Odd Jobs 1 - The Invitation

A Case for New York Noir

by Marthinus Conradie

v3.1 - 6/23/25

SUMMARY

Iris Faith has recently discovered her magic, and is being mentored by a man who does 'odd jobs' for the NYPD. Tonight, she hits the streets with him for the first time. (This case involves magic as a centerpiece of its deductions. It is intended to introduce players to a specific system of magical investigations.)

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Instructions

To play this case you will need the v3 base document set from New York Noir (https://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
C1	C2	C3
D1	D2	D3
E1	E2	E3
F1	F2	F3
G1	G2	G3
H1	H2	H3
I1	I2	I3
J1	J2	J3
K1	K2	K3
L1	L2	L3
M1	M2	M3
N1	N2	N3
O1	O2	O3
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

CULTURE

OTHER

OTHER TAGS

TRACKS

IRP

DOCUMENTS

1
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9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
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NEW YORK NOIR – DAILY LOG SHEET

____ Day# ____ Day of Week ____ Date

TIME	LEAD		NOTES	RETURN?
			SCHEDULED EVENTS	REQUIRED?

Day One

Introduction

11:30 PM - Wednesday, September 15th, 1937

There was crimson lipstick on the folded piece of paper in my mentor's hand. He was holding the paper aloft, as if we were standing inside a lecture hall at Oxford instead of his brownstone in the heart of Chelsea.

"Exhibit one! A love letter," he announced. His accent marked him as a Brit. An upper crust Brit. It was annoying. And sexy as hell. Like his pencil moustache and square jaw.

"Um… Good for you… I guess," I muttered, not sure where this was going. "And why am I holding a baseball?"

He chuckled, slipping the letter back into the chest pocket of his white shirt. "The ball is for illustrating a basic principle of magic. Please throw it at me. Aim for the spot between my eyes."

We were standing in the centre of his library, on the second storey of his brownstone, which afforded us a large, open space to work with.

I gave him the fisheye. "You're serious?"

He winked at me. "Perhaps you lack the strength, or precision?"

Age difference be damned—I had a huge crush on him. Luckily, I managed to avoid blushing.

He continued in a mocking tone. "I had been led to believe that all you Americans knew how to pitch a baseball. Even American girls." He used his white-gloved hands to frame either side of his face. "Go on."

I rolled my eyes, trying to look as bratty as possible. "Fine," I said in my New Jersey accent. "But you're going to the hospital alone." I rolled my shoulders theatrically, as if to loosen tight muscles. "Okey dokey. On the count of three. One… two—." Before finishing the count, I cocked my arm and hurled the ball at him. Just to be on the safe side, I didn't aim for his face. Just his solar plexus.

I needn't have bothered. The baseball hit an invisible barrier, maybe an inch from his body, lost all momentum, and dropped harmlessly to the wooden floor. It didn't even bounce. A few seconds later, I realised my mouth was hanging open.

"How'd you do that?" I stammered.

On the desk behind me, the phone rang, making me jump like a professional athlete. My mentor wasn't gentlemanly enough to keep from laughing. Walking past me to the desk, he patted my arm and picked up the phone, still chuckling—the handsome bastard.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“You have reached the home of Morten Hooks,” he said. “Ah, Detective Hatchet, how can I… My word. I see. As fast as a cab can carry us. Yes,” he said, turning to lock his blue eyes on mine, “both of us are coming. I insist. No, she recently turned twenty. She’ll be fine.”

Morten’s eyes never left mine as he put the phone down. “Kid,”—damn, but I hated when he called me that. I could think of other things I’d prefer him to call me. Like ‘girlfriend’. “Remember me saying that I do ‘odd jobs’ for the Manhattan constabulary? Well, tonight you discover what that entails.”

For the second time in two minutes, my mouth dropped open. “Really?” Normally, I stayed cooped up in the library when he ventured out. “Where are we going?”

“East 71st. Someone bumped off Harry Harper.”

“The crime lord?” My chest started fizzing with excitement.

“Alleged crime lord. Off we go.” He grabbed his indigo tweed suit jacket, black bowler, and we were off.

Special instructions for play-testers:

When you are ready to end day 1, go to 3-9258 (p.38).

There are no questions to answer at the end. Instead, finish Day 2 and, when you feel you have solved the case, read the late night leads starting on p.11. Then, read the conclusion and see how accurate your deductions were. (Please provide feedback on whether this was a satisfying case.)

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.

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

1-1241

2-4114 (p.24) contd.

Thomas Nelson was as happy to see us again as mice are to see feral cats. When he opened the door, his eyes shot wide open, while he attempted to shut the door in our faces, but Morten stuck his boot in, blocking the young lawyer's attempt.

I chimed in. "Come now, Thomas. All we want is an amicable chat about your mate John Winter."

Morten forced his shoulder into the doorway and Thomas relented, allowing us inside.

"You said nothing about John not coming home with you from the Lion's Head," I reprimanded the lawyer with a tisk. "How do you think that makes me feel?"

"You didn't ask!" Thomas shouted, but he made his way into the kitchen, where he put the kettle on and started making coffee, his genteel manners taking over. We followed on his heels. "Apologies. Shouting never helps."

"Judge Winter's secretary is worried about John's wellbeing," I prompted.

"She's a lovely lady. John likes her."

"Now, don't you go changing the subject, Thomas. What do you know about John's adventure last night?" I pushed.

"Look, you need to understand something about John," he said, and something about his tone told me was actually relieved to be telling someone—as if he needed the little scene at the door to make himself believe he was only disclosing this information under duress. "John is... unique. He has this strange obsession with being some kind of crime fighting hero. Milk? Sugar?"

"Milk, yes," I answered. "No sugar. I'm sweet enough as I am. You were saying?" I accepted a steaming cup of coffee from him. "So, what? John goes out picking fights with hoodlums or something?"

Thomas passed a cup of coffee to Morten, who took it, but wouldn't drink it. "That's how it started. Just troublemakers around the Lion's Head—especially men who endangered women. But then he met this reporter. Matters escalated. About a month ago, I confided in John about Harry Harper, Richard Forslund and Bruno Larsson trying to recruit me. Apparently, all three had been doing the same with his father—like it was some sick game. John told me that those three were hardly the ones we should be worried about. He said someone else was... good grief this sounds crazy... collecting documents with which to do magic. John got all passionate about it and, to be honest, after a while he stopped making much in the way of sense."

Thomas blew out a long breath and collapsed into a chair, like a deflating balloon. "That's the long and the short of it."

Morten asked, "Do you know where John is right now?"

"No. He didn't come home last night... Well, you know that already. I reckon he'll be back before the end of the day."

"Do you know the name of this reporter friend of his?"

"Cunn.. something. To be honest, I wasn't paying much attention."

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1-1383

6-0448 (p.56) contd.

I stepped up to the door, working on a hunch. "Because Father Forthill wouldn't approve. I like the old man. Wouldn't want to disappoint him."

"You know Father Forthill? Well… Dammit. Get inside before anyone sees you. The building is almost certainly being watched." A chain rattled, and the door opened to reveal a man with wavy blonde hair, deep dimples framing his mouth, and a crooked nose. That much I had expected. What I had not expected was the shiner on one cheek, or the way he limped to let us in.

We wasted no time getting inside and—yep, it was as shabby as I'd expected, and reeking of sweat. Threadbare curtains covered all the windows. A weak oil lamp cast orange light over scarred, second-hand furniture and faded rugs. A small, round table in the centre of the sitting room played host to a bottle of bourbon, two glasses, and a white Stetson hat. Not far from the table, I saw a couch, and the recumbent form of what I assumed to be John Winter.

"Johnny," Cunningham called. "Allies have arrived. Partners in the quest for justice." He turned sharply and looked me in the eye. "You are here to help, right?"

"Yep," I answered. "Angels of justice. That's us."

"Good! Sit down! Have a drink!"

Morten and I remained standing, letting our eyes adjust to the dim light.

"What happened to Mr John Winter?" Morten enquired.

In answer, the young man on the couch gave a low groan, and Cunningham plopped himself down on the armrest of the couch. He rested his face in his hands and started raking his hair.

"Where to begin? Ask me questions, and I'll answer."

"Okay," I said. "First off, is John okay? His father's secretary and aspiring wife wants to know."

"Battered and bruised. Sprained wrist and ankle, but he'll live."

"Who's responsible?" I asked.

Cunningham looked up at me, opened his mouth, then snapped it shut. A full minute later, he said. "Even with the old padre's endorsement, I don't fully trust you. Not yet. But I'll give you this. Visit Father Forthill again. Ask him about Daniel Fasbender. After that, maybe try Azure Phoenix Traders."

Morten stepped in, "Can you give us a physical description of your attacker?"

"Sure can. We won't though. Not us." He emphasised the last two words.

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

"Fine," Morten said. "Tell us how the attack played out. You don't have to give us names."

Cunningham winced, presumably from the memory of the attack. "Lexigraphic resonance."

I blinked, surprised that this reporter knew about magic.

"Kinetic blasts," he continued. "Felt like getting beat up with invisible truncheons. Nearly broke my leg. Most of it was aimed at Johnny, though. It's what you get for wearing a stupid hat and a stupid mask. Johnny did his best to fight back. Found a broken brick on the sidewalk and threw it right at… our attacker. The brick didn't land. It just bounced off some invisible shield around the man's body."

"Do you know how he was doing it?" Morten asked.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Cunningham shook his head slowly as if afraid it might fall off. "You mean, what text was he using as fuel for his attacks? No idea. Something brimming with anger like the Red Sea with salt."

Circle **Marker S1** in your case log.

If you have circled **Marker J1** in your case log, go to 6-8545 on p.58

Circle **Marker B2** in your case log.

Circle **Marker C2** in your case log.

1-2117

I had expected Judge Samuel Winters to be living the high life. I was bang on.

As we stepped into the elevator of the lavish and exclusive Lerner Apartments, which was manned by a servant in a dapper maroon suit, Morten commented, "Judge Winter is almost literally atop the world."

