
84	84	84
85	85	85
86	86	86
87	87	87
88	88	88
89	89	89
90	90	90
91	91	91
92	92	92
93	93	93
94	94	94
95	95	95
96	96	96
97	97	97
98	98	98
99	99	99
100	100	100

C1	C2	C3
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
13	13	13
14	14	14
15	15	15
16	16	16
17	17	17
18	18	18
19	19	19
20	20	20
21	21	21
22	22	22
23	23	23
24	24	24
25	25	25
26	26	26
27	27	27
28	28	28
29	29	29
30	30	30
31	31	31
32	32	32
33	33	33
34	34	34
35	35	35
36	36	36
37	37	37
38	38	38
39	39	39
40	40	40
41	41	41
42	42	42
43	43	43
44	44	44
45	45	45
46	46	46
47	47	47
48	48	48
49	49	49
50	50	50
51	51	51
52	52	52
53	53	53
54	54	54
55	55	55
56	56	56
57	57	57
58	58	58
59	59	59
60	60	60
61	61	61
62	62	62
63	63	63
64	64	64
65	65	65
66	66	66
67	67	67
68	68	68
69	69	69
70	70	70
71	71	71
72	72	72
73	73	73
74	74	74
75	75	75
76	76	76
77	77	77
78	78	78
79	79	79
80	80	80
81	81	81
82	82	82
83	83	83
84	84	84
85	85	85
86	86	86
87	87	87
88	88	88
89	89	89
90	90	90
91	91	91
92	92	92
93	93	93
94	94	94
95	95	95
96	96	96
97	97	97
98	98	98
99	99	99
100	100	100

D1 D2 D3

E1	E2	E3
0	0	0
0	0	1
0	1	0
0	1	1
1	0	0
1	0	1
1	1	0
1	1	1

F1 F2 F3

	G1	G2	G3
1	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	0.00	0.00	0.00
11	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	0.00	0.00	0.00
15	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	0.00	0.00	0.00
21	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	0.00	0.00	0.00
23	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	0.00	0.00	0.00
26	0.00	0.00	0.00
27	0.00	0.00	0.00
28	0.00	0.00	0.00
29	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	0.00	0.00	0.00
31	0.00	0.00	0.00
32	0.00	0.00	0.00
33	0.00	0.00	0.00
34	0.00	0.00	0.00
35	0.00	0.00	0.00
36	0.00	0.00	0.00
37	0.00	0.00	0.00
38	0.00	0.00	0.00
39	0.00	0.00	0.00
40	0.00	0.00	0.00
41	0.00	0.00	0.00
42	0.00	0.00	0.00
43	0.00	0.00	0.00
44	0.00	0.00	0.00
45	0.00	0.00	0.00
46	0.00	0.00	0.00
47	0.00	0.00	0.00
48	0.00	0.00	0.00
49	0.00	0.00	0.00
50	0.00	0.00	0.00
51	0.00	0.00	0.00
52	0.00	0.00	0.00
53	0.00	0.00	0.00
54	0.00	0.00	0.00
55	0.00	0.00	0.00
56	0.00	0.00	0.00
57	0.00	0.00	0.00
58	0.00	0.00	0.00
59	0.00	0.00	0.00
60	0.00	0.00	0.00
61	0.00	0.00	0.00
62	0.00	0.00	0.00
63	0.00	0.00	0.00
64	0.00	0.00	0.00
65	0.00	0.00	0.00
66	0.00	0.00	0.00
67	0.00	0.00	0.00
68	0.00	0.00	0.00
69	0.00	0.00	0.00
70	0.00	0.00	0.00
71	0.00	0.00	0.00
72	0.00	0.00	0.00
73	0.00	0.00	0.00
74	0.00	0.00	0.00
75	0.00	0.00	0.00
76	0.00	0.00	0.00
77	0.00	0.00	0.00
78	0.00	0.00	0.00
79	0.00	0.00	0.00
80	0.00	0.00	0.00
81	0.00	0.00	0.00
82	0.00	0.00	0.00
83	0.00	0.00	0.00
84	0.00	0.00	0.00
85	0.00	0.00	0.00
86	0.00	0.00	0.00
87	0.00	0.00	0.00
88	0.00	0.00	0.00
89	0.00	0.00	0.00
90	0.00	0.00	0.00
9			

H1 H2 H3

I1	I2	I3
----	----	----

J1 J2 J3

K1 K2 K3

L1	L2	L3
1	1	1
1	2	1
1	3	1
1	4	1
1	5	1
1	6	1
1	7	1
1	8	1
1	9	1
1	10	1
1	11	1
1	12	1
1	13	1
1	14	1
1	15	1
1	16	1
1	17	1
1	18	1
1	19	1
1	20	1
1	21	1
1	22	1
1	23	1
1	24	1
1	25	1
1	26	1
1	27	1
1	28	1
1	29	1
1	30	1
1	31	1
1	32	1
1	33	1
1	34	1
1	35	1
1	36	1
1	37	1
1	38	1
1	39	1
1	40	1
1	41	1
1	42	1
1	43	1
1	44	1
1	45	1
1	46	1
1	47	1
1	48	1
1	49	1
1	50	1
1	51	1
1	52	1
1	53	1
1	54	1
1	55	1
1	56	1
1	57	1
1	58	1
1	59	1
1	60	1
1	61	1
1	62	1
1	63	1
1	64	1
1	65	1
1	66	1
1	67	1
1	68	1
1	69	1
1	70	1
1	71	1
1	72	1
1	73	1
1	74	1
1	75	1
1	76	1
1	77	1
1	78	1
1	79	1
1	80	1
1	81	1
1	82	1
1	83	1
1	84	1
1	85	1
1	86	1
1	87	1
1	88	1
1	89	1
1	90	1
1	91	1
1	92	1
1	93	1
1	94	1
1	95	1
1	96	1
1	97	1
1	98	1
1	99	1
1	100	1
1	101	1
1	102	1
1	103	1
1	104	1
1	105	1
1	106	1
1	107	1
1	108	1
1	109	1
1	110	1
1	111	1
1	112	1
1	113	1
1	114	1
1	115	1
1	116	1
1	117	1
1	118	1
1	119	1
1	120	1
1	121	1
1	122	1
1	123	1
1	124	1
1	125	1
1	126	1
1	127	1
1	128	1
1	129	1
1	130	1
1	131	1
1	132	1
1	133	1
1	134	1
1	135	1
1	136	1
1	137	1
1	138	1
1	139	

M1 M2 M3

N1 N2 N3

01 02 03

P1 P2 P3

Q1 Q2 Q3

R1 R2 R3

S1 S2 S3

T1 T2 T3

U1 U2 U3

V1 V2 V3

W1 W2 W3

X1	X2	X3
----	----	----

Y1 Y2 Y3

Z1 Z2 Z3

Date(s) Played, Duration, Final Score, etc.:

DEMERITS

REPUTATION

A large grid consisting of 4 rows and 20 columns of small squares. The grid is divided into four equal sections, each containing a 4x5 sub-grid of squares.

CULTURE

OTHER

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

OTHER TAGS

TRACKS

[illegible]

DOCUMENTS

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	
29	
30	
31	
32	
33	
34	
35	
36	
37	
38	
39	
40	

NEW YORK NOIR - DAILY LOG SHEET

Day#

Day of Week

Date _____

[illegible]

Day One

Introduction

9 AM - Thursday, October 12th, 1933

“You’re kidding, right?”

My heart plummets when my station chief shakes his head. “Sorry, Ben, but you’re familiar with... *esoteric matters*, and you’ve met the victim.”

“Familiar?” I spit the word out. “Sir, all I know is there are some weirdos out there with weird beliefs.”

My station chief rests both hands on his pasta-loving gut, and I smell cigars on his breath. “Hell, son, that’s more than I know.”

I blow out a breath and examine the gold-edged business card the chief had handed me. “Sean Kean. Esoteric Art. 245 W. 25th Street. Chelsea.”

“Remind me how you met Mr. Kean.” The chief passes me a cup of cheap coffee.

I shrug. “Not much to tell. Three months ago, I was walking by this address when I heard someone groan. I looked around and saw Mr. Kean nursing his side, leaning against the door to his place of business. I rushed over, only for him to wave me away, insisting there was nothing to see, but he was clutching his left ribs and his mouth had been split open on the left side. What with him pushing fifty, I nagged him to visit a hospital.” I give the station chief another shrug. “No dice. Stubborn old codger.”

The chief nods. “Not stubborn enough to dodge the reaper. His two secretaries found his body one hour ago.” He stabs a finger at the door behind me. “Get out there, Ben. Find out who killed him and why.”

When you are ready to end day 1, go to [4-2656 \(p.27\)](#).



STOP!



Stop reading this case book now, and begin searching for leads in the directories.

Do not turn the page. You should have set an event which will trigger at the end of **day 1**, which will instruct you on what to do when the day ends.



Evening of Day 1

It's the evening on day 1. But there is nothing special to do.

It's **3pm** on **Thursday, October 12th, 1933** (day #1), and your case is coming to an end.

If there are still leads you wish to visit before ending the case, you may visit those leads now.

☒ Tick **3** demerit boxes in your case log if you choose to do so.

Consider yourself in overtime. In overtime there is no limit to how many leads you may visit, and time does not advance past **3pm** (ignore any instructions to do so).

When you are ready to conclude the case and answer questions, proceed to [Conclusion \(p.51\)](#).



Day Two

Introduction

9 AM - Thursday, October 12th, 1933

I take my first sip of coffee for the day, allowing myself to focus on nothing but the strong brew, before my brain ticks over into the mental state necessary for work. Then, my phone rings, shattering my early morning equilibrium. I walk to the hallway where the black phone sits on a small table.

“Detective Ben Hatchett.”

It’s Moira No-Last-Name from Undercover Operations. “Did you have anything to do with it?”

“With what?”

She takes a long time before responding. “Fine. I believe you.”

“Great. Not to sound like a preacher, but would you mind telling me what you believe.”

“Two Dudek. He’s dead. Did you see him last night?”

“He was a no-show. I was on my way over to your office right not to tell you as much.”

“Meet me at the Three Kings Tattoo parlour in the Bowery.” She cut the call without another word.

When you have identified the murderer/s and their motives, go to [2-8505 \(p.21\)](#)



This page intentionally left blank.

LEADS

STOP!