The old man operating the elevator gave him a look suggesting that gossiping about tenants might get us kicked out. I sure would have liked to see anyone try and throw Morten out.

When we had reached the Judge's apartment, I wasn't surprised to discover that it combined his office and living quarters. The foyer to his office was guarded by a middle-aged secretary, primly dressed and tastefully made up.

The woman opened her mouth to ask about our business when the judge himself threw back the doors, and demanded the same information. He was short for a man—his eyes and mine were roughly on the same level, but he was bigger in other ways. He reminded me of a boxer, his neat white shirt straining across his chest—though, perhaps his stomach was starting to go soft. The cleft in his chin still looked handsome, and the grey hairs at his temples suited him.

Morten explained our business, but the judge declined to give us a second of his time. Once he'd closed his office doors behind him, however, his secretary motioned us closer.

"Don't mind him, darlings. He's been under enough strain to bend steel." She gave me a conspiratorial wink and added, "Bark's worse than his bite, dear, and once I marry him, I'll make a civilised man of him." Her face darkened, and she glanced back at the door, as if worried that Judge Winter might be eavesdropping. "You said you were helping the police?"

Morten let me take the lead, so I said, "That's right, Miss...?"

"Lockerby. Gina Lockerby. Meet me in the lobby downstairs in ten minutes."

We complied and, ten minutes later, Miss Lockery—the aspiring Mrs Winter—met us, ordering coffee and two ridiculously large pieces of cake for each of us. I ate mine in seconds. Hey! Investigating is hungry work!

"For the last three months, Samuel's been receiving unpleasant visitors."

"Uh-huh," I mumbled interest through a mouthful of cake.

"Between you and me, representatives from three, 'real estate magnates' have been here on a regular basis."

"Real estate magnates?" Morten enquired.

"That's Samuel's term for men who are high up in organised crime, but against whom no proof seems to avail the authorities. Whether they are actually involved in real estate, I don't know, but I was listening at the keyhole whenever those

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men came by. Great big brutes, every one of them."

"Like they had bears in their family trees?" I asked, and she laughed. "So, what did the bears want?" I asked after swallowing a lump of sugary heaven.

"Influence," she hissed, as if the word were a lethal curse. "They wanted to bribe him—wanted him in their pockets. Apparently, all three 'real estate magnates' were jostling to outbid the other—like jockeys in a horse race."

Morten chimed in, "Do you know the names of the men who employed the thugs?"

She drew herself up, evidently proud of her eavesdropping acumen. "They were thick enough to mention names, if you can believe that: Harry Harper, Richard Forslund, and Bruno Larsson. Samuel discussed the matter with me openly. He said: all three men had invited him to write to them personally, so they could 'hammer out an amicable agreement'. He had turned them all down—told them to go to hell. But, to be honest, I was worried that, eventually, those three bullies would try brute force instead of money."

"So," I asked, "is Judge Winter involved in a case related to them?"

"No, not currently. Apparently, the three of them had a bet going about who could get him in their pocket first. Never hurts to have a judge on your side, I imagine."

"Thank you. You've been a tremendous help."

"Once last thing," I chirped before she could leave us. "Upstairs, in the foyer, I noticed a photo of a teenaged boy on a horse. He was wearing a large cowboy hat and some kind of mask. Mind if I ask who that is?"

"Oh," Miss Lockerby said with a smile. "That's Samuel's son from his first marriage. John is all grown up now—twenty-one years old. He lives with us, but I'm sad to say, the father-son relationship is a touch strained. You see, John doesn't seem to have found much direction yet. I get on with him very well. He entertains dreams of doing something grand, or, 'being a hero' as he likes to put it."

"Do you know where we can find him?" Morten asked.

When Miss Lockerby's face twisted with suspicion, I jumped in, "We might need to warn him. It's not impossible that some baddies might cause him grief to pressure his father."

She gasped, but settled down when I promised to look out for Johnny boy's welfare. "Well, he has a room in his father's apartment upstairs—as do I—but recently, he's been spending most of his time with a friend called Thomas Nelson."

"One last question," Morten interjected. "Can you shed light on Judge Winters' whereabouts last night?"

She blushed quite prettily. "We were having dinner. Just the two of us." Her face darkened again. "As a matter of fact, he was discussing the three 'magnates' I just mentioned. I went to bed at… oh, somewhere around… 10:00pm." She glanced at a grand clock on the wall. "I need to get back up to my office. If you don't mind, dear," she said to me, "please do come and see me again if you find out whether John is safe."

Circle **Marker H2** in your case log.

If you have circled **Marker W1** in your case log, go to 2-1228 on p.22.

1-2587

440 Riverside Dr, MS-65 (apt. 1d)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

If it is Day 1: Gertrude Burt did not answer her door.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 4-9392 (p.47)

1-4338

The manager of Parchments & More easily admitted to supplying stationery to a long list of corporate and individual clients. When Morten produced one of the envelopes found on the dead crime lords, the man confirmed that it was their product. However, when we asked to see the list of his clients, the manager turned red and refused pending an official warrant from the police.

"We could ask Hatchet," I suggested.

"Acquiring a warrant could take days," Morten pointed out. "We should seek alternative approaches."

1-4391

540 W. 55th St, HK-11 (apt. pnt)

Walter Fox's apartment was a dump. Hell, the whole building looked as likely to collapse as a drunk old man with weak knees. His rooms were surprisingly spacious, but filthy. Guess he didn't spend much time at home. I ignored the horrid smells from the kitchen, and watched Morten ask the big man questions.

"Can't say who sent that invitation," the bodyguard said in his lumbering voice. "My standing orders were to read all the boss' mail, except in special cases."

"And the criteria for special cases?" Morten asked.

"Letters went directly to the boss if it came from Judge Samuel Winter, Thomas Nelson, Father Bartholomew Forthill, Gertrude Burt and Amanda Burt, or if the envelope said, 'an invitation to dinner'."

Morten narrowed his eyes, a strange expression crossing his face. "Tell me straight, Mr Fox, are you planning on taking the crown from your dead boss?"

The gangster stared at Morten for a long minute. Then he grinned and the sight was as pretty as a serrated knife. "I know more than most about how the business was run. I command the loyalty of enough men to pull it off. Sure. Why not? I deserve it. But if you're thinking that gives me motive for punching the boss' ticket—well, then you know nothing about me. Loyal as a hound, that's me. Now it's my time to rise. So, let me tell you one more thing. I know the two of you are special." He nodded towards me. "Your father was special too. I don't get the details. But when I 'take the crown' as you put it, I might come offering you a job. And I don't take kindly to being turned down. You're not special enough to stop bullets."

If you have circled **Marker F1** in your case log, go to 2-5626 on p.27.

1-5289

"Without an appointment, you don't get to see Mr Frost," the security guard rumbled with voice like rocks wrestling.

"Thank you, sir," Mortem chimed. "How might we go about securing an appointment?"

"Ah," the security guard rumbled. "Now that is a

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matter of precise protocol. See, what you do is, you write a request. Write it on expensive paper in a neat hand. Then what you do is, you go stick on the nearest wall." The guard chucked at his own joke. Then his eyes turned to flint. "If you don't have an existing business connection to Mr Frost, he won't want to see you. So how about you put an egg in your shoe and beat it?"

"You put Shakespeare to shame," Morten quipped as we left.

1-5587

The news stand on East 38th offered a wide range of fashion magazines and celebrity gossip, in addition to the highbrow reports on politics, economics and such. It was being run by a lanky young man with black hair and dark eyes. He seemed keen as mustard to chat with me and I smiled a lot to help him along.

"Yeah, I was here late last night. Believe it or not, but you make loads of sales to couples out walking, or men with dour faces trying to clear their minds of whatever sins they'd been committing." He winked at me and I blushed a little.

"Did you see anything… exciting last night?"

He squirmed a little, then whispered. "Look, I don't want no trouble. I saw something alright, but nothing that should concern a decent girl like yourself."

"You let me make the call on what interests me, okay?"

He shrugged, "Have it your way. So, you see the courier across the street? Reliable Courier?"

"Plain as the nose on your face."

"Late last night, some guy comes walking out of it. Looked rich. Fine suit. Fine shoes. Had a fedora slanted across his face, like he wanted to be a movie star."

"Nothing special about that," I prompted.

"Wait till you hear what happened next. Two guys start tailing him. Now it was looking a lot like some scene from the pictures."

"What did these guys look like?"

"Stupid is what. One of them had a white cowboy hat and a black mask. That got me spooked, but I just stood here staring—bit like an idiot if I'm honest."

"And the other one?"

"Hell, I hardly noticed the other one, given how weird Mr Big Hat was looking. But the real kicker is, Big Hat attacked the rich guy."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, he charged him. Tackled him to the ground. They wrestled, and I was just getting my wits back, and looking around for a cop to call, when Mr Big Hat got up and ran like hell back up East 38th. Looked to me like he had a piece of paper in one hand. The other guy joined him, and the two of them beat it like it was a race."

"What did the rich guy do?

"Strangest thing. He looked after them and just shook his head, like it didn't matter much. Then he laughed, and I'll tell you this: That laugh made my blood run cold. I've seen some rough stuff, even been in a dust up or two. I'm no coward. But that laugh..." he shuddered.

"Thanks a ton. That was super helpful."

"Hey, can I at least get your name in exchange for the story?"

I winked at him. "Maybe I'll come by later and let you have it."

I walked off and joined Morten.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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

1-6465

848 Washington St, HY-4

The Working Children's Soup Kitchen was not the place we'd been looking for. After relating our story, the kind folk over there redirected us to what had been a condemned building on Little West 12th Street.

1-7167

2-5169 (p.25) contd.

"Indeed," Father Forthill said with a pleasant smile when we asked him about the soup kitchen. "That project has been generously funded by Jesse Frost." He frowned. "Why do you ask?"