WARNING! Do **not** read through the rest of this document like a book from beginning to end. Lead entries are meant to be read individually only when you look up a lead by its number.

Close this book now and follow rulebook instructions for looking up leads.

1



1-1861

2 Great Jones St, BO

If it is **day 1** (Thu Oct 12), go to [5-7246 \(p.36\)](#)

If it is **day 2** (Fri Oct 13), go to [3-4570 \(p.22\)](#)



1-5029

I cannot find any of my usual contacts at Undercover Operations, and no one else is willing to divulge anything useful.



1-5194

1 Great Jones Aly, BO

If it is **day 1** (Thu Oct 12), go to [2-4772 \(p.19\)](#)

If it is **day 2** (Fri Oct 13), go to [4-0020 \(p.26\)](#)



1-5860

4-9100 ([p.32](#)) *contd.*

"Do you know a man named Timo Meriga?"

"Oh, yes. He's a foul piece of work. Makes a life from forgeries."

"Think he's capable of murder?"

"Timo? No! He's a dandy and a peacock, but he lacks the steel of soul to kill... Perhaps that says something good about him."

1-5876

3-7042 ([p.24](#)) *contd.*

Unfortunately, I find nothing related to the Artois Nine or Astaroth. Finally, a middle-aged librarian with a long braid and bright eyes approaches me, asking if she can help. "If you need a specialist on manuscripts, paintings and occult matters, Mr Garreth Hennessy is your man."



1-7595

222 W. 23rd St, CS-54

Nothing much is going on at the Chelsea Hotel when I arrive.

If you have circled **Marker M1** in your case log, go to [2-1193 on p.18](#).

If you have circled **Marker N1** in your case log, go to [5-1768 on p.34](#).



1-9431

3-0160 ([p.22](#)) *contd.*

Ryan sets to work on Garreth Hennessey's door and a few minutes later, I step inside. Eventually, I find his office. The wall is dominated by multiple news clippings from 1923. All of them celebrate Mr. Sean Kean as the man who discovered the whereabouts of one of the most sought-after Lucien Artois paintings. The painting in question features in several photographs, and immediately make me think of the crime scene. According to the newspaper reports, this was the discovery that established Sean Kean as a leading figure in the art world.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



1-9971

1 Hogan Pl, LI-62

I talk to all my regular contacts, but without anything specific in mind, we just shoot the breeze and chew the fat.

If you have circled **Marker M1** in your case log, go to [7-0547 on p.42](#).



2

2-1142

219 W. 22nd St, CS

At Quinn and McCarthy Antiques, I enquire about the dagger found at the crime scene. The wizened Mr. Quinn toys with his wispy beard before answering. "It sounds like a bollock dagger to me."

"Excuse me?"

"A bollock dagger. Two spheres as a hand-guard." He gestures with his hands, as though he were cupping something.

"And did you sell any of those recently?"

"Not recently, but two years ago, I sold one to the Order of the Painted Smile."

"The what?"

Mr. Quinn grinned. "It's a group of people interested in occult beliefs from... either Medieval or Renaissance France. I don't recall their precise curiosities. I remember the sale because, well, we don't sell many daggers like that."

"And do you recall the names of the people you dealt with?"

Mr. Quinn's grin widens. "I possess a splendid memory. So, yes. They were Mr. Daniel Murphy and Mr. Garreth Hennessey."



Circle **Marker B1** in your case log.

On departing the antique store, I turn on my car radio.

"And now, folks, it's time for a few chuckles with our weekly segment—The Lighter Side—where we read the finest groaners, clinkers, and rib-ticklers sent in by you, the

listeners! Here's one from Marty Lang in Brooklyn: 'Why did the bootlegger fail his math test? Because he kept trying to divide by zero proof!' And this gem from Miss Estelle Harrington of Park Slope: 'My sister's been seeing a magician. Says he vanished with her heart. I say he vanished with her wallet—typical romance!' From Leo 'Lefty' Manzetti in Hell's Kitchen: 'I told my barber I wanted the usual. He handed me a bill and a bandage!' And finally, from Mrs. Rhoda Klein of the Upper West Side: 'My neighbour says her dog understands English. That's nothing—my cat speaks sarcasm fluently!' Thanks to all our clever listeners! If you've got a gag, groan, or giggle to share, send it to The Lighter Side, WNYC, Manhattan. And remember—if it makes us laugh, or groan loud enough, we just might read yours on the air!



2-1193

1-7595 (p.16) *contd.*

Just as I arrive at the Chelsea Hotel, I spot Timo trying to hail a cab. He sees me, and lowers his hand, grinning. The man looks exactly as I remember him. Smartly dressed, self-assured. A real piece of work. I was never officially involved in the investigations into this lowlife. Unofficially, however, I lent a hand a few times and, in the process, got to know Timo just enough to hate him.

The tall Italian wastes no time, getting right up in my face to shake my hand. "Detective Hatchet! *Mio amico*. How are you these days? It's been... what? A year? I have missed your fumbling attempts to implicate an innocent man."

Enough is enough.

Before I know it, I have one hand around his silk tie. "Florence Kennedy. What's your business with her?"

His eyes go wide. "Florence? How do you

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

know about her? Have you been following me?"

"Talk!"

The Italian makes a few complicated moves with his arms and, after a sharp pain in my wrist and shoulder, he gets free of my grip.

He steps away from me and says, "I do not expect a man like you to understand, but I am in love with Miss Kennedy. That is my business. Not yours."

I stare at him, suddenly lost for words.

Timo lets out a breath. "Look, Detective Hatchet, I know you think I'm a murderer, but as I have told you before, you are wrong. I met Miss Kennedy during business with a certain Mr. Kean. And she is the one for me. The only one."

Again, I just stare. Finally, my brain gets back on the job. "You followed her. Twice. Last week."

"*Dio*, Detective. I do not know how to introduce myself to her."

"You? You don't know how to introduce yourself to a woman? No! Wait! You just said, you met her during business with Kean."

He opens and closes his mouth several times then, finally, looks down at his shoes. "Always, you have wanted a confession from me, Detective Hatchet. Now, this one time, I will give you one. True, I did not *meet* her as such. I only saw her at Kean's office, and that was enough. My life has changed. Truth be told, it's been a long time coming. I want to make a new start. An honest one. But, what happens if she finds out about my past?"

"You mean, what if she finds out you made your money through fake art?"

"Again, I do not expect you to understand my tortured emotions. You are a simple man. But, Mr. Kean—if he finds out how much I want Miss Kennedy, he could ruin everything."

"Tell me about your business with Mr. Kean."

"I think we have nothing more to say to each other."

"Did you kill him?" I ask.

Timo does a fine impersonation of a statue. "What?"

"Mr. Kean is dead. Murdered."

"*Dio*. Detective Hatchet, I had nothing to do with that."

"Where were you last night between 5 and 9pm?"

He jerks his chin over my shoulder. "In the hotel lobby, pondering how to approach my future wife. I even asked the advice of every waitress I could find. Now, unless you have a warrant, I will say no more."

Timo finds a cab, and heads off.

I interview the hotel staff, all of whom confirm Timo's story.



2-1914

"Well, I'll be damned," I mutter after putting the phone down. Turns out the guys at Ryley & Son back Daniel up all the way. Unfortunately, they have zip on who might have forged the painting, or how Kean got his hands on it, nor do they have anything else of use for me.



2-4772

The antique store is closed when I arrive. I look around, but see no way to sneak a peak inside.



2-5816

I find nothing of significance at US Customs.



2-5973

4-6491 (p.31) *contd.*

"The Artois Nine," I say. "If you were a betting man, what odds would you put on them being linked to Kean's death?"

Mr. Chancer frowns. "Mrs Katherine Hill is obsessed with completing the set, but she'd never go as far as committing murder." He takes a few minutes to think. "That's all I know. Can't see another connection, Mr. Detective."

"Right, but what if Mr. Kean hoodwinked her on a deal related to the Nine? Would you put it past her to pay someone to murder him?"

"My word, Mr. Detective. You have a mind like a pig's tail. She'd never go that far."



2-5995

8-1224 (p.47) *contd.*

My patience with this chum is wearing thinner by the minute, and my temper flares when I see him again.

"Mr. Murphy, where were you between 6 and 8pm on the night of the murder? And don't give me any crap about you being with your fiancée. You showed up there at 8."

He goes pale, mouth opening and closing several times before he finally pulls himself together. "In point of fact, I was *at* her apartment, just not inside it." He flinches, and I guess the anger must be plain on my face, because he starts flapping his chin real quick. "I was outside her building, talking to a PI.

He'd been... looking into something for me." He starts chewing his nails.

"Looking into what?"

"One of them is a fake! One of the three Artois paintings we have in the Order is a fake! And it's the one we bought directly from Mr. Sean Kean. I only found out about it when I spoke to the PI outside Elaine's apartment."

"You'd better get me in touch with this PI."

"Sure, thing. He works for Ryley and Son. You can call them."

"When did the Order buy this painting from Kean?"

"Three weeks ago. The other two—the real ones—have been with the Order for five years. I personally bought the fake one from Kean three weeks ago."

"And you only realised the truth when you spoke to the PI?"

"Yes, but before I hired the PI, I shared my suspicions with Gar... another member of the Order, our foremost expert on the Nine. He said he couldn't be sure."

"When was this?"

"Um... A week ago."



Circle Marker N1 in your case log.



2-7145

"Just my luck," I mutter. The archives for birth and death certificates are as busy as a dead skunk on an anthill. There's no way I'm getting access for the next few hours. I'd be better off trying my luck tomorrow.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2-7333

4-6491 (p.31) contd.

"Do you know a man named Timo Meriga?"

"Oh, yes. He's a foul piece of work. Makes a life from forgeries."

"Think he's capable of murder?"

"Timo? No! He's a dandy and a peacock, but he lacks the steel of soul to kill... Perhaps that says something good about him."



2-8505

Day 2 - End of Day Briefing

"Have you consulted the guys from smuggling investigations?"

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

"Have you gone back to Iwo Dudek's home to sniff around?"

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

"Might be a good idea to interview Solomon Chancer gain. He did say he might remember something useful."

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

"What about the archives for birth and death certificates? You've been there, right? You do see the importance of going there?"

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

You may now read the conclusion of the case.



3

3-0160

Upon arriving at Garreth Hennessey's residence, I find the place locked.

If you have circled **Marker A1** in your case log, go to [1-9431 on p.16](#).



3-0962

5-2331 (p.35) contd.

After calling in a few favours, I finally discover that three months ago Iwo Dudek had become a valuable informant for Moira, who's running an undercover investigation into the cocaine trade. Dudek, apparently, had been a small-time coke dealer for years. Eventually, I find one of her superiors, who gives me permission to meet up with Iwo Dudek.

"Tonight, after hours, just outside the Bathtub Gin Bar," Moira's superior says.



3-4570

The inside of Iwo Dudek's tiny hovel is worse than the outside. I step carefully, feeling as if the entire wooden structure might collapse at any moment. Fast food wrappers carpet the floor, broken up by islands of unwashed clothing. The stench makes me queasy, but I steel my nerves and start digging. It feels like hours before I find a small, black safe bolted to the only part of the bedroom wall that looks sturdy. "Now what?" I ask myself.

If you have circled **Marker A1** in your case log, go to [5-3666 on p.35](#).



3-4862

120a E. 23rd St, GP

Katherine Hill's townhouse on Gramercy Park is an elegant, ivy-clad brownstone with polished brass fixtures and a discrete iron gate. A servant lets me in, and I'm led to a sitting room that exudes wealth in a quiet, bespoke fashion. Velvet armchairs, silk drapes, and walnut bookcases line the walls. Oil paintings from the Italian Renaissance hang in heavy gilded frames, and a faint scent of lavender and old paper lingers. A widow of means, she surrounds herself with beauty and history. I notice there are zero pictures of her husband or extended family. Apparently, Mrs Hill recently turned sixty, but when she enters the room, I'd have estimated her age at around fifty-five, maybe younger.

"I heard about Sean Kean's death," she says in a low, quiet voice. "Dreadful. You know, I recommended Elaine to him. She worked as my husband's personal secretary for a little while before he died and I immediately told Kean to hire her. Pity she's beth..." The widow looks like she's about to say more, but then stops herself. "Pity the poor girl has had to witness a murder."

"Did you know him well?"

She blinks. "My husband? Of course, I did."

I laugh. "Apologies. I meant Sean Kean."

"Only as a business associate, but he was talented at locating fine pieces for my collection. It's become something of a personal obsession, as you can see. I have a separate room for works by English, French and Flemish masters, if you wanted to see those."

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to [4-5008 on p.29](#)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to [4-5640](#) on [p.29](#).



3-5806

8-1224 ([p.47](#)) *contd.*

“What was your impression of Mr. Sean Kean?” I ask.

“Impression number one was he underpaid Elaine.”

“And?”

“And?”

“How did you get on with him, Mr. Murphy?”

“How does anyone get on with someone they hardly speak to?”

I sigh. “You were overheard having words with Mr. Kean last Monday.”

“Ah. That.”

When Mr. Damn Daniel Murphy doesn’t bother to elaborate, I feel my patience thinning until I’m close to choking him—but no one gets far in the detective business without developing ways of cooling your own temper. “Mr. Kean was looking over your shoulder all the time. Explain.”

Daniel Murphy looked around the room. “See these paintings? Collectors bring them to me for restoration. That demands a tremendous level of trust. Old Kean, as you know, traded in esoteric art—that’s paintings with some kind of arcane significance. He wanted me to keep an eye out for such paintings. He wanted a list of names; in case some collector was hiding a valuable painting in their private vault or something. And I felt obligated to do it, for Elaine’s sake. So, no, I didn’t much like the man and, when it became clear he wasn’t going to give Elaine a raise or anything, I told him straight what I thought of him. No crime in that.”

3-6476

208 W. 23rd St, CS-54

The door-“man” of The Carteret is a pimply teenager, and he’s working on a crossword puzzle when I find him, his tongue sticking out of his mouth in concentration.

“Detective Hatchet,” I introduce myself, flashing my badge.

He sighs, and looks up at me with an expression that makes it damn clear I’m inconveniencing him. You’d swear I’d just asked him to go fry an egg on the roof. “Yeah?”

“You know Miss Florence Kennedy?”

The kid rolls his eyes. “Yeah. 1D. Works at some snobby art... something. Always giving me random facts about Renny-sense... some-things. Like I need fancy words taking up space inside my noggin.”

“Have you seen anything suspicious recently?”

“Involving Miss Kennedy? No. Involving other people in the building?” He lowers his voice and whispers conspiratorially. “No.”

I’m about to leave when the doorman calls me back, “By the way, do you know an eleven-letter word that means rebirth?”

I turn around to face him, thinking this kid deserves a slap, but then his expression changes. “Actually... Detective Hatchet, there is something about Miss Kennedy. Last week, I saw this man follow her into the building. He doesn’t live here, I know that for sure. But when she came home from work, he followed her in. Looked to me like he was trying to get her attention, but she clearly didn’t know him either. All he did was stop, turn around and leave again. It happened twice last week. Can’t remember on which days, though.”

“But being such a shrewd observer, you can describe him to me, right kid?”

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"Sure can, Detective. He was a beanpole. Brown skin. Looked Italian to me. And he had this stupid-looking toothbrush moustache."

My blood runs cold. "Did he have a sharp chin, and two gold rings on his right hand? Did he smell of expensive cologne?"

The kid's mouth drops open. "Yeah. Exactly. Wow, you're like something from a comic book, Mister."

I'm barely listening to the kid now. I know that man. Timo Meriga. Suspected art forger and, if you were asking me, a murderer too. Last I heard, the investigation into his crimes was still ongoing.



Circle Marker M1 in your case log.



3-6872

72 Wall St, FD-45

If it is **day 1 (Thu Oct 12)**, go to [5-2331 \(p.35\)](#)

If it is **day 2 (Fri Oct 13)**, go to [1-5029 \(p.16\)](#)



3-7042

476 5th Ave, Room 212, TL-6

Tucked behind heavy oak doors on the library's upper floor, the Rare Manuscript Section houses illuminated texts, rolls of vellum, and centuries-old folios. Scholars huddle together at long oak tables, whispering under brass lamps. The air smells of dust. Access is restricted. Visitors must present credentials. No problem for me there. I search as best I can, but I'm clearly out of my depth.

If you have circled **Marker D1** in your case log, go to [3-7205 on p.24](#).

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to [1-5876 on p.16](#).



3-7205

3-7042 ([p.24](#)) *contd.*

None of the old manuscripts make sense to me, nor can I find a book to shed light on my case. I need to keep digging.



3-8490

8-1224 ([p.47](#)) *contd.*

"When you met with Sean Kean, were you hoping to discover anything about the Artois Nine?"

Daniel Murphy's eyes snap open wide. "Holy shit, Detective Hatchet. You really have done your homework. I'm not sure whether to be happy or upset that the NYPD employs such sharp minds."

"No matter what you feel, I need you to answer the question."

It was Murphy's time to sigh. "Alright, yes. We, that is the Order of the Painted Smile, own three of the nine. We are trying to divine the knowledge contained within it, but that's not really possible unless you have all nine. So, yes, I was hoping Kean would lead me to the others."

"Can you identify other members of the order?"

"No. The man who inducted me died of old age two years ago and I don't know the others. We wear masks when we meet."

"Isn't that convenient. Can I see this manuscript you were analysing with Kean?"

"No problem."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

He brings a piece of ancient vellum to me, but it's written in Latin and I can't make anything out."



4

4-0020

The store is small and crowded with bits of furniture that look less like valuable antiques and more like yard sale junk. I find an old man with a round belly and a wispy beard, calling himself Mr. Monaldo.

“Old Man Dudek died three years ago,” he wheezes when I ask about the store’s name. “He was a good business partner. Pity his son is such a rascalion. I hear he’s selling drugs. You should arrest him.”

“Wish I could, sir. Could you tell me anything about this?” I show him a picture of the dagger found at the scene of Sean Kean’s death.

“Ah, yes. A bollock dagger. The only real antique I had to sell, I’m afraid to say. It was a marvellous piece.”

“Do you have any sales records?”

“I’m afraid I stopped keeping those. In this neighbourhood, no one wants to be on record. If I insisted on those, I’d sell nothing.”

“Do you remember anything about the person who you sold it to?”

“To whom, I sold it,” he corrects me with a kind smile. “Not much. I remember it was about a month ago, maybe. He was in his thirties, I think. Can’t be sure. Sorry.”



4-0174

I get access to the archives for birth and death certificates and manage to extract the following information:

Florence Kennedy. Born 5 January 1908.

Elaine Marquette. Born 23 March 1908.

Sean Kean. Born 20 July 1876. Died 12 October 1933. Murder by person/persons unknown (subject to revision, pending NYPD investigation).

Katherine Hill. Born 9 October 1873.

Oscar Hill (husband to Katherine Hill). Born 17 November 1870. Died 3 January 1930. Heart attack.

Daniel Murphy. Born 10 September 1898.

Garreth Hennessey. Born 8 September 1898.

Desmond Hennessey (father of Garreth Hennessey). Born 20 June 1880. Died 12 October 1923. Suicide. Maria Hennessey (mother of Garreth Hennessey). Born 15 March 1880. Died 2 October 1923. Tuberculosis.



4-0407

5-9707 (p.37) *contd.*

I find Elaine Marquette still hard at work at Sean Kean’s place. She’s filing records in the drawers of her desk.

“Miss Marquette, I need to know where you were last night.”

“I understand, Detective Axeman. You’re crossing your *ts* and so on. I was in my apartment with my fiancé, Daniel Murphy.”

“How late did he show up?”

“8pm.”

“Thanks.”



Circle Marker L1 in your case log.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

4-2656

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing

My pasta-and-cigar loving station chief rests his hands on his impressive gut, and eyes me. “You need sleep, Ben. Let’s finish up so you can go home. First things first. You spoke to Mr. Solomon Chancer, right? Made sure to learn *everything* you can from him?”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“Good. Now, I’m sure you’ve identified the man Florence Kennedy saw at Sean Kean’s right? If I were you, I’d go find out if he has a criminal record. You might want to take a trip to the Central Police Records office.”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“And you tried the last known address for this man, right?”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“This bar where Florence Kennedy saw Sean Kean. You went there, right?”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“Sounds to me like a visit to the Public Library is in order. Done that?”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

.