Morten took the lead. "We've heard rumours that his generosity is not entirely free. Apparently, he requires a strange payment."

Farther Forthill chuckled. "Oh, you mean the letters. Yes. Most peculiar. But given how much we've all benefited from his open-handedness, I'm not inclined to question him. Although..." The old priest started scratching his chin. "A strange thing happened... two months ago, I think."

"What was that?" I asked, my eagerness eliciting another chuckled from the priest.

"Nothing violent, if that's what you're wondering. Just something unusual. Those letters you mentioned, Mr Frost was going around the soup kitchen asking people to write them—well, those who can write. Not all patrons at the kitchen can, in fact, write. Anyway, I heard that someone stole them. The story, as I heard it, was that he'd only let the letters out of his sight for a minute, but someone stole them, possibly someone posing as a person in need."

"Was an investigation conducted?" Morten asked.

"I asked Mr Frost that same question. He said he would look into the matter himself, and there was no need to involve the police. However, he did ask me to talk to my staff at the soup kitchen. We were requested to ensure that a certain man never shows up there again."

"Did Mr Frost give you a name?"

"No name. Only a description." Father Forthill started ticking off points on his fingers. "Crooked nose. Big, deep dimples round his mouth. Blonde, wavy hair. Blue eyes. Mid-thirties."

Circle **Marker E2** in your case log.

1-7370

6-0028 (p.56) contd.

Daneil Harris wasn't home when we came knocking.

A nosy neighbour opened their door, startled by the noise. "If you're looking for Harris, you're better off looking at the nearest drinking hole."

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1-9971

235 W. 63rd St, LS-44 (apt. 2a)

No one at the Manhattan Prosecutor's Office was willing to spill the beans for us, especially about developments regarding the investigation into my father's death. Not even Detective Hatchet's name could unlock the sealed lips at the office.

2

2-0289

6-0448 (8-1551 on p.64) contd.

"So," Morten mused, turning to me. "Let us conduct a quick examination of your growing knowledge of lexigraphic resonance."

"Fine," I groaned, feeling as eager for a pop quiz as for root canal.

"Can you theorise how the person who attacked John Winter and Emilio Cunningham might have fuelled his magic?"

"He would need access to writing filled with genuine anger, obviously, apart from the letters from the soup kitchen, which he uses for protection."

"Top marks, Iris," Morten grinned. Then, turning back to Cunningham, Morten's voice turned as serious as a plague. "Mr Cunningham, you saw the face of your attacker?"

"Yeah. I've been following the man for a long time. Had my suspicions about him since... well a long time."

"Then you must appreciate the danger you face. Allow us to contact the police and arrange for your protection."

Cunningham laughed. "Nothing doing mate. Johnny and I will take our chances."

Morten made a face as though he'd just bitten into a lime. "Even so, we'll return and check up on you soon. Perhaps by then you will have realised the gravity of your situation."

You may read this lead after following at least one other lead. Go to 6-4938 on p.57, and then return here.

2-1228

1-2117 (p.16) contd.

I stayed down in the lobby while Morten broke the news to Miss Lockerby and possibly the Judge, assuming we wasn't busy. I felt like a coward. Because I was one. Just couldn't face the woman after I'd given her my word to look after John.

When Morten came down, his face showed all the emotion of a granite wall. We didn't speak as we left.

2-2893

100 Forsyth St, BO-44 (apt. 2b)

If it is Day 1: We knocked and waited, but no one answered the door.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 6-0028 (p.56)

2-2986

100 E. 77th St, UE-11

I don't like hospitals. But who does, right? Mom and I spent way too much time in one before my father passed, hoping the doctors could save him from all those bullet wounds. Can't believe it's been five months.

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Morten gave me a gentle look. He understood. But he also wanted my mind on the job, and I guess I wanted to impress him.

Our third crime lord for the night was Mr Richard Forslund. Two uniformed officers were stationed outside his hospital room, and another two inside.

"Expecting someone to try and finish the job?" Morten whispered at Hatchet, who simply shrugged. It looked like Hatchet never used words when gestures would do.

We stood around the bedside, watching the crime lord's surprisingly serene face. Like the other two, Richard Forslund was in his mid-forties. Like Harper, he looked fit from what I could see.

"The doctors," Hatchet confirmed, "say he's fit as a fiddle. No natural explanation for his sudden drop into a coma."

"Have the doctors given any odds on him waking up again?" I asked.

"Extremely unlikely," Hatchet answered. "Miracle or nothing."

"Same MO?" Morten asked. "An invitation to dinner, and a blank card?"

Hatchet nodded. "We have no Manhattan address for Richard Forslund—or Bruno Larsson for that matter. Both men owned property in Chicago, but travelled to Manhattan regularly. Finding out where they stayed each time was hell on wheels. Tonight, though, Richard Forslund was at the Carlyle Hotel."

"His bodyguard called it in?" I asked.

"Girlfriend, actually," Hatchet said. "She's still there."

"Mind if I sniff Richard's card?" I asked. Gee whiz, investigations make you say weird stuff.

Hatchet pulled it out of his pocket, and I confirmed our collective suspicion. Same magical scent as the other two.

"Iris," Morten said, giving me a neutral look. "If we are going to aid Detective Hatchet, what questions should we be asking, in your estimation?"

I felt like a circus seal about to perform. Even so, part of me was purring at the opportunity to show off how well Morten had been training me. So, I rolled my shoulders.

"Detective Hatchet, in each of these attacks, the sender of that invitation knew the targets would open the envelopes personally. There can't be many people who knew for certain that all three crime lords would do that."

Hatchet smiled. "Crime lords make more enemies than politicians."

"But we're looking for someone with motive against all three, and who knew their letters would be opened."

Hatchet rubbed his eyes with the heel of his palm. "Walter Fox screened all Harper's mail, like he said. As for Forslund and Bruno, you'll have to ask Forslund' girlfriend, and Bruno's bodyguard."

"Thanks," I said, feeling keen as mustard now we had a path to tread.

"And," Morten spoke up. "We should visit the appropriate section of the public library, Iris. It's the best place to answer your earlier question."

"Um, which question was that again?"

"Do these killings share anything with the love letter trick?"

Since we were already at Lenox Hill Hospital, we tried to locate Bruno Larsson's bodyguard, only to be informed that he'd already been discharged.

"He's gone home with a few guests," Hatchet grinned. "Some of my best officers. For pro-

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tection."

2-3469

Morten and I visited the Gotham Letterpress Company to hear if anyone had been around late last night, and whether they'd seen anything suspicious. We struck out. No one had been around.

"But there's a news stand further up the street, and it's always got someone on hand. Try them."

2-3942

If you have circled **Marker B2** in your case log, go to 5-2002 on p.50.

2-4114

I love Bloomingdale. The charm of its architecture. The leaves changing colours. I bought myself a bagel and coffee from a dogcart, but Morten refused, on account of his condition: being a tea-loving stick in the mud.

Thomas Nelson's place was a two-storey brownstone that looked like a twin to Morten's place in Chelsea. Like Morten, I was guessing he'd inherited the property. It sure looked too swanky for a young lawyer to afford.

When he answered the door, Thomas turned out to be a short guy, barely taller than myself. He had a weak chin, with round spectacles perched on his tiny nose. The thick, black rims of his glasses looked like an infinity symbol on his nose, but he had a warm smile, an affable manner—and the kind of North Georgian accent I found charming. Once Morten disclosed the purpose of our visit, the lawyer's face fell like a failed soufflé.

"Yeah, the radio mentioned some rumours about mobsters getting attacked last night, but nothing concrete. Come on in." He led the way into a small, but comfortable sitting room with furniture that might have been on the Mayflower. "The way I heard it, some low-level thugs got killed. I had a feeling it was bigger."

Morten said, "It has been suggested to us that three men of considerable influence in the city have been communicating with you."

Thomas nodded. "Mr Larsson, Forslund and Harper. All three of them promised to pave the way for me in the law business. Hell, they said they could make me a judge one day, if I signed on with one of them—metaphorically speaking. Each man was trying to outbid the other. Called on me to write to them personally if I accepted."

"What precisely would 'signing on' have entailed?" Morten asked.

Thomas looked him straight in the eye. "Nothing. That's what they said. But I know what kind of 'nothing' it would have been. Oh, they made a big song and dance about how they just wanted to invest in talented minds. 'It's what makes America the greatest nation on earth' and all that—'clever investment in young talent'. Problem is, I heard enough scuttlebutt to reckon that those three men are far from level, if you know what I mean."

"Did any of these men approach you in person?" Morten asked.

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"No, they sent representatives. Big ones. With big knuckles and small brains. But, like I said, I was invited to write personally to Mr Larsson, Forslund, or Harper."

"Did you?"

Thomas shook his head. "I didn't want to see the inside of their pockets—wouldn't ever get out, would I? To be honest Mr Hooks, I'm not shedding any tears over their deaths. The money they were offering was the carrot. Since I'd been refusing all three of them for three months, the stick was coming down soon, probably. Any day now, someone would come here and… what's the expression? Feed me a knuckle sandwich? That's why I asked a friend to stay over."

I perked up. "What friend?"

"His name is John Winter. You might have heard of his father, the powerful Judge Samuel Winter. Johnny can handle himself in a fight. Hell, sometimes he goes looking for what he calls, 'a knuckle tango'. I've seen him throw drunks around in some rowdy bars." Thomas chuckled. "He's a strange fella, but a good one to have around if you feel threatened. Loves to wear a Stetson some nights, like he's on a ranch. And you know what? He never touches alcohol himself." A frown twisted Thomas' face. "By the way, if you're wondering, I was out with Johnny last night at a bar—not going around playing Captain Vigilante."

"Where did you go?"

"We hitched a ride with a friend, so we could all go out to the Lion's Head on East 39th. I'm sure you can find people there to verify my account."

"Who is this friend?" Morten asked. "And, is Johnny available?

Thomas smiled. "I'm his friend, not his babysitter. Not sure where he is right now."

I spoke up, "Can we see his room?"

Thomas glanced at a door off to one side of the sitting room. Then he frowned and started fidgeting. "No offence, Miss, but you're not officially with the cops, as far as I can tell. So, unless you swing by with a warrant, I'm not comfortable letting you into Johnny's room. Besides," he glanced at an antique grandfather clock, "I have an appointment now."

Morten took me outside, but we hung back to watch Thomas' brownstone. After five minutes, the young man stepped out, locked the door behind him and left.

"Wow, he really has an appointment," I smirked.

"Would you like to see another practical demonstration of lexigraphic resonance?"

If you have circled **Marker R1** in your case log, go to 5-0921 on p.49.

If you have circled **Marker Q1** in your case log, go to 1-1241 on p.14.

2-5169

St. Agnes boasted an impressive façade, with soaring towers and elegant gothic arches. I liked it, but it always surprised me to see it in the Hudson Yards. Something about the juxtaposition between the beautiful church and the shipping yards always struck me as sad in some strange way I could never explain.

Before I could stop myself, I started giving Morten a little lecture. "Those stained glass windows were donated by the Munich School of Glass. My favourite is that scene over there, with Mary Magdalene anointing Jesus with the alabaster jar of expensive perfume."

When I turned to face him, Morten was smiling at me and, annoyingly, I couldn't tell whether it was a patronising grin, or something more along the lines I would have preferred.

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Inside the church, we found Father Bartholomew Forthill easily enough, and he was happy to talk to us. The priest was a tall, spare man, in his early sixties, with eyes the colour of robin's eggs and thinning, white hair. He offered us tea and when Morten tasted the brew, I saw his eyes light up with approval.

"Yes," Father Forthill confirmed when asked about his correspondence with Harry Harper, Richard Forslund and Bruno Larsson. "I wrote to them on a regular basis. You see, around this part of Manhattan, it's common knowledge that all three men are major players in organised crime. Prostitution. Gambling. Smuggling. Drugs and guns. No one dares breathe a word to the authorities, of course—at least, not without incurring significant risk to life and limb. No man with a family to care for would hazard that risk. I wrote to them, imploring them to stop inflicting harm on my parishioners, and I imagine I'll keep up the attempt. Miracles happen."

I looked at the old priest, his straight back, his open face, and found myself respecting his courage. He was doing what he could in a part of town where despair was common, and collusion with crime easier than resistance. "Did your efforts bear any fruit?"

He nodded sombrely. "Some. As you might know, Richard Forslund and Bruno Larsson have no permanent addresses in Manhattan. Once or twice, I persuaded them to spend the night here, sleeping on the church pews in the company of some of the poorest members of our congregation. They came in disguise, of course, and with men to protect them. I think they saw it as a joke—indulging an old man. But as of two months ago, I have noticed a sharp reduction in violence around the docks under their command."

"I don't suppose," Morten asked, "you could suggest the names of anyone with a particular interest in their demise?"

Father Forthill shrugged. "Many people around here would not mind seeing harm come to them. Why? Has something happened?"

"In a moment," Morten stalled. "First, tell us more, please. Any theories based on your insight into local sentiments would be welcome."

The old man stared at the stained glass windows of his church for a moment, and I got the impression he had just guessed that the three mobsters were dead. "I would not be surprised if some of the criminals around here aspired to replace Harper, Forslund or Larsson, but no names come to mind. No one powerful enough. The same goes for anyone who desires revenge. Many of my parishioners do, but none possess the power, and I preach against vengeance as best I can."

Circle **Marker X1** in your case log.

If you have circled **Marker L1** in your case log, go to 2-7214 on p.32

If you have circled **Marker A2** in your case log, go to 1-7167 on p.20

If you have circled **Marker G2** in your case log, go to 5-6230 on p.54.

If you have circled **Marker C2** in your case log, go to 3-9461 on p.38.

2-5569

5-3784 (p.53) contd.

Arriving at Knapp Memorial Hospital, we discovered that only one of Walter Fox's attackers was still alive.

I followed Morten into the man's hospital room. To my surprise, the man's eyes bulged when he saw me. Recognition flashed across his face. He

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looked a little old for an assassin—pushing fifty, I thought, with bright blue eyes and thin strands of grey hair over a spotted scalp.

Morten stood over him and asked, "Who ordered you to assassinate Walter Fox?"

"Isn't it strange?" the bedridden man asked with a thick Irish accent, "how murder gets upgraded to assassination when the man you're killing is important enough." He chuckled, then couched up blood. When his fit had subsided, the man looked me up and down. "You're the spitting image of him—your father. Far prettier though. That must come from your mother. Never met her, sadly." A twinkle gleamed in his eyes. "Tell you what, just because you're a pretty thing and I'm feeling generous, I'll say this. The man who hired me knew your father. They had some arrangement. Sometimes they were chummy as can be. Other times, I heard them fighting. That's all you'll hear from me, dear."

When we left the hospital, I got a strange feeling, making the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

"Keep calm," Morten whispered. "We're being followed."

I stiffened and tried to keep my cool. "Who?"

"Maud Labeau. I had a feeling she was more than she seemed. Sniff the air, Iris. If you're good enough, you'll be able to pick up her scent. Can you smell that? She's like us. She knows about magic."

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

2-5626

1-4391 (p.18) contd.

There was blood on the wall outside the door to Walter Fox's apartment. The inside looked like a warzone. Walls riddled with holes. More blood on one wall of that stinking kitchen. Two grim-faced cops were in evidence and they informed us that Mr Fox had been murdered.

"Took three of his attackers with him. Two more are at Knapp's Memorial Hospital." The cop shook his head. "And as far as we can tell, the only weapon Fox had to hand was a kitchen knife. Tough bastard."

"This is only the beginning," the cop's colleague opined with grim wisdom. "Unless someone powerful rises to the top fast, we're looking at a drawn out turf war."

Circle **Marker G1** in your case log.

2-5788

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (7-3888 on p.61) contd.

Following this lead will end the case. Do not read on unless you believe you have solved the case.

Something was wrong. Morten had instructed me to wait outside the tall fence surrounding the dockside warehouses belonging to Azure Phoenix Traders. He was scheduled to meet up with Detective Hatchet and Claudia Fields from Undercover Operations, and then rendezvous with me here. An hour ago.

The warehouses looked eerily quiet. I'd expected to see at least a few guards patrolling, maybe even some late night dock workers loading and unloading things.

I was standing by a section of the fence where I'd be hidden by the packing crates on the other

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side. I waited. And waited. Nothing happened.

"Screw it," I whispered to myself, pulling wire cutters from my backpack. Morten had asked me to wait, but an entry would have to be cut eventually, and he was late.

Five minutes later, I saw a silver Packard approach the compound's main entrance—way off to my right. No guards appeared as the driver got out, unlocked the gate, returned to his car and drove into the largest warehouse, right in the centre of the big place. The man had been too far away for me to see anything beyond a coat and hat, but he seemed short.

Morten had trained me to be patient. Clearly, the lesson hadn't sunk all the way in yet. I thought about that silver ring with the initials HF, and squeezed my way through the hole I'd cut in the fence. Moving slowly, quietly, I snuck all the way to the huge doors of the warehouse where the Packard had entered. Crouching low by one door, I tried to peer inside as surreptitiously as possible. The inside was brightly lit with overhead lights. Packing crates stood everywhere, except in the centre, where the Packard waited.

"Step inside, Iris," a deep, basso voice said. "I know you're there." Thunder boomed overhead, and rain came down in fitful starts. "You'll catch a cold out there, Iris. Come inside, girl."

I rose from my hiding place beside the door, took a deep breath and walked in.

"Good evening," said a man matching the description Morten and I had received from Speedy Stevie at the Reliable Courier Company. I wondered if I'd ever make it to that date.

"My name," the man said, "is Jesse Frost—but you know that already." He spoke slowly, patiently, as though afraid I might bolt. "Step closer, please. Ah yes. There is much of your father in your face, in your bearing. He was a great man."

I stopped sixteen feet from the Gentleman. His brown eyes were warm. I'd expected cold, grey eyes, for some reason, maybe because of what Anastazja Ciesielska had said.

He spread his arms wide as though inviting me to attack. "Try it if you must, but I'm far too well protected, courtesy of my 'friends' at the soup kitchen. From what I've heard, you haven't done so bad yourself."

I sneered and spat on the floor near his shoes. "No thanks to your hitman with the shotgun."

Frost blew out a long sigh. "I want you to know that I have severely chastised my employee for discharging his weapon at you. His instructions had been to liquidate Maud Laubeau."

"How did you find us?" I was glad to hear my voice come out steady.

He shrugged. "Some of my employees have been watching Arthur Moss' apartment all day, waiting to see who turned up. Consider it a test of your intelligence, and I'm happy to say you passed with flying colours. Moss is alive and well, by the way, I am no monster..."

Frost kept on talking for a while, only stopping when he noticed I wasn't listening. I put some steel into my voice, and asked the question that mattered most to me, "Did you kill my father?"

He blinked, genuinely surprised, and lowered his arms. "Is that what you think? That I killed him? Dear Iris, your father was my friend. He wanted Harper, Forslund, and Larsson dead as badly as I did. They killed him. It was an arranged hit between the three of them. I avenged you father."

"Cut the crap! All you care about is being kingpin of Manhattan. You had Arthur Moss' wife killed. You convinced him it was the Big Three's work, just to give yourself a nice, focused source of rage for your invitations. You deliberately cultivated your reputation to exploit people!"

Frost raised his hands in a placating gesture.

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"Calm down. To be sure, there are some fiscal benefits to be reaped upon the demise of one's competition." He sighed, and when he spoke again, his voice was low, deliberate, like he was talking to a spooked horse. "Iris, I am not your enemy." The way he looked at me was giving me jitters. "You look so much like him. He walked the straight and narrow too, your father. Harker always objected to the criminal side of my enterprises. Told me to become a true philanthropist. Eventually, he would have come around to my view, I'm sure. But we had too little time."