“I heard an interesting news report about some church renovation project. Think it’s relevant to your case in any way? Always best to be sure.”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“Have you checked in with Undercover Operations? That’s what I do after bumping into Moira.”

o If you have, continue reading. Otherwise, follow more leads.

“Well, then, looks like you’ve done as much as you can for one day, Ben.”

“Not quite, sir,” I say. “Just a few more loose ends to tie up.”

Late Night Leads

To visit the NYPD Fingerprint Identification Lab, go to [5-6596 on p.36](#), and then return here

To meet with Iwo Dudek, go to [4-9737 on p.33](#), and then return here

To visit the coroner, go to [4-5820 on p.30](#), and then return here.



4-3847

During the drive to Hennessey’s address, I listen to a news report from WNYC.

“Authorities report a troubling rise in cocaine use across Chelsea, with police citing a surge in illicit activity near clubs and boarding houses. Community leaders urge swift action, while health officials warn of the drug’s growing grip. Efforts to trace sources remain ongoing. WNYC will follow developments closely.”

Mr. Garreth Hennessey meets me at the door to his apartment. I estimate his age at around thirty-five. His dirty-blond hair resembles a bird’s nest—indicating his habit of running his hands through it. Dark brown eyes sit behind

round glasses and when he shakes my hand, I notice he's wearing white latex gloves.

"Welcome, Detective Hatchet," he says. "Thanks for calling ahead. This way please."

He leads the way into a spacious room with large, high windows, admitting bright beams of sunlight. The room is filled with paintings, arranged on easels in a wide semi-circle. This is what I'd expected Mr. Sean Kean's personal rooms to look like.

"What exactly do you do, Mr. Hennessey?" I ask.

He takes up station in front of a painting depicting a man sitting at a desk and reaching for a globe. "I'm a freelance art appraiser and restorer, Detective Hatchet. This, for example, is a genuine piece by Johannes Vermeer circa 1668. I was asked to determine its authenticity and I'm glad to say its owner will be happy."

"Who is the owner?"

"One Mrs Katherine Hill. Quite the prodigious collector, she is."

"A librarian at the Public Library informed me that you might be able to help with occult symbols."

Mr. Hennessey swivels on his heels to face me, his eyes bright with enthusiasm. "Absolutely! But..." He frowns. "Why are the police interested in occult symbols? Don't get me wrong, Detective Hatchet. I'm keen as mustard, but this sounds like something from a storybook."

I keep my face placid. "Did you know a Mr. Sean Kean?"

"I knew *of* him, but not personally. Everyone in the art world knows *about* the great Sean Kean—especially those of us with an interest in occult matters. Why do you ask?"

"Can you tell me anything about triangles? Do they have some special occult significance?"

"Depends. What kind of triangles."

"Equilateral triangles."

Mr. Hennessey's eyes glitter with boyish excitement. "Again, it depends. If the triangles are pointed at a person, then they are intended to direct harmful energies *at* him or her. If they are pointed upwards, they are intended to deflect said energies *away*. In other words, triangles can be offensive or defensive, at least in the occult beliefs of Western and Southern Europe—specifically from the late Medieval to Early Modern period."

My mind races with the effort of keeping the information straight. "Well, thanks, Mr. Hennessey. You've been a great help."

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to [8-0598 on p.46](#).

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to [5-0998 on p.34](#).



4-4194

5-9707 ([p.37](#)) *contd.*

"Miss Marquette, are you aware that your fiancé is a member of an occult organisation called the Order of the Painted Smile?"

She sighs heavily. "Yes, Detective Axeman, I am. Honestly, I've been trying to get Daniel to quit for ages, but he keeps telling me how he owes them a debt of gratitude for funding his studies and all. I've never met any other members, and they sound reasonably harmless, but still crazy as a raccoon convention. Wait, do you think this has anything to do with the murder?"

"Can you give me a reason to rule it out?"

"I'm afraid not, apart from the fact that I don't think Daniel is capable of murder."



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

4-4668

327 W. 30th St, CS

I knock on the door to Miss Elaine Marquette's apartment, but no one answers.



4-5008

3-4862 (p.22) *contd.*

"What about the Artois Nine? Does your collection contain any of those?"

"My, my," she says. "They sure didn't send a clown to investigate this case. As a matter of fact, I own five of the Artois Nine. Come along."

She leads the way into an adjoining wing of the house. Here, brass lamps provide the only light, and it suits the subject matter of the gory paintings. Most of them depict some form of death or torture, one of which matches the crime scene. Another one depicts a corpse, hanging upside down with a smile painted in lurid red across its mouth.

"I will have all nine one day. Be certain of that," she breathes, her voice as cold as steel. "You know, Daniel Murphy—the man who's engaged to Elaine—he once tried to break into this room. His obsession with these paintings nearly matches mine, though for different reasons, given what a nutcase he is. He wanted to study something about the initials on the paintings. I would have reported the matter to the police, but Sean Kean dissuaded me. Said he'd take care of it, and ensure Daniel never bothered me again."



Circle **Marker H1** in your case log.



4-5044

424 W. 34th St, CS-5

One of the priests at the Church of Saint Michael proves especially talkative, and informs me that the expensive renovations are being paid for by donations from one Mr. Solomon Chancer. The donations began one year ago.



Circle **Marker K1** in your case log.



4-5640

3-4862 (p.22) *contd.*

"Do you know anything about a group called The Order of the Painted Smile?" I ask.

"Never heard of them, but they sound like another one of those... mentally deficient people who believe these paintings hold some arcane powers. Actually, no. Wait. I think perhaps Sean Kean mentioned them once. He said they might have some of the Artois Nine. He was going to get back to me about the veracity of that rumour. Believe me, if they do, I will make them an offer they can't refuse, unless, of course, they don't value money at all."



4-5671

I call the number, but get no answer. If the same thing happens tomorrow, Daniel Murphy's going to be in hot water.



4-5820

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (4-2656 on p.27) contd.

The coroner confirms that Sean Kean had been murdered last night (11 October) between 7 and 9pm. He'd been stabbed by someone standing in front of him. The murder weapon was definitely the dagger found on this body. The blade had entered Mr. Kean's torso from an upward angle, and had been used by a right-handed person. Nine downward thrusts had been administered. The first three had pierced his left lung and the fourth had punched through the sternum into the heart. There were no defensive wounds on his body, and the body must have been arranged in the position in which I found it soon after death. Return to 4-2656 (p.27).



4-5994

4-6491 (p.31) contd.

This time, I'm forced to go all the way up to Mr. Chancer's room at the Adelphi. I find him in a much humbler room than I'd expected. Nothing cheap, but nothing opulent either. Guess that makes sense, now that I have some idea of where his money is going.

"You're paying for the renovation of the Church of Saint Michael," I kick off the interview as blunt and direct as a cannon. "Why?"

Mr. Chancer reacts as if I'd just confronted him with evidence of some heinous sin. Slowly, he walks to the window of his sitting room, and looks down at the city below. "Do you sleep well, Mr Detective? I do not. There is much on my soul that needs..." He makes a scrubbing gesture. "Cleaning."

"And donating to the church is your way?"

"To each his own."

"Mind telling me what you need atonement for?"

He chuckles, but it's a dead sound. "You mean, am I giving money to the church because I killed Mr. Sean Kean? No. It started about a year ago."

"But it's got something to do with Mr. Kean and his business?" I press, going with a hunch.

Mr. Chancer has his back to me and I see his shoulders sag. I nearly punch the air the triumph. "You could say that. Remember me telling you that some people hold strange beliefs? Well, Mr. Kean liked to play on those. He made large sums of money selling so-called esoteric art to... what is the word? Clandestine organisations. Cults! That is the English word, I think. People who gather in cellars and such, searching the paintings for hidden knowledge."

"How exactly did he prey on people's beliefs?"

"He lied about the authenticity of some of the paintings I procured for him. He never did anything so crass as to make a forgery—not that I know of. But... Oh how to explain to a common man. Let's say I brought him a few paintings from the... late Renaissance, for example. Imagine these paintings are imitations of earlier works by mystics from Medieval times. I know of at least three occasions when Mr. Kean passed these Renaissance imitations off as original works by Medieval mystics. In each case, some cult or other paid ludicrous sums of money for the paintings."

"Are any of those cults based here in Manhattan?"

"Not that I know of. One was in Chicago, the other two in France."

"Did you ever confront Mr. Kean about this?"

"Once. Three months ago. I was in town, and I was talking to him about it outside his shop. I made my feelings plain. It was all fair enough to sell paintings to people like Mrs Hill. Hell, it was all fair and fine to sell paintings to cults, as long as we were honest about what we were passing along. Kean laughed. Just laughed in my face. I'm afraid I lost my temper."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“What did you do?”

“I punched him. Twice. Once in the ribs and once on the mouth. Then I left. It was a terrible thing to do. He was no spring chicken, as you know, and not in the finest health.”

Before I can think clearly, I burst out, “Why did you keep working for a parasite like Kean?”

Mr. Chancer turns around to face me. “Since I am spilling my guts—as you Americans like to say—I might as well tell you. Money, Mr. Detective. Pure and simple. No great secret.” I watch him rub at his eyes. “I’m tired, Mr. Detective. With your permission, I will rest now. Visit me tomorrow, if you wish, and if I think of anything useful, I will divulge it.”



4-5997

8-1224 (p.47) *contd.*

“Mr. Murphy, Sean Kean is dead and he didn’t drop down from natural causes.”

“Yeah, I heard that from Elaine. She’s still at work, if you can believe it. A real trooper that one. Heart like Joan of Arc.”

I brush his prevarication aside. “Mr. Murphy, right now, you are going to tell me whether the Order of the Painted Smile had anything to do with Kean’s death. Don’t bother denying it. I know you are a member.”

Daniel Murphy does not look surprised. “It’s not a huge secret. I’m almost the public face of the group. But, as far as I know, the Order had nothing to do with his death.”

“If you’re the face of the Order, did you have regular meetings with Mr. Kean?”

“Yeah, I did. We met at the Bathtub Gin Bar. I figured that if Kean was going to use me, I might as well use him too. He’d discovered some manuscript, and both of us were hoping it would lead us to some undiscovered esoteric paintings.”

“I have it on good authority that the Order of the Painted Smile owned a type of dagger, which they’d bought from an antique shop.”

“Yeah, I bought it for them.”

“And do you know where this dagger is now?”

“Someone in the Order has it. I don’t know who.”