My hands were shaking. "He knew?"

Frost nodded.

I backed off, away from him, until I felt a packing crate behind me. I slumped down on it, sitting with my face in my hands. My shoulders shook. I heard Frost come closer, saw the tips of his polished black shoes through the tears filling my eyes. Felt his hand on the back of my head, stroking my hair. Smelled his magic. His scent matched the odour from the three cards. Surprisingly, it was a gentle smell—firm, confident, subtle.

"There, there, little girl. All will be well. I'll take care of you. That's what your father would've wanted."

"Where," I whispered, "where is Morten?"

"Some of my employees are ensuring that you and I have enough time to become better acquainted. Iris, you need to learn that I am not such a bad person as some might have led you to believe. You need me to..."

I reached for the concealed, snub-nosed .38 revolver on my hip, pressed its barrel into his body—and pulled the trigger once, twice, again. AGAIN.

I wanted to shout: Shield yourself against that, you bastard! Or: Fasbender says he'll see you in hell! But my voice. Was gone.

Frost backed away from me. I was still looking down at the floor. He gurgled. His body hit the floor. He gurgled again. "... curse..." was all I could make out. Something struck me, and for a second it felt as if every nerve in my body had been set on fire. White light stole my vision, and when it passed, it was down on my hands on knees, panting for breath. What the hell?

Footsteps sounded behind me and, somehow, I knew it was Morten. I tried to get up, but my legs and arms buckled. Morten caught me, pulled me up. I looked up into his handsome face and gasped.

Morten's lower lip was bleeding. A massive bruise was forming over the entire left side of his face, and his suit had been torn in several places. His white gloves were gone, and the skin beneath was an ugly collection of pink, scarred flesh, more like wax than human skin—though that was clearly from years ago, not tonight.

His mouth was hanging open, eyes staring past me at the corpse of Gentleman Jesse Frost. "Iris," he said, voice barely audible. "Detective Hatchet and company are on the way. You can't be here when they arrive. Not like this."

My father's ring—I wanted to say. Please, get my father's ring. My mother gave it to him. But my voice was still gone. I had just committed murder.

I don't remember much of what happened next. I think Morten veiled me and concealed me somewhere in the compound, then quietly snuck me away in a cab when he had a moment. Evidently, my brain had gone on vacation without getting me a ticket.

When I woke up, I was comfortable in my own bed in Morten's brownstone. Voices were coming from downstairs: Morten's, Detective Hatchet's, and Claudia Field's.

(You may now read the conclusion.)

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2-6206

1 E. 71st St, UE-29

The home of Harry Harper was a pompous festival of art deco extravagance. With its sweeping view of Central Park, it must have cost a boatload.

"And not a dime of it made from honest work," I grumbled when the cab had dropped us off. I added some unladylike words that made Morten's eyes pop.

The building was a three-storey affair, with a wide garden leading from the curb to the front door. Ornamental trees and flowerbeds were spaced in geometric patterns, but I noticed a single wide window on the top floor would give a clear view over everything.

"Guess the mean mobster wanted to see his enemies coming," I smirked.

"Plenty of muscle on hand," Morten added. Ten goons wearing dark suits were being interrogated individually by uniformed police officers.

"Those fellas must have grizzly bears in their family trees." Other cops were combing the grounds inch by inch, flashlights in hand.

We were approached by a tall, handsome man with a chin like a chisel and a strong Roman nose. His grey suit was rumpled, and between the circles under his eyes, and the lack of a ring on his finger, I pegged him as a workaholic detective.

Morten stepped forward, reaching out a white-gloved hand to the newcomer. "Good evening, Detective Hatchet. I take it you won't be shedding a river of tears over the loss of Harry Harper."

Detective Hatchet blew out a long sigh. "For him? Nah. But mob crowns don't pass without blood. We're all bracing." He looked down at me—my head only came up to his elbow. "This the kid?"

"You remember my friend Harker Faith? May I introduce his daughter, Iris."

Detective Hatchet's eyes widened, and he looked me up and down appraisingly. "Sorry for your loss. Your old man was a great PI, and it's—"

"Not relevant to the case," I cut him off. "You called us in, Detective. Will you take us to the dead man?"

Detective Hatchet smiled approvingly. "This way, Iris. May I call you Iris?"

"You can call me anything except 'kid'."

He laughed and led the way into the house.

It took us three minutes to reach Harry Harper's private office on the top floor. Every room along the way screamed, 'expensive' and 'secure'. I saw ten more goons along the way, all of them armed, all of them unhappy with cops crawling around taking pictures and dusting every surface for prints.

Finally, we reached a heavy oak door on the top floor with geometric designs in gold inlay. Detective Hatchet stepped inside and beckoned for us to follow. Compared to the rest of the house, this room was Spartan. Don't get me wrong, the carpet was a rich purple, and the red wallpaper boasted yet more golden art deco patterns, but the furnishings were simple. A long, plain, study desk stood to one side—far away from the window overlooking the grounds. The desk was bare, and I figured the goons had cleared away any incriminating documents before calling the cops.

Three purple couches faced the desk in a U shape, arranged beneath the long window I'd seen from the curb. Three hulking men sat there like boys outside the principal's office, shoulders hunched, eyes on their polished shoes. They looked pale and ashamed.

Harry Harper lay on his back on the floor, halfway between the couches and the desk,

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dressed in a purple, silk dressing gown. Mid-forties. Slender and healthy-looking—apart from being dead, obviously. One of his legs was exposed and the quadriceps told me he was a runner.

Morten surveyed the body for a moment, then beckoned me over, gesturing at the prone form. "What do you surmise?"

Harper's left hand lay beside his body on the carpet. It was clutching a white envelope. Something was scribbled on it, but his grip obscured the words. His right hand had seized the bathrobe over his heart. I inhaled deeply, calling on my arcane sense of smell. If poison had been used, it must have been super special to evade my supernatural nose.

"Cardiac arrest." I could smell the cause of death easily enough. Turning to Detective Hatchet, I asked, "Was he clutching whatever came in that envelope?"

The tall detective reached into a coat pocket to retrieve a plastic bag, containing a crumpled card of high quality paper. The paper was completely bare. Not a word on it. But my nose caught the subtle odours of magical energy.

"This was in his right hand," the Detective confirmed.

I locked eyes with Morten, who nodded. He could smell it too—both the magic on the card and the absence of poison in the corpse. Keeping my voice low, I asked, "That trick you did with the love letter. Could someone use it to kill? Maybe if they used a different kind of letter?"

My mentor grinned like a happy cat and winked at Detective Hatchet. "Later, kid. First, let's talk to the goon squad. Our detective friend will take the lead."

I stood back, ears open, watching the goons' body language while Detective Hatchet kicked off his interrogation. "This is Walter Fox." He pointed at the man in the centre of the couch. "Right Walt, tell my colleagues what you told me."

Walter never looked up, and his voice came out hollow. "Boss got a letter at 10:30. Arrived at the front door by special courier. Some kid on a motorcycle. Didn't get the plates. I checked the envelope myself. It said, 'An invitation to dinner'. For the last month, orders were to hand those to the boss himself. This was the first and only letter of that kind ever to get here. I did as I was told. Gave it to the boss. Normally, all mail goes through me. I open it. I decide what's worth his time. Only special mail like this one goes to him direct. Boss was standing there when I came in." Keeping his eyes on his shoes, he pointed to the dead body. "Micky and Tank were sitting right here. So, I handed the letter to the boss and I turned to sit down. I heard a noise. I looked round and… he was clutching his chest and," Walter snapped his fingers. "Just like that, he was dead. I checked his pulse. Just… dead. Just dead." Walter started repeating the words, crossing himself over and over like it would bring his boss back.

Detective Hatchet steered us out of the room. "Morten, if my boys find anything else of interest, I'll let you know, but… well, believe it or not, this isn't the only attack."

My mouth dropped open. This time, Morten's did too. He found his voice first. "Same MO?" Morten asked. "How many?"

Hatchet nodded. "Same MO. Two more victims. Both crime lords of the same standing as Harper—men against whom no legal accusations ever stuck, but all of us on the NYPD knew they had enough blood on their hands to flood Central Park. Come with me to Keith's on East 75th. We'll start there."

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2-7187

2-9326 (p.33) contd.

A quick chat with the friendly reporters at the Daily Mirror revealed that three months ago, Daneil Harris had been fired. "For filing undercooked stories," one reporter claimed, "that is to say, making claims without evidence".

But a different reporter opined that Harris' firing was the result of, "pissing off someone powerful. It's not like our editor is really opposed to publishing unsupported claims, is it? He makes his dough selling goose-shit as gospel. So, why fire Harris for that, unless..." the man winked at us.

Morten asked, "Any idea who this powerful person might be?"

"For my money," the reporter said, "it's someone in organised crime. Harris was like a dog with a bone about that. Fancied himself just the man to put big names behind bars."

"What big names?" Morten pressed, but no one was willing to say more.

2-7214

2-5169 (p.25) contd.

"Father Forthill, you mentioned that violence has ebbed a little around here. How exactly did that come about?"

The old priest grinned. "I have been fortunate enough to secure the alliance of Mr Jesse 'Gentleman' Frost."

"Jesse Frost..." Morten mused. "The shipping tycoon and philanthropist?"

"The same. He visits us regularly. Mingles with the locals. Asks after their interests. Helps where he can. And three months ago, he volunteered to reach out to Harper, Forslund and Larsson. His goal was to get all three men together—have them meet here in our church and talk—negotiate terms so they could do business with the absolute minimum violence, both against each other's organisations, and against innocent bystanders."

My ears perked up. "That sounds like a pretty ambitious plan. Did it work?"

Father Forthill chewed on that question for several long minutes. "Violence has diminished for about two months, as I said, but I'm not ready to call it a victory for justice yet. Neither are any of my parishioners. Too many scars. Too many losses. Wives, children, parents, and siblings. We do not yet trust the current calm."

"Thank you, Father," Morten said. "Tell me, if we wanted to sample local feelings about persons of interest, where would you suggest we start?"

"The Baskerville, I'd say. Though, remember that you are outsiders. Can't make any promises you won't get the tight-lip treatment."

Circle **Marker Y1** in your case log.

2-7241

5-1609 (3-1800 on p.34) contd.

Detective Claudia Field eyed us with the kind of scepticism I normally reserved for politicians. After listening to our reasons for suspecting that Judge Winter might have murdered the three crime lords, she folded her arms and said, "Thank you for your work. I will be in touch shortly."

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Something about her cold, dry tone told me we had goofed badly. Return to 3-1800 (p.34).

2-7785

26 W. 38th St, TL-27

If it is Day 1: There was nothing of value for us.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 1-5587 (p.19)

2-9326

235 E. 40th St, MH-8

If you have circled **Marker K1** in your case log, go to 2-7187 on p.32.

2-9373

7-3901 (p.61) contd.

With a good word from Judge Winter's secretary, the doorman from last night finally agrees to speak to us.

"I can assure you that Judge Winter did not leave through the main entrance last night after 10pm. I was at my post until midnight."

On our way out, I jabbed Morten in the ribs and said, "Not sure I trust that man."

"The doorman or Judge Winter?" he asked.

2-9610

24 W. 30th St, TL-71

If it is Day 1: We had no real reason to show up at the Tenderloin Cab company. I felt silly and confused.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 3-2988 (p.34)

3

3-1800

5-1609 (p.50) contd.

Morten informed me that my father's contact was named Claudia Field. I was surprised that any woman had managed to claw her way into a high position in the boys' club of the NYPD, especially undercover investigations.

We met a steely-eyed matron with grey hair to match her eyes, and a jaw that jutted out like the edge of a cliff.

"The way things stood between your father and I was quid pro quo. So, you bring me something, and I might share what you need to know."

Morten stood back, letting me navigate the negotiation. "What do you need?"

"Find out if Judge Winter might have murdered the three crime lords. Come back when you have an answer."

Yes. Go to 2-7241 on p.32, and then return here.

No. Go to 6-2091 on p.56, and then return here.

3-2537

100 Forsyth St, BO-44

Not that I'm a gambling kinda gal, but I would have put down good money that the doorman of the Forsyth Tenement building had seen military service. His hands bore the telltale signs of violence. Moreover, his desk, his clothes, his manner—all of it was organised with a precision that complimented the rest of the tenement like toothpaste compliments orange juice.

But he wouldn't speak to us. Not a word. I could easily imagine that face staring placidly at a drill sergeant screaming abuse at him.

If you have circled **Marker O1** in your case log, go to 5-1518 on p.49.

If you have circled **Marker P1** in your case log, go to 3-9571 on p.39.

3-2988

At the head offices of Tenderloin Cabs, we found someone who did, in fact, pick up two men on East 38th, not too far from the Reliable Courier Company, one of whom was wearing a white Stetson hat.

"Dropped them off at Forsyth Tenements."

"Thanks," Morten said.

Just as we were leaving, I heard an announcement over the man's radio:

"This is WNYC, Manhattan's voice on the airwaves. We're receiving early word of a disturbance on East 65th Street in the Upper East Side. According to residents, a brief but intense exchange of gunfire broke out at approximately two o'clock this morning. Details remain unconfirmed, and the NYPD has yet to issue a statement. At this time, no fatalities have been reported. WNYC will bring you updates as officials release further information. In more heartwarming news, shipping magnate and well-loved philanthropist, Mr Jesse Frost has recently announced his intention to build

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a new school in the Hudson Yards. Details will be forthcoming soon."

Circle **Marker L1** in your case log.

Circle **Marker M1** in your case log.

3-3322

8-9137 (p.65) contd.

Morten was asked to stay at the door to Anna Bartosh's two-storey brownstone. I was led into a spacious, clean kitchen that smelled of fresh bread, cinnamon and cloves. My mouth was watering like a fountain while I watched the plump woman knead dough on a long wooden table.

I looked around for a cauldron, and was disappointed to see none in evidence, what with the order's name and all.

"I have something for you," the woman said. "It will cause you some pain. Some joy too. Either way, it might save your life."

"Not one for idle chit-chat, are you?" I joked, but even I could hear the nervous edge to my voice.

She nodded at the spice rack lining one wall. "Check under the bottle containing the cinnamon."

I did. And my hands started shaking. It was a letter from my father. Addressed to me. I opened the envelope, unfolded the paper and read. Don't expect me to share its contents with you. Its private. Not for prying eyes. Nothing that would solve this case, only the kinds of things a daughter longed to hear from her father. Dimly, some part of my mind thought about the self-defence Morten was able to extract from that love letter he'd shown me, and I wondered whether my father had intended for me to put this letter to the same use.

I dried my eyes before leaving.

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

3-4198

4-9392 (p.47) contd.

"Daneil Harris poses no meaningful threat to your daughter," Morten told Gertrude. "He's not the sharpest tool in the shed and, ultimately, harmless."

Miss Burt closed her eyes and let out a long sigh. "Well, that's a relief." She opened her eyes and gave Morten a warm smile. "Why don't you sit down, and I'll fix us a drink."

I rolled my eyes. "Thanks, but we're on a tight schedule and we had a deal."

Burt gave me an acid look that could eat through metal and answered through clenched teeth. "Judge Winter was interested in lexigraphic resonance because his son had, apparently, fallen in with someone who knows about it. The judge wanted to know more about what his son was getting into, but the two of them were not exactly on speaking terms. That's all I know."

3-5101

23 E. 39th St, TL-17

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

If it is Day 1: At this time of night, even the Lion's Head was closed.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 4-2887 (p.41)

3-5286

970 Park Ave, CM-54

Morten and I popped over to The Hanover building to check whether the doorman on that side of the street could tell us whether Judge Winter had been spotted leaving Lerner Apartments.

Lucky for us, the doorman at the Hanover proved more forthcoming than his counterpart across the road.

"Sure I know Judge Winter," he affirmed in a faintly Polish accent. "Everyone around here does."

"Did you see him leave his building late last night?"

"As a matter of fact, I did. Or, at any rate, I saw his car leave. No idea where he was headed, but there was something strange. Some lout was loitering outside the Judge's building, and I saw him watching the Judge' car with more than a passing interest. So, being a security-conscious type of person, I walked over there and asked this man about his business."

"What did he tell you?" Morten asked.

"Claimed to be a private dick. I asked for his name, and he said it was Danny Harry. Sounded like a false name if ever I heard one. So, I asked to see his PI license. That's when the fella ran like the devil was after him. In fact, I was just about to call the police to report the incident. Guess since you two are working for them, you can save me the trouble."

3-5303

520 W. 126th St, MS-44

The personnel in the 26th Precinct would have made bees in a beehive look like a bunch of slackers. It was nearly impossible to gain entry, even after we'd identified ourselves as consultants working with Detective Hatchet.

After locating Amanda Burt's desk, we found the spitting image of her mother, typing up reports.

"A secretary?" I wondered aloud. For some reason, I'd pictured her as a proper police officer. Then again, I should have known the boys club would keep her down.

Morten gave me a knowing nod, as if he'd read my thoughts.

We approached Amanda's desk, only to be treated to a withering look. "If you two are with that muck raker, then I have no time for you. If you're not—well, then I don't have time for you either."

Thankfully, Morten had a gift for thinking on his feet. "Actually, we've been sent to deal with him."

Amanda blinked. "Deal with him?"

Morten nodded. "Can't have him wasting your time. We just need a name and a few details. Then we'll be on our way to have a quiet word with Mr Much Raker."

Amanda sighed and raked her fingers through her long blonde hair. Her shoulders slumped and her eyes fell, making it look like she was talking to her typewriter. "His name is Daneil Harris. Claims to work for the Daily Mirror. A week ago he started pestering me about Judge Samuel Winter. No idea why. I don't know the

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man at all. Mr Harris also questioned me about Harry Harper. You know, the crime lord none of us can catch. For some reason, he expected me to know something special about him. He had this crazy idea that Judge Winter was out to kill Harper. Like I said. Crazy stuff."

Circle **Marker U1** in your case log.

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

Circle **Marker V1** in your case log.

3-5571

850 3rd Ave, TB-42

If it is Day 1: Unsurprisingly, the Canadian Consulate closed hours ago.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 4-8868 (p.47)

3-5976

100 Forsyth St, BO-44 (apt. 3b)

If it is Day 1: I had no idea why we were standing outside Forsyth Tenements.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 6-0448 (p.56)

3-6071

5-1609 (6-2091 on p.56) contd.

Detective Claudia Field's demeanour had changed since our last meeting. She seemed in a cheery mood. There was even bourbon on offer when we sat down in her office.

Morten said, "John Winters is in an apartment in Forsyth Tenements. Room 3B."

Field poured three fingers' worth of bourbon for herself and for Morten. I got coffee on account of not looking adult enough for bourbon. Bitch. Like I wanted her nasty alcohol anyway.

"By now," Detective Field said, "both of you are aware that Forslund, Larsson and Harper had cultivated reputations as crime lords—despite the fact that the NYPD have never been able to amass sufficient evidence against any of them. Each man's reputation was important. It carried weight during criminal negotiations. It scared common people enough to make them go tight-lipped whenever we came asking for information. But that kind of reputation comes with a bucket full of risks. I believe there was, in fact, a fourth crime lord—one responsible for doing shipping work for the other three. Someone who could get their drugs, arms and other contraband out of the country and to overseas markets. The way I see it, this man might eventually imagine himself as the sole kingpin of organised crime in Manhattan."