4-6491

“Detective Ben Hatchet,” I push my badge across the clerk’s counter at the Adelphi Hotel. “You have a Mr. Solomon Chancer staying here, right? I need to speak with him.”

The spotty-faced teen at the reception counter points me towards a courtyard with a lush garden. There, sitting on a white bench, I find Mr. Solomon Chancer, smoking a long, thin cigarette. His maroon suit clashes with his dark skin and olive eyes, and I see black curls poking out under his maroon fedora. He sees me approach and rises from the bench. Something in the way he carries himself makes me balance my weight on the balls of my feet, like I need to get ready for a fight.

I introduce myself peremptorily and get down to business. “How did you know Mr. Sean Kean?”

Mr. Chancer takes a slow drag from his cigarette as if time were nothing of much value and blows a plume of smoke towards me. “I travelled for him. Found paintings for him to sell,” he answers in a Greek accent, shrugging. “What else are you expecting to hear?”

“Maybe something about what makes your art esoteric.”

That gets under his skin. He flinches—then tries to cover it with a chuckle. “What do you know about esoteric matters, Mr. Detective?”

"You got this the wrong way around, Mr. Chancer. I'm the one asking the questions."

He shakes his head, taking another drag. "Merciful Saints. The NYPD sent a hammer-head to do a priest's job. Look, Mr. Detective, some people believe strange things, but you know what all people have in common? They want power. Some want it by investing in valuable art. That's what I know."

I press him for a few more minutes, but get nothing out of him, except more smoke and a mild headache.

If you have circled **Marker K1** in your case log, go to [4-5994 on p.30](#).

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to [2-5973 on p.20](#).

If you have circled **Marker M1** in your case log, go to [2-7333 on p.21](#).



4-7978

476 5th Ave, Room 503, TL-6

Secreted away in a quiet corner of the New York Public Library's main branch, the Occult Reference Section exudes an eerie, magnetic charm. Tall wooden shelves cradle weathered tomes on alchemy, demonology, astrology, and forbidden rites, their cracked spines whispering secrets. Brass lamps cast soft pools of light over heavy reading tables. The scent of incense clings to the air, despite the library's best efforts. Fellow visitors speak in hushed tones, watched silently by a marble bust of Hermes Trismegistus.

I spend at least three hours down here, though it feels like days, but finally I locate something that makes my brain fizz. Inside a book on Renaissance art and mystical beliefs, I spot a painting that seems vaguely familiar. A man lies on his back, his head near a writing desk, and his chest a mess of stab wounds. His hands are pressed together as though in prayer. A

blade nestles between them, with the pommel resting on his chin. The dagger's guard terminates in two knobs. The author's note beneath the painting identifies this as a bollock dagger, but that's hardly the most illuminating part.

According to the author, "One of the most valuable sets of Renaissance paintings—at least as far mystical/esoteric communities are concerned—is the Artois Nine. Reputedly the work of French artist Lucien Artois, these nine paintings were created between 1479 and 1505. The painter is credited with claiming that he received direct instruction from the demon Astaroth."



Circle **Marker C1** in your case log.



4-9100

I find Mr. Solomon Chancer in the hotel's courtyard. He's sitting on the same white bench, smoking another cigarette, and his spirits seem to have lifted since yesterday.

"Ah! Mr. Detective. I have remembered something."

"Go on."

"Ten years ago, another man did for Mr. Kean what I did for him until his death. That man discovered a painting of immense value, and Mr. Kean stole it from him, which ruined the man's family."

My mind starts racing. "Why didn't this person report the theft?"

Mr. Chancer smiles. "Because he, in turn, had stolen it. Thieves cannot report thieves, Mr Detective. I only heard the story as a rumour. But I believe it. Sadly, I never learned the name of this man."

"Do you know anything about this painting Kean stole? Anything that could help me track it down?"

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“The rumours that reached me said it was French. Something deeply regarded in the esoteric community, especially among true believers.”

If you have circled **Marker M1** in your case log, go to [1-5860 on p.16](#).



4-9737

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing ([4-2656 on p.27](#)) contd.

It's cold outside the bar and my only weapon against the chill is cheap coffee. I wait for over an hour, but no one shows up. Return to [4-2656 \(p.27\)](#).



4-9923

300 W. 29th St, CS

If it is **day 1** (Thu Oct 12), go to [4-3847 \(p.27\)](#)

If it is **day 2** (Fri Oct 13), go to [3-0160 \(p.22\)](#)



5

5-0998

4-3847 (p.27) *contd.*

"What can you tell me about the Artois Nine?"

It takes Garreth Hennessey several seconds to realise his jaw is hanging open.

I grin at him. "Good thing there are no flies around."

"Well, well, well," Hennessey says. "I wasn't aware the NYPD employs men with such specialised knowledge."

"Would you answer the question, please?"

"Oh, sure, sure. The Artois Nine. I assume you know the basics. Personally, I don't believe they have any magical powers, but they are of historic value. Oh! You might find this interesting. Legend has it that six of the nine paintings are clearly initialled LA—for Lucien Artois, obviously. However, three of them are unique. They are initialled AT."

"AT?" I ask. Then, I get it. "Astaroth?"

"Precisely!" he claps his hands together. "Strange what people will believe, isn't it? Still, it would be something to see those paintings. Assuming they even exist."



5-1768

1-7595 (p.16) *contd.*

I count myself lucky to find Timo still staying at the Chelsea Hotel. This time, there's no smile when he sees me, and I raise both hands in a placating gesture.

"Answer one question—off the record," I say. "Then, I'll leave you alone. Did you forge one of The Artois Nine for Sean Kean three weeks ago?"

He looks me in the eye for a long minute. "Yes. My last job. I swear it."

I nod and make good on my promise, leaving the Chelsea Hotel.



5-2244

692 Broadway, BO

A King of Spades, Hearts and Clubs leer down at me from the entrance to the Three Kings Tattoo parlour. The place is nestled in a dim corner of the Bowery, humming with low conversation and the buzz of needles, even this early in the morning. The gutters outside reek of stale beer and worse. Inside, the walls are cluttered with flash designs—anchors, skulls, and saints. Moira No-Last-Name looks completely out of place in her beige trench coat, and yet she seems to have cowed the much larger man sitting on a stool in front of her.

Upon seeing me, Moira ushers me outside. "This way."

"And good morning to you too."

She grunts, leading me to a narrow alley beside the tattoo joint.

"No police tape. No EMTs. Nothing," I observe.

"They'll be here soon, and they'll conclude that Iwo Dudek died from a mugging gone wrong. You understand?"

"But that's not what you think?"

She stops outside the mouth of the alley and, looking down, I see a black homburg on the sidewalk. "Poke around, Ben. Figure out who killed Dudek. See if it's connected to Sean Kean. Either way, you tell me first. We in

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Undercover will decide what gets reported on Dudek's death. Got it?"

"Got it." I salute.

I follow her into the alley.

A few steps in, I encounter a shabby brown wallet. After donning my latex gloves, I peruse it as gently as possible. "There's cash inside. Looks like fifteen dollars. Nothing else."

Moirra grunts.

A little deeper into the alley we find Dudek's body, still dressed in his black coat that must have been brand new at the turn of the century. He's lying on his back, arms wide, like he's making a snow angle in the filth of the alley, coat splayed wide. I see a single bullet wound in the centre of his forehead.

"If I were you," Moirra says. "I wouldn't get my hopes up about finding a witness in this part of town. Even if there'd been a crowd watching from the mouth of the alley, no one from the Bowery would talk to cops."

"Any sign of a spent cartridge?" I ask.

"None."

"Great. Can't say yet whether there's any connection with Sean Kean, but one thing's clear. The method is radically different. Any idea how I might track down the firearm? I'm betting it's a handgun—something easy to conceal."

"Obviously," Moirra rolls her eyes at me, then carries on in a more measured tone. "Gun control within the city limits gets better every year. Maybe someone smuggled something in from outside. I know for a fact that gun laws are not enforced all that well in rural areas. Know anything about smugglers?"

"Nope."

"Find someone who does."

I look around the crime scene for another thirty minutes, but find nothing conclusive, until Moirra tells me to leave.



5-2331

No one at Undercover Operations is willing to talk to me.

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to [3-0962 on p.22](#).



5-3666

3-4570 (p.22) *contd.*

I watch over Ryan's shoulder while he works. When he's done, I reach into the safe and retrieve a small notebook. Flipping to the last page, I read Dudek's nearly illegible scrawl: 11/10. Saw GH at SK. Late night. Came out bloody. 12/10. GH promised \$10K. Meeting tonight at 3K.



5-4581

At US Customs, I manage to find someone to give me a hand with locating the firearm that put a hole in Dudek's head, or at least with discovering the gun's origins. My new friend is a round, bald man with a thin, red moustache and a high voice, named Mr. Lowary.

"If you suspect someone from the Bowery," Mr. Lowary advises. "Then, you're looking for a needle in a stack of needles." He chuckles at his own joke. "There are at least eleven known gun smugglers in that part of town, and we're having a hell of time keeping track of them, let alone arresting them. But, from listening to your story, I think you'll have an easier time looking into Chelsea. I know of only one gun smuggler still operating there. The only reason we haven't arrested him yet is because we're hoping he might lead us to bigger fish."

"Sounds like you're trespassing on Undercover Operations' turf."

He shrugs. "We'll deal with them later."

"You have an address for me?"

"There's a vehicle parts warehouse on 520 West 22nd Street. Look for a man with red hair and a spider's web tattooed on his neck."

"Thanks. How do I talk to this guy without scaring him off?"

"As you might have figured out, we run our own version of undercover operations here—unofficially, obviously. I have an officer who can take you there now. Our smuggler trusts him. So, all you need to do is tell my guy what questions you need answered, and he'll ask the smuggler. Got it?"

I nod and Mr. Lowary calls over a huge man who looks like hired muscle for some crime boss, but if he can help me out, I'll follow him.

Just before leaving, I see a note on Mr. Lowary's desk. It reads: *Ryan, T. Lockpicking expert phone number 5-7712*. I memorise it quickly. Might come in handy.



Circle Marker G1 in your case log.



5-5115

5-7712 (p.37) *contd.*

I call Mr. Ryan, T and learn that his name is Tinwhistle. Apparently, he does *special jobs* for US Customs, and he's happy to work for me too—off the books, obviously, and for a generous fee.