3-6872

72 Wall St, FD-48

If it is Day 1: My father's contact was unavailable at this hour.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 5-1609 (p.50)

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3-8963

1012 6th Ave, TL-27

If it is Day 1: Gotham Letterpress was closed when we showed up.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 2-3469 (p.24)

3-9078

310 W. 97th St, BD-64

If it is Day 1: It was clear as day that the inhabitants of the address were asleep. So, we left them to their dreams.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 2-4114 (p.24)

3-9258

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing

Technically, Morten and I had only been on the case for a few hours, but I sure felt like it'd been much longer. A little sleep was welcome.

Annoyingly, Morten wanted a little chat in his library before bed. I huffed about it, but then my mentor presented me with hot chocolate, as if I needed any more fuel for my crush on him.

He poured himself a Scotch and rubbed at his eyes while pacing the library. "I'm about ready to keel over, Iris, but let's just cross our t's before bed, okay? Now, did we interview every single person on the lists we received from Walter Fox, Archie Potter, and Maud LaBeau?"

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

"Remember that courier? The one who delivered the invitations?" Morten asked. "Did we track him down?"

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

"You did fine work with Speedy Stevie, Iris," Morten said with a smirk. "It might be worth our time snooping around the immediate area where he works. See if anyone saw anything."

Late Night Leads

These are the late night leads for Day 2 (16 September):

To visit Arthur Moss' apartment, go to 7-4950 on p.61, and then return here.

To visit the Azure Phoenix Traders, go to 7-3888 on p.61, and then return here.

3-9461

2-5169 (p.25) contd.

Returning to St Agnes, we found Father Forthill in the small garden adjoining the church. Sitting on a stone bench beneath a tree, the old man had his white head in his hands, cradling it as if his skull might burst.

Morten approached carefully, taking a seat beside the priest. He didn't say a word. I just hung back and watched.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

After what felt like hours, the old man looked up at him, and passed a neatly folded piece of paper to my mentor.

"Daniel Fasbender," Morten read.

"It's a signed confession," Father Forthill explained, looking my way. "Daniel left it with me, saying he'd done something terrible, and that if he didn't show up at church today, it was because he'd been murdered. I am supposed to hand his confession over to the police, or someone working for them."

Morten was frowning. "Daniel Fasbender confessed to murdering a woman who lived on Hudson Street. He claims that a meeting was held between Richard Forslund, Bruno Larsson and Harry Harper somewhere near her apartment block. Fasbender had received a description of the woman along with payment to shoot her on the night that meeting was being conducted. He had no idea why she had been targeted, but he went through with it."

"It ate at him," Father Forthill commented. "It was hardly his first murder, I'm afraid to say, but it was the first time he'd murdered a woman."

"And," I asked the Father, "Fasbender suspected he was going to get murdered in turn, and he gave you that letter as some kind of insurance?"

Forthill nodded. "Daniel said that if he was murdered, his body would never be found. This letter was the only way anyone would ever find out. So, he claimed."

Leaving the priest to his grief, Morten and I left St Anges, making for a dogcart so I could get something to eat. While we walked, Morten toyed with the confession, a grim expression twisting his handsome face. I didn't like the look.

"What are you thinking?" I asked.

He tapped the letter. "That you and I now possess a suitable text with which to perform a little lexigraphic resonance of our own."

My eyes shot wide. "What do you have in mind?"

"The emotions associated with confessions are powerful. There is much I can do with such excruciating self-disclosure." Morten was staring at the sky while he talked, his mind far away. Then he blinked his eyes and looked at me. "First, we need to decide whom we think Mr Fasbender murdered. Then, we visit the poor woman's home, and I'll show you what I have in mind."

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

3-9571

3-2537 (p.34) contd.

Morten and I went down to the lobby to call Detective Hatchet to the scene. That done, Morten spoke to the doorman. "Did you take an envelope up to Mr Cunningham's apartment?"

"Yes, sir. It came in not long after the last time you were here. Took it right up to this room."

"Did you see the person who brought the envelope here?"

"Afraid not. I went to the bathroom and, when I got back, the envelope was lying on my desk, with Mr Cunningham's address on it. Why? What's happened?"

3-9768

4-9392 (p.47) contd.

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"What did Judge Samuel Winter want with you last night?" Morten asked once we had returned to Gertrude Burt's apartment.

She was still smoking. "The way I have it is he got my name from Anastazja Ciesielska. The judge wanted me to teach him about lexigraphic resonance."

"Any idea why?"

Burt gave us a long, level look. "I'll make you a deal. My daughter is having trouble with some reporter. Find out who he is. Talk to him. Come back here and tell me if he's any danger to my daughter. Then, I'll tell you why Judge Winter wants to learn about lexigraphic resonance."

4

4-2887

It turned out the Lion's Head was a pub—a proper Irish pub—not a bar like Thomas Nelson had claimed.

For a moment, Morten's commitment to the case wavered. "Let me verify the cultural credentials of this establishment."

I had no idea what he was on about, but my curiosity was stoked, as I followed him in. He stepped up to the counter, where a burly, red-haired man with sideburns all the way down to his jaw, held court over a series of taps. Something about the barman screamed 'green-blooded Irishman'. Morten, being English, eyed him warily, and indicated one of the taps. Neither man spoke.

The Irishman poured a dark, foaming liquid into a tall glass and passed it to Morten. My mentor tasted the brew, and the atmosphere between the two men changed. I didn't need an advanced command of magic to read the unspoken message. 'The history of our two peoples might be soaked in blood, but by Jove, we possess a higher appreciation of good beer than any American'.

I rolled my eyes. I mean, sure, I like a good testosterone show-off as much as the next girl, but this was... well, not exactly racist, as such, but some kind of ist, I was sure.

The two men started flapping their gums like old pals, with Morten verifying Thomas Nelson's account.

"Sure," the barman said in a Dublin accent. "Thomas Nelson and John Winter are regulars. Can't miss John, on account of that eejit cowboy hat he favours. The pair of 'em arrived together at 8pm. Someone dropped them off. Didn't see who. John, though, he left early. Must have been... oh, 'round 10, I'd say."

"And John was alone when he left?"

"Not as such, no. He'd been talking long with some reporter fella—don't know his name—and the pair of 'em wore faces so sour you'd think prohibition was doing a Lazarus act."

"Did you happen to see where the two of them went when they left?" Morten asked.

"As it happens, I was just stepping outside for some fresh air and a cigarette. They were walking westwards down East 39th. I saw 'em round the corner down 5th avenue."

Morten nodded, and the look he gave the Irishman said plain as day: I owe you one. Let's not be strangers.

I would have rolled my eyes again, but the information seemed useful.

Circle **Marker Q1** in your case log.

4-3094

42 W. 44th St, TS-89

If it is Day 1: The Association of the Bar was closed.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 5-9818 (p.55)

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4-3625

5-9767 (p.54) contd.

At the 19th Precinct, we were able to confirm that Archie Potter's would-be assassin was some low-life mugger named Peter Burrows who had, apparently, been carrying a letter from one Daneil Harris, which stated that Archie Potter was a being from another planet who was planning to take over the world.

4-3832

315 Hudson St, HY-69 (apt. 1a)

Mr Harry Fowler point blank refused to speak to us.

4-5862

The front desk of the Reliable Courier Company was being manned by a gentleman in his late sixties, chuckling over something in the funny pages. He laughed hard enough to bring tears to his eyes, making us wait a few moments, and I found myself smiling at him.

When the fit of chuckles had subsided, Morten asked him whether his company might have been responsible for delivering messages last night between 10:30 and 11.

The man answered in a strong Italian accent, "Sure. If the order came in real late, and the customer was willing to pay extra, we could've done it."

"Do you have any records for us to consult?" Morten asked. "Or might the deliveryman be available?"

The old man gave us the fisheye. "Was there some monkey business I should know about? I don't want to get myself or the boys in any trouble."

Morten raised both hands in a placating gesture. "You'll get no trouble from us, sir. We're just making enquiries on behalf of the police." Then he continued in a conspiratorial tone. "Rumour has it, the Chief of Police wants to offer jobs to some of your boys—for a special motorcycle unit."

The old man chuckled again. "And he wants boys who know their way about town after dark, hey? That's the kind of daring business I'd rather keep clear of, myself. But you can speak to Speedy Stevie, and see if he's interested. If any deliveries were made last night, Stevie was on hand. I'll go get him for you."

Speedy Stevie appeared five minutes later—a guy roughly my age with red hair and freckles, who openly looked me up and down with interest.

Morten interposed himself between us, but the second he started asking questions about last night, Stevie's face scrunched up in irritation.

"Gee-whiz, mister, I already told that reporter what happened," he said in a nasal voice. "Why's everyone so hot and bothered over last night's delivery?"

He turned to leave, but I stepped forward and made eyes at him. "Hi Stevie. My name's Iris, and I'd really appreciate it if you helped us out. Just tell us what went down last night."

Stevie hesitated for a second—then flapped his gums like a runaway train. "So, this guy comes in, he's short for a man. About your height, Iris. But he looks strong, like he's carrying lots of muscle. Broad shoulders. And he had this fedora, which he wore low over his face. I wasn't exactly super interested in seeing his face, so I

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made no real effort. Even so, I spotted grey hair on his temples. Plus, he had a cleft in his chin like Cary Grant. So, he comes in here about 10:15. Pays me to deliver three white envelopes. One to East, 71st Street. One to Keith's Restaurant, and one to the Carlyle Hotel. Each of these envelopes just said, 'An invitation to dinner'. Nothing else. But this guy pays the extra charge and gives me a huge tip—like more than enough to take you to the picture show next week if you want, Iris." Stevie tried an awkward wink and I actually smiled in response.

"But wait," he carried on, "there's more."

"Oh?"

"So, I take the envelopes and I head out to my motorcycle. The rich guy is walking away down West 38th, right. Then, out of nowhere comes this reporter."

"What's he look like?" I asked.