5-6596

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (4-2656 on p.27) *contd.*

Personnel at the fingerprint identification lab have two sets of prints for me. Both were lifted from the doorknob to the entrance of Sean Kean's place of business and the door to his office. One set belongs to Elaine Marquette. The other belongs to a man named Iwo Dudek. According to his criminal history, he's a small time cocaine dealer and the appended photo shows a haggard face with dark, curly hair and acne scars. No other prints were lifted from the doorknobs. The railing on the staircase had been covered in a wide range of partial prints, some of which could be identified as Sean Kean's, Elaine Marquette's, and Florence Kennedy's. No prints were recovered from the dagger found on Kean's body. Return to [4-2656 \(p.27\)](#).



5-7246

From the outside, Iwo Dudek's place is a graffiti-covered pigsty that looks like a moderate wind could blow it down. That, however, isn't what grabs my attention. I spot a woman watching the place, wearing a beige trench coat and a wide-brimmed hat. I know her, so I approach carefully, giving her plenty of time to see me coming, and I keep my hands visible.

"Afternoon, Moira," I say when I'm within earshot, but I pull a newspaper from my coat pocket and pretend to read it, keeping my back to her so no one else would see us speaking to each other.

"What do you want, Ben?" Her voice is as friendly as a hacksaw.

"A chat with Iwo Dudek."

"Not happening."

"Why are you lot in Undercover Operations interested in him?"

"Why don't you head over to our offices and see if they'll give you clearance to talk to Iwo."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

I'm not saying anything." With that she leaves. Getting into my car, I switch on the radio to distract myself. The announcer, speaking in a cheerful voice, reports:

"This is WNYC, Manhattan's voice on the airwaves. And now, a community update from right here in the heart of Manhattan. In the Chelsea neighbourhood, locals may have seen the scaffolding and heard the hammers echoing from West 34th Street. That's because the historic Church of Saint Michael is undergoing an extensive renovation—one of the most ambitious restoration projects the area has seen in recent years. Parishioners and preservationists alike are calling it a timely and much-needed effort. The Church of Saint Michael, known for its Gothic Revival architecture and striking stained-glass windows, has stood as a spiritual anchor in the neighbourhood for over seventy years. The renovations aim to restore the church's ornate façade, repair weatherworn masonry, and rejuvenate the interior woodwork, which date back to the late 19th century. Church officials have not publicly disclosed the source of funding, but they say the upgrades mark a significant step in preserving the cultural and architectural heritage of the Chelsea community. Locals are encouraged to stop by and view the ongoing work—or even better, attend Mass and see the transformation for themselves. This has been your neighbourhood update from WNYC. Stay tuned for more news after this message from our sponsor."

 Circle **Marker O1** in your case log.



5-7712

560 W. 23rd St, CS

If you have circled **Marker G1** in your case log, go to [5-5115 on p.36](#).

 Circle **Marker A1** in your case log.



5-8922

208 W. 23rd St, CS (apt. 1b)

I walk along the hallway of Miss Kennedy's apartment, investigating the other rooms. Looks like 1A is a communal laundry room. Knocking on the door for 1B, I get no answer.



5-9707

245 W. 25th St, CS

A white van and two EMTs are waiting for me when I arrive at *Kean's Esoteric Art*. The EMTs are smoking, while two young women stand just outside the door to the building—presumably Mr. Kean's secretaries. Their cheeks are streaked with ruined mascara, and their hands are shaking. I estimate their ages at around twenty-five. One of them is a round-faced brunette with rectangular glasses perched on a button nose. She looks at me with blue eyes before drawing her blonde colleague's attention to me. The latter turns green eyes my way, while sunlight glints off her round glasses, and the engagement ring on her left hand.

I pick my homburg hat off my head and approach them.

"Detective Ben Hatchet. Sorry about your loss."

The brunette's eyes widen. "Hatchet? Like an axe? You're Detective Axeman?" She chuckles in a way that has me worried, until the blonde puts an arm around her shoulder. The gesture steadies them both.

"Elaine Marquette," the blonde introduces herself, giving me a firm handshake. Her accent is as British as buttered scones and warm beer. "This is Florence Kennedy."

Miss Kennedy pulls herself together and shakes my hand hard enough to hurt my fingers.

"Where did you find the body?"

Miss Kennedy answers, "Office. The first floor is the reception room. His office is on the second. Ditto his private rooms."

I click my fingers to get the attention of the two EMTs and point at the doorknob behind the secretaries. "Dusted for prints?"

One of them regards me with an expression of extreme boredom, and nods. "Two clean sets. Two more on the knob to Mr. Kean's office. The lab will have the results tonight, if you're still on duty. Coroner said he'll be here in an hour, so his report will most likely be ready by tonight too. Oh, and in case you're wondering, we also dusted the staircase to the office."

Elaine Marquette says, "One of the prints will be mine. I opened both doors this morning."

"Before you ask," Mr Bored EMT says. "We already took the ladies' prints."

The second EMT chips in. "Took pictures of the crime scene too. So, poke around if you need to."

I pull white latex gloves over my hands, and speak to secretaries. "When you arrived this morning, was the door locked?"

"Unlocked," Miss Marquette answers. "Florence and I don't have keys, and we saw Mr. Kean lock the door when we left yesterday at 6pm. That's why I rushed upstairs this morning. I thought maybe someone had picked the lock or something. His office door was closed, but also unlocked. I opened it and we both saw... everything."

Miss Kennedy adds, "He always came downstairs to lock the door at 6pm—even when he was scheduled to see business associates after

hours."

"And was he scheduled to see anyone after 6pm last night?"

Both secretaries shake their heads. "But," Miss Kennedy adds, raising a finger, "that's hardly conclusive. He often saw people without appointments. People like Solomon Chancer and Katherine Hill because..."

I hold up my hand, stalling her. Then I point at the door behind them. "I sincerely appreciate your co-operation, Miss Kennedy, but would you mind if I look around before getting back to you about those two people?"

Both secretaries shake their heads, and step out of my way.

I lean down to inspect the doorknob. No signs of forced entry. Not a single scratch to suggest lockpicking. Next, I nudge the door open with my foot, not touching the doorknob, and when I enter the reception room, the scent of wax polish hits my nose. The wall directly opposite the entrance features three paintings, each as mundane as a traffic jam. Literally—they depict scenes of snarled New York traffic.

"Nothing esoteric there," I mumble.

To the far left of the room, I see an iron staircase spiralling up, presumably to Mr. Kean's office and private rooms. On either side of the staircase, I see a mahogany desk, each with an Underwood typewriter. Notepads and pencils are arranged around each typewriter—tidy enough to make an army barracks look like a slob-fest.

I take a few seconds to let my eyes wonder. Nothing stands out, so I ascend the stairs, looking everywhere for evidence. Nothing obvious. On the landing to Sean Kean's office, I stop to peer inside the room. The door is completely open, giving me a good view.

Now that I was seeing him again, I felt sure Mr. Kean had been in his early fifties. He'd been a lean, vulpine man, with a thin nose and a neatly trimmed, white beard. Death had not yet swollen his body or produced any

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

smell. His charcoal suit probably cost more than my apartment. Judging by the bloody mess all over his torso, he'd been stabbed multiple times. Not sure I'd need the coroner's opinion on the cause of death.

"No defensive wounds on his arms or hands," I muse.

His hands had been arranged on his chest in a pious gesture—palms together, like he'd been praying.

A dagger had been placed in Kean's hands with the pommel resting on his chin and the blade between his palms, leaving the wooden grip free. The dagger's guard—the part that would protect your hand from slipping onto the blade—resembled two knobs.

Stepping as carefully as a soldier in a minefield, I enter the room. The floor is covered with a beautiful oriental rug, stained with blood beneath the corpse. I see no footprints in the blood. There is a fireplace to my right, a large cherrywood desk in front of me—just behind the corpse—and behind that is a door. The walls are painted white and I'd expected to see paintings. Instead, every inch is covered in crude shapes, drawn with red chalk. I see multiple number 9s drawn in various degrees of clarity, but always the right side up, so there's no mistaking it for a 6. I see several roughly equilateral triangles and note they always point to the ceiling, their flat sides facing the floor. Stepping closer, I see the word, *thief* repeated several times beneath the flat sides of some of the triangles. Stepping behind the desk, I see a matching cherrywood chair. The desk is empty. There are five drawers on each side and, as gently as possible, I open each one. All I find is an empty chequebook, an unused notepad and some loose change.

I straighten up and look out the window to the right of the desk, looking down on the EMTs and their van. Nothing else about the scene stands out to me, so I proceed to the door behind the desk.

It leads to Mr. Keans' private rooms, and you

couldn't find a more Spartan setup inside a monastery. The single bed in the centre of the narrow room looks comfortable enough, and the mattress is a good brand when I check it, but I'd expected something more illustrious for an art dealer. The walls are bare, except for more triangles with the word *thief* underneath them, and the number 9. All in red chalk. There's no bedside table, but the closet is as large as I'd expected. Inside, I find a wide selection of extremely expensive suits, dress shirts, ties and shoes. I take a long time rifling through all of them but find nothing suspicious. Ditto the small bathroom attached to the bedroom.

"Time for the secretaries."

To interview Elaine Marquette go to [7-0527 on p.41](#), and then return here.

If you have circled **Marker J1** in your case log, go to [4-0407 on p.26](#).

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to [4-4194 on p.28](#).

To interview Florence Kennedy go to [7-4809 on p.42](#), and then return here.



6

“With Elaine. She can confirm that.”



Circle **Marker J1** in your case log.



6-3655

208 W. 23rd St, CS (apt. 1d)

I knock on the white door to Miss Florence Kennedy’s apartment, but no one answers.



6-4804

881 8th Ave, HK

If it is **day 1** (Thu Oct 12), go to [4-5671 \(p.29\)](#)

If it is **day 2** (Fri Oct 13), go to [2-1914 \(p.19\)](#)



6-8902

8-1224 (p.47) contd.

“I heard you were caught breaking into Katherine Hill’s house.”

“Dammit. Please don’t tell Elaine. Yes, I... Look, the woman has five of the Artois Nine. Five! We only have three. All I wanted was for her to give us permission to study them, but she turned us down. Then, I decided to just try and examine them on my own, but I got caught. I had no intention of stealing anything.”

“And that’s when Sean Kean got you under his spell?”

“Yes. He wanted me to spy on the Order of the Painted Smile and let him know if we ever discovered the last of the Nine.”

“Where were you last night?”

7

7-0527

5-9707 (p.37) *contd.*

Down in the reception room, I open the front door and ask Miss Elaine Marquette to join me.

“How late did you arrive here this morning?”

“At 8am, as always. Florence and I always arrive at the same time, though we live in different directions from here. We’re good friends.”

“Did you see the chalk scribbles on the walls in Mr. Kean’s office?”

She shifts uncomfortably, but straightens her shoulders. “You mean the triangles, the word *thief* and the number 9s? We both saw them. He’s been drawing them on the walls for... the last two months. Sometimes, Florence and I could hear him mumbling to himself up there.”

“Did you ever catch any coherent words?”

“None, I’m afraid, apart from the few times when he’d open his office window to yell for someone to stop watching him. Every time it happened, Florence and I rushed to the entrance to look around, but we never saw anyone. There was no pattern to this yelling or his mumbling that we could make it out.”

“It seemed to me the body had been posed. Did you notice that?”

“You mean the hands, with the blade between them?”

“Exactly. Does that mean anything to you?”

“No, Detective. I’m afraid I can’t say anything about the significance of the pose.”

“Thank you. Now, earlier you mentioned a

Mr. Solomon Chancer and a Katherine Hill. Could you tell me more about them?”

The change in topic seems to lighten Miss Marquette’s mood. “If being creepy were an Olympic sport, Mr. Chancer would win gold every time. I’ve seen him give Florence a look you might call appraising. But in terms of his actual business with Mr. Kean, it was Mr. Chancer’s job to find paintings of *esoteric* significance.”

It was my turn to fidget, embarrassed by my ignorance. Miss Marquette didn’t miss it and asked, “You do understand what I’m talking about, right Detective Axeman?”

I sigh. “Between you and me, I wouldn’t mind a primer, Miss Marquette.”

She laughs, warm and genuine. “My word, Detective Axeman! The NYPD sent a clown to do a surgeon’s job! Or maybe a priest’s.” She clamps a hand over her mouth. “Apologies. That was uncouth. Let me help you out. It’s about magic!” She waves her hands in a dramatic gesture, green eyes wide, mouth grinning. “There are some Renaissance paintings that were, apparently, created as repositories of special knowledge.”

I struggle to keep from rolling my eyes. “What kind of knowledge?”

She shrugs. “Immortality, maybe. How to avoid income tax, I don’t know. Most likely anything from the divine to the profane. I don’t know about the details, but most of the serious collectors here in the US care nothing for that mumbo jumbo. People like Mrs. Katherine Hill, for example. She just cares for its monetary value, but I’ve heard rumours about people who believe that if they can just read the clues in the paintings, they can... I don’t know what, if I’m honest.”

“Think this *esoteric* stuff might have something to do with the murder?”

Her face falls. “I’m no Sherlock Holmes, Detective Axeman, but who knows? To be honest, I’ve hardly seen any of these purport-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

edly magic paintings. Mr. Chancer brings them here all wrapped up and people like Mrs. Katherine Hill pick them up that way. Sometimes she has Florence and I unwrap them just to show off. Mostly, it's gory scenes of death or torture, or just the usual saints and angels stuff, or scenes from Greek mythology like the Trojan War."

"Thank you, Miss Marquette. Can you think of anything else that might help?"

"Nothing now, but you can swing by during the day and I'll let you know. Florence and I will still be here settling accounts and such."

I clear my throat and point at her engagement ring. "If you don't mind me asking, who is the lucky fella?"

She blushes prettily and the morning sunlight flashes off her white teeth. "Daniel Murphy. He's a freelance art-restorer."



Circle **Marker E1** in your case log.

Return to [5-9707 \(p.37\)](#).



7-0547

1-9971 ([p.17](#)) *contd.*

This time, I have a buzzing bee in my bonnet, and I head straight towards the office of the man leading the investigation into Timo Meriga.

"Sorry, Ben," he says. "There's still no evidence to suggest he's ever killed anyone. We have some new leads on the art angle. He might have forged a few pieces, but it's all up in the air still. Not much movement."

"Know where I can find him?"

My contact eyes me. "You're not going to mess up my investigation are you?"

"I just want a few civil words with Mr. Meriga. He might be connected to someone in a mur-

der case I've taken on." I hold up two fingers. "Scout's honour, I won't do anything stupid. Just tell me where I can find him."

"Fine, Ben, but you owe me one. Last I heard, he was staying at the Chelsea Hotel, though he moves around like a gigolo, so who knows if he's still there."



7-4809

5-9707 ([p.37](#)) *contd.*

I call Florence Kennedy to join me inside the reception room.

"Can you tell me anything about the red scribbles on the walls or the way the body was posed?"

Miss Kennedy starts nibbling her fingernails. "I saw Mr. Kean's hands had been pressed together, almost like he was praying. I've seen that sort of pose in some of the catalogues for Renaissance paintings—like in the pious stuff with saints, but without the knife."

"What about the scribbles?"

"You mean the triangles, the word *thief* and the number 9? No idea, but Elaine and I have noticed Mr. Kean gradually drawing more and more of those on his walls for the last two months."

"Did anything unusual happen two months ago?"

"Nothing Elaine and I noticed."

"What about this Mr. Solomon Chancer?"

"Oh, he's a Greek man. Goes around the world finding paintings for Mr. Kean to sell."

"What's your impression of Mr. Chancer?"

Miss Kennedy frowns and stops biting her nails. "I'd never suspect him of murder. He seems... a genteel sort. I think that's the word. Like a man from an older world. He has a certain... old school politeness in his manners."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Oh, I asked him about the triangles once, but he had no idea what they meant.”

“Does Mr. Chancer live in New York?”

“Oh, no. He drops by from time to time, bringing paintings all wrapped up. Sometimes he shows me some of them. They’re beautiful. Vibrant and colourful, mostly stuff from Greek or Roman mythology, because Renaissance painters had a thing for it, but nothing like Mr. Kean’s pose that I remember. To be honest, I’m not even sure *Solomon Chancer* is his real name.”

“Do you know where he might be found when he’s in New York?”

“The Adelphi Hotel.”

“Thank you. If you don’t mind me asking, how do you know that’s where I might find him?”

She blushes. “Oh, he’s invited me there a few times. I didn’t accept.”

“What about Mrs. Katherine Hill?”

“Widow. Wealthy as Croesus. Lives alone in some mansion in Gramercy Park. Apparently, she has a much-prized collection of Renaissance works, but I’ve never seen them, except when she makes Elaine and I unwrap some of those that come through here.”

“On that subject, what’s the difference between *esoteric* art and other types?”

Miss Kennedy rolls her eyes. “To be frank, Detective Axeman, I’m not sure. I think some people believe there are paintings with hidden codes or such things in them, but surely no one takes that kind of thing seriously, or if they do, they’d hardly admit it.” Miss Kennedy frowns again. “There’s one other thing I should mention. Monday last week, just before closing time at 6pm, a man showed up. Elaine had slipped away a little earlier with Daniel Murphy—that’s her fiancé—so I was here alone. He was wearing a black coat and a black homburg, sort of like yours. He was a short man with long, dark curly hair and old acne scars on his cheeks. I opened the door

when he knocked. He turned his collar up and asked to see Mr. Kean. So, I went upstairs to fetch him. Mr. Kean went red in the face and told me to leave. Actually, he yelled at me to get out. I did, but I was worried about him, so I just walked round the corner and kept an eye on the door. Mr. Kean came out, locked up behind himself and... well...” Miss Kennedy’s face turns redder still. “I sort of followed the pair of them. Mr. Kean shouted at the man to never visit him at work again. The other man appeared nonplussed. Then the two of them walked off and I followed. Turns out they were walking in the direction of my apartment anyway, but they passed it, and went on for a few blocks. I saw them stop outside the Bathtub Gin Bar. It looked to me like they exchanged something, and then Mr. Kean went inside, and the curly-haired man left. I went home at that point.”

“Thank you, Miss Kennedy. Anything else?”

“Nothing I can think of at the moment, but Elaine and I will be here for the rest of the day and most likely tomorrow, too, if you want to ask more questions.”

I turn to leave, then stop. “Actually, just one more question. You mentioned Miss Marquette’s fiancé—Daniel Murphy. What’s your impression of him?”

“Well, I haven’t met him often. Elaine speaks highly of him, obviously. She’s a dear friend and it looks like I have every reason to be happy for her.” She purses her mouth as though she were chewing worms. “That said...”

“Yes?” I prompted.

“Well... I once overheard an argument between him and Mr. Kean. This was also last week Monday—the day I followed Mr. Kean. It was just before Daniel took Elaine away, so around 5.45pm. Elaine was waiting for Daniel outside and I went up to the office to ask about... something, I don’t recall what. Anyway, I overheard Daniel say something like, *I’m sick and tired of you looking over my

shoulder *. Then he said something about his loyalty to someone, but I didn't catch the details."

"Thank you."

 Circle **Marker F1** in your case log.

Return to [5-9707 \(p.37\)](#).



7-5838

1 Bowling Green, FD-87

If it is **day 1 (Thu Oct 12)**, go to [2-5816 \(p.20\)](#)

If it is **day 2 (Fri Oct 13)**, go to [5-4581 \(p.35\)](#)



7-7082

134 Ninth Ave, CS

The bar is run by an old friend of mine, and I smile as I step inside. He's portly with a hairless pate, but his upper lip compensates with a walrus moustache.

"Morning, Ben," he says in a Boston accent. His tone is one part warm welcome and two parts caution—no ice. "Here on business?"

"Afraid so, Max, but no worries. It's nothing about you or this place—not directly." I produce a picture of Mr. Sean Kean, supplied by Florence Kennedy. "Just tell me if you know this man."

Normally, I'd be more subtle, but Max's place was nearly empty. He took his time studying the picture, then nodded. "I do. Comes in regular. Every Monday evening for the last two and a half months, between 6 and 7."

"Alone or with company?"

"Usually, there's a man with him, but he stops by the door. Never comes in. Shabby black

coat, black hat. Never saw his face. Then your man comes in and he sits way over there in the corner. Sometimes he just waits all alone and leaves. Other times, another man joins him. Beige coat and brown fedora. Easy to remember on account of how he never takes off his hat, like he's hiding his face. Sometimes, the two of them exchange harsh words—nothing I can hear, but I get the tone."

"What about last Monday?"

"Last Monday, your man was alone. The week before, Mr Brown Fedora was with him. I keep my nose out of client's business, as you know, but I remember seeing some old, ratty paper on the table between them. Wait... not paper... There's a word for that sort of thing." He clicks his fingers as if that would produce the right word.

"Manuscript?" I offer.

"Right, you are. Manuscript." He glances over my shoulder and, following his gaze, I see several young couples enter the bar. "If you don't mind, Ben."

"No problem, Max. Reputation is everything. Just one last question. Did you happen to see anything about this manuscript that might help me identify it?"

"Afriad not, Ben. I only caught one quick glance at it—what with me minding my own business and all. I saw a triangle in one corner and that's it. The rest of it was covered in tiny scribbles."

 Circle **Marker D1** in your case log.



7-8245

240 Centre St, LI-34

Armed with strong coffee and a cold sandwich, I work hard to ascertain whether any of my people of interest have a criminal record.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

I find a file matching the description Florence Kennedy had mentioned. A short man with long, dark curly hair and old acne scars on his cheeks. His name is Iwo Dudek.



7-8820

208 W. 23rd St, CS (apt. 1c)

There's no answer at room 1C.



8

8-0598

4-3847 (p.27) *contd.*

“What can you tell me about a group called the Order of the Painted Smile?”

Mr. Hennessey blinks, his mouth falling open. “How the heck did you find out about that?”

I stay silent until he closes his mouth and answers. “Good grief, Detective Hatchet, you’ve got special knowledge up the wazoo. Um, well. The Order of the Painted Smile is interested in esoteric knowledge. They believe that some Medieval and Renaissance paintings contain hidden symbols which, if interpreted correctly, can teach people to access said esoteric knowledge.”

“What kind of knowledge?”

“Immortality.”

“Are you a member of this group?”

Mr. Hennessey runs both hands through his dishevelled hair. “I am, but I cannot say I share the group’s core beliefs.”

“Then, why are you a member?”

He lowers his hands, crosses them over his chest and looks me dead in the eye. “Because I needed the money. I joined in my early twenties. I’d already started working in the art world, and a member of the group got me involved, promising to fund further studies. That’s how I can afford to be a freelance art appraiser today.”

“Who recruited you?”

“Daniel Murphy. He’d only been a member for a few years before inviting me in, but he said they saw potential in my brains and they’d fund my studies, all of which they did.”

“Can you identify the other members of this order?”

“No, I can’t. We... my word, I know this sounds crazy, but Daniel is the only one I’ve met outside formal meetings and... well, we wear masks and hoods during meetings. So, I cannot identify any other members of the order.”

“Do you know whether the order had any dealings with Mr. Kean?”

“Oh, someone from the order almost certainly did. Mr. Kean was renowned for his ability to find paintings of esoteric interest. I don’t know which member would have liaised with him, but someone would have done, hoping he’d be able to find something special.”

“So, you were not in the habit of meeting Mr. Kean?”

“No. Like I said before, I’d never met him in person.”

“Where does the order meet?”

“I can’t tell you without feeling like I’m betraying them. Unless you bring a court order, I’m not going to answer that question. Sorry.”

“Maybe you can answer this one. I have it on good authority that the Order of the Painted Smile bought a certain dagger from an antique store. Do you know where it is?”

“Well, I can tell you I was the one who bought it on behalf of the Order, and it’s right this way.”

Mr. Hennessey leads me to a small, black safe bolted to the wall. Pulling a tiny key from one of his pockets, he opens the safe and lets me peer inside. I see a dagger, nearly identical to the one at the crime scene.

“These are called bollock daggers,” Mr. Hennessey says. “They were quite popular during the late Medieval and Renaissance periods. Many of them were made in roughly the same style.”

“Thank you, Mr. Hennessey.”



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

8-1095

520 W. 22nd St, CS

I keep my distance while the huge officer, dressed in plain clothes, talks to the red-headed smuggler with the spiderweb tattoo on his neck. Eventually, the huge man, whose name was never shared with me, returns.

“Got news for you. He says he sold an old Wembley revolver to a man from Chelsea yesterday around noon.”

“Did he have a name for this buyer?”

“Nope, but he gave me this description. Apparently, the buyer looked like *a scholarly type*. He had dirty blond hair, all tousled. Round glasses. Brown eyes. Mid-thirties.”



8-1224

345 W. 30th St, CS

Daniel Murphy turns out to be a handsome, smartly dressed man with extremely white, extremely even teeth, and dark hair, cut short. He’s an art restorer by profession—big on art, not big on talking. He leads me into a large room with plenty of sunlight, where his restoration projects are on display.

If you have circled **Marker F1** in your case log, go to [3-5806 on p.23](#).

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to [4-5997 on p.31](#).

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to [3-8490 on p.24](#).

If you have circled **Marker H1** in your case log, go to [6-8902 on p.40](#).

If you have circled **Marker L1** in your case log, go to [2-5995 on p.20](#).



8-3475

332 W. 23rd St, CS-53

Two old men are playing chess in the reception hall of Leo’s German Boarding House. I flash my badge and ask if they know Florence Kennedy.

“Can’t say I recognise the name,” the player of the black side says without looking up from the board. I give him a description, which deepens his frown, until his eyes sparkle. “Oh, yeah. She walks up and down the street. On her way to work and back I’d guess. Probably... 7:30ish in the mornings and somewhere later in the day. You know her, John?” he asks his competitor.

The player of white side shakes his head. “Recognise her description, but never talked to her. Check.”

I press on. “Have either of you seen anything suspicious around here lately?”

The competitors shake their heads in unison. “A clown could be stalking up and down the streets every day and I’m not sure we’d notice. Too busy with the great game.” He points at the chessboard.



8-6841

470 W. 23rd St, CS-52

If it is **day 1 (Thu Oct 12)**, go to [4-6491 \(p.31\)](#)

If it is **day 2 (Fri Oct 13)**, go to [4-9100 \(p.32\)](#)



8-9210

233 5th Ave, GP

I talk my way into the manager’s office at the Gramercy branch of the Chase Bank, and discover that Mrs. Katherine Hill does, in

fact, have an account with them, but there's been no suspicious behaviour in her financial habits.



8-9869

31 Chambers St, 3rd Fl., CC-36

If it is **day 1** (Thu Oct 12), go to [2-7145](#) (p.20)

If it is **day 2** (Fri Oct 13), go to [4-0174](#) (p.26)



DOCUMENTS

STOP!



Do **not** access the documents section unless directed to retrieve a specific document.

Document 1

Sample document

Sample document.

END

Conclusion

I enter my home, dog-tired, and switch on the radio:

“Good evening, New York. This is WNYC, Manhattan’s voice on the airwaves. Police have confirmed the arrest of Garreth Hennessey in connection with the brutal slaying of Chelsea art dealer Sean Kean. An NYPD spokesperson said Mr. Hennessey, a known associate in the city’s antiques trade, was taken into custody without incident earlier today. Authorities believe the killing took place late Wednesday evening inside Kean’s premises. Hennessey is expected to be arraigned tomorrow morning at Manhattan Criminal Court. Stay tuned to WNYC for further developments.”

24 January 1935

I open my mail and discover an invitation to the wedding of Florence Kennedy and Timo Meriga.

12 October 1953.

“Good evening, New York. This is WNYC, Manhattan’s voice on the airwaves. In social news, Mrs. Katherine Hill—that renowned and wealthy art collector—is hosting an exhibition at her private home. The centrepiece of this exhibition will be the famed Artois Nine. Mrs. Hill completed her collection back in November 1933. Interest in these strange paintings have recently intensified almost to the same degree as our astonishment at Mrs Hill’s vibrant energy and good health, despite her many years.”



Questions

Questions here. Each question is worth five points.

- Question 1: Who murdered Sean Kean?
- Question 2: Describe the two motives that drove the murder/s.
- Question 3: How did the murderer procure the murder weapon?
- Question 4: What caused Sean Kean's erratic behaviour?
- Question 5: What was Iwo Dudek's relationship with Sean Kean?
- Question 6: What is the significance of the two fingerprints on the outer door handle to Sean Kean's office and the entrance to his place of business?
- Question 7: Who witnessed the murder of Sean Kean?
- Question 8: Who murdered Iwo Dudek?
- Question 9: Why was Iwo Dudek murdered?
- Question 10: Who painted the forged Artois painting?

- Answer 1: Garreth Hennessey.
- Answer 2: Sean Kean stole one of the Artois Nine from Garreth Hennessey's father, who worked for Sean Kean in a capacity similar to Solomon Chancer. When Kean stole the painting from Garreth's father, the latter became destitute and committed suicide. This can be confirmed by interviewing Solomon Chancer, and visiting the Register of Births and Deaths. Garreth Hennessey was also motivated by the discovery that Sean Kean had sold a fake Artois to the Order of the Painted Smile. This was the final straw for him.
- Answer 3: Garreth Hennessey bought the dagger from an antique store in The Bowery (Monaldo and Dudek). He understood that using the dagger, which he and Daniel had bought for the Order, was too risky.
- Answer 4. Sean Kean was using cocaine to deal with the pain following his fight with Solomon Chancer.
- Answer 5. Iwo Dudek was supplying Sean Kean with cocaine.
- Answer 6. Garreth Hennessey cleaned the door handles, wiping away his fingerprints. Elaine Marquette's fingerprints were left on the door handles when she arrived the next morning. This means that Iwo Dudek's fingerprints must have been left on the doorhandles after the murder, but before Elaine's arrival.
- Answer 7. Iwo Dudek.
- Answer 8. Garreth Hennessey.
- Answer 9. Iwo Dudek witnessed Garreth exiting Sean Kean's place of business covered in blood. He entered, and saw Sean Kean's body. Iwo Dudek had arrived at the art store to try and push more cocaine on Sean Kean.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

- Answer 10. Timo Meriga. He can be found by speaking to the doorman of Florence Kennedy's apartment.



Final Scoring

Calculate your final score by assessing how well you answered each question, assigning partial credit as you see fit.



Behind the Scenes: Postscript from the Author

Behind the scenes



Full Walkthrough



HINTS

STOP!



Do **not** access the hints section except when looking up a specific hint from the table of contents at the start of this case book.

Hints are here.