"Um... he had a crooked nose and big, deep dimples round his mouth. Blonde, wavy hair... I think... Anyway, he grabs me by the collar, told me he was a reporter, and starts asking about the rich guy. Wanted to know where I was going and why. He passed me some scratch and I coughed up the information. The reporter just nodded, like he already knew everything, and then followed the rich guy down the street."

I left Speedy Stevie with a vague promise to swing by next week and, maybe, arrange a date.

"One more thing, Iris!" Stevie called after us once we'd stepped out. "There was a third guy hanging around. At first, I thought he was just a fruit cake, but I saw him join the reporter, and together they followed the rich guy. He was a real weirdo—with a big Stetson hat and a domino mask, like the Lone Ranger from the radio show."

4-7688

315 Hudson St, HY-69 (apt. 3a)

If it is Day 1: I had no idea what we were doing out here.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 4-7817 (p.43)

4-7817

Arthur Moss' building struck me as the kind of place that needed extensive renovations—starting with a kiss from a wrecking ball. Apart from being an eyesore, it looked as safe as a mousetrap.

We reached Moss' apartment, 3A, just in time to see the man himself lock up behind him. A large suitcase stood on the floor beside him and, once we'd introduced ourselves, he gave us the kind of look that could curdle milk. There was no talking to him.

"What've cops ever done for the likes of us?" He waved a hand to encompass the building. "I don't know what being a 'consultant' means, but you'll get nothing from me." He spat at the floor beside my shoe.

Morten gestured at the man's suitcase. "Going somewhere?"

"Yeah," Mr Moss shot back. "Going on a trip to Mind-You-Own-Business State."

"Catchy," I muttered at his retreating back.

Morten turned to look at the locked door of Moss' apartment.

I grinned and guessed at his train of thought. "Feeling like a return visit tonight?"

He nodded, his expression as sour as lemon rinds.

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4-7978

476 5th Ave, TL-6 (apt. basement east)

Instead of leading me into any of the main buildings of the public library, Morten showed me a side entrance. The door opened onto a long, narrow service corridor, eventually throwing us out into a set of ancient-looking rooms, permeated with the scent of dust and pipe smoke.

"This way," he said, taking me to a tiny office, where a kettle and several supplies stood ready. "I need my tiffin, and I have a standing arrangement with the librarian of the occult section."

I plonked myself down onto one of the tiny wooden chairs, which sat beside a narrow desk inside the office. When Morten had finished preparing his tea, he took the other chair and started.

"It's called lexigraphic resonance," Morten said. "That's the magic that was used to kill those three men. We don't have time for a formal lecture, and more's the pity, so I'll have to give you the quick and dirty version. Basically, it's the primary way people like you and I do magic. Remember how I taught you to smell the magical potential in objects?"

"Like the three invitations sent out to Harper, Bruno and Forslund? Yes I remember."

"That magical energy comes from writing. Whenever people write something down in their own hand, and with a big dose of authentic emotion behind it, the writing is imbued with magical energy."

I tried to process what he was saying, and hit upon a snag. "No, wait. Those cards were blank. You saw them."

"Precisely. People like us can do more than detect magic through smell. With training, we can also extract the energy from the paper on which it was written and store it somewhere else—like our own bodies, or..."

"An outwardly innocent little card," I finished. "Um. Okay. So, you're saying someone who wanted all three men dead, took deadly energy from... some written source, and they pulled it out of its original paper and stored it all up in those three invitations. How would that work?"

"Good. You're asking the right questions. Well, to start, you'd need someone who hated all three men. That person would have to put pen to paper. Focus their rage, and write it all down. To kill reliably, they would have to name Harper, Forslund and Larsson. After that, the hostile potential embedded in those words can be pulled out of the paper, and transferred into the three invitations. The fact that the invitations were blank doesn't matter. Our perpetrator could as well have stored the deadly energy in food, or drink or a mundane object. A blank card works because, well, it's so seemingly innocent."

"Hmmm... I think I get it," I mused. "That tells us something. Whoever wrote the words down, he or she gradually lost focus... or their anger ebbed away."

"Why?" Morten asked encouragingly.

"Because Harper dropped dead right away. Larsson lingered for a minute, and Forslund only fell into a coma."

Morten beamed with pride, and I blushed, just as a question bubbled up in my brain. "Tell me something," I said. "Is that how you pulled off that trick with the love letter? The emotions embedded in the letter can be transformed into a protective shield?"

"Precisely, Iris! Murderous magic comes from anger. Protective magic comes from love, and

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so on. None of the emotions can be faked." Morten was getting all kinds of excited now, talking faster and faster. "That love letter, for example, wasn't even written to me personally, sad to say. That doesn't matter. The woman who wrote it, truly loved her beau. So, believe me when I say you could have fired a revolver at me, and the shield would have stopped the bullet." He caught himself and focused his attention back on our case. "There are complicated nuances, but we have no time to cover the details now. The core point is that the emotions must be real, and a text like a letter does not grant you perpetual magic. It's more like a battery. A strong love letter can give me about four shields against handguns."

"And whatever killed these three men, petered out after two deaths," I mused.

"Indeed," Morten confirmed.

"Wait," I said. "If you can use the energy in a love letter that wasn't addressed to you personally, why do you think the original text that fuelled these three deaths had to name the intended victims?"

Morten shrugged. "I don't know for certain, but I figure our killer would have wanted to be assured of success—just in case someone else did open the letters first. If Walter Fox, or Archie Potter, or Maud Labeau did, in fact, open the letters, they would still have been safe. As long as the intended victim touched the cards, they would die and no one else. That is my hunch. Now, there is one more point you must consider."

I kicked my brain into gear. "We're looking for someone who understands lex… lexigraphic resonance. But… that person is not necessarily the same person who wrote down the hateful words. Is that it?"

"Top marks."

I frowned. "Not exactly. If we're looking for someone who hates crime lords, the list is going to be as long as Central Park."

"Remember what you said to Detective Hatchet. It must be someone who genuinely hated all three."

"And potentially, we're talking about two people. One to write, and one to do the magic." I chewed on that thought. "If a love letter offers protection, what kind of text can create such deadly magic?"

"In my experience, death threats are the most lethal. A truly angry letter of resignation can work, in principle. A raw diary entry might do it too, assuming it is brimming with enough hate. Whatever it was, we need to find the person who used its inherent magic." Something in his expression grew dark and distant.

I asked. "Is this what you and my father did during the war?"

He nodded slowly without meeting my eyes. "Before, during, and after. We worked with the police on occasion too. In fact, your father had a contact at the unit for undercover operations. Not sure if they'll help me out, but we might as well try."

Circle **Marker R1** in your case log.

4-8180

7-5574 (p.62) contd.

The condemned building on 48 Little, West 12th had indeed been renovated into a spacious soup kitchen, with a dining hall that could seat around four-hundred people on sturdy benches set around long trestle tables. None of the ragged men and women sitting at the tables

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looked especially happy, but they were eating what smelled like a decent soup. Everything looked clean and functional, without any trace of the depressing austerity I'd seen in such places before. There was even some art on the walls, mostly pastoral scenes. That caught me off guard.

The staff tending to the patrons were all monks and nuns of St Agnes. None of them had any time for us, and they kept telling us to direct any enquiries to Father Forthill.

Circle **Marker A2** in your case log.

4-8516

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (7-4950 on p.61) contd.

Sneaking into a dilapidated apartment building in the dead of night is not easy. Try it. See how far you get. There are loads of things that creak, groan or squeak underfoot. Not to mention the unpleasant-looking people hanging around.

But there was a reason why Morten was my mentor. He led me into an alleyway behind Arthur Moss' building. The stench of urine and old beer was everywhere, but eventually Morten led me to a backdoor. The moonlight shimmered off his white gloves when he motioned for me to wait. He made a series of strange motions around my head and shoulders, too fast for me to follow, and a cold sensation covered my entire body, like a wet blanket.

"To protect us from unfriendly eyes," he said, as if that explained anything.

Then he simply touched the keyhole of the backdoor. There was a licking sound, and Morten opened the door, no lockpicking tools necessary. We passed two people on our way to Arthur Moss' floor, but none of them seemed to notice us. I made a mental note to ask Morten to teach me his invisibility trick.

When we reached Moss' apartment, my eyes widened. The door was ajar. Morten snapped his fingers, and the cold sensation around my body faded, so I figured we were detectable again.

I wanted to ask Morten why he'd turned off the invisibility thing, when a soft, feminine voice from inside Moss' apartment whispered, "I know you're there. Come inside. It's safe. No harm will come to you." The voice was inflected by a vaguely French accent.

Morten led the way in and, inside the apartment, we found Maud Laubeau holding a small flashlight and a cigarette. Immediately, I thought of the letter my father had left me. It was inside my coat pocket, and I prepared myself to create a shield, like Morten had done with that love letter.

However, Maud seemed uninclined to violence. She stood in the middle of Arthur Moss' tiny kitchen, smoking a cigarette in a long, dainty holder. Her flashlight was turned to the floor, casting ghostly light about her feet.

Morten folded his arms across his chest and lifted his chin at Maud. "Not that we're displeased at meeting again, Miss Labeau, but we'd dearly appreciate an explanation. What do you want?"

Maud nodded, and I was surprised to see trepidation in her expression. Gone was the confident ice queen I'd met at the Carlyle Hotel. "I'm a member of the Ordo Caldarium," she explained in a small, mousy voice. "I was initiated into the Quebec chapter of the Ordo. Not sure if you already know that, but..."

I chipped in before Morten could respond, "Wow, thanks for the résumé. Doesn't explain what you're doing here." For some reason,

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Maud was getting on my nerves. Maybe I was just jealous of her pretty haircut.

She flinched at my words, but held up her hands in a placating gesture. "Iris, I met your father two months before he died."

Something in my chest shifted—like a gear slotting into place, and I felt my brain closing the box on a knot of uncomfortable emotions. Instead, I became clinical and cold like a scalpel—focused on the job like Morten had trained me. "Still not hearing an explanation for what you're doing here."

She sighed. "We think your father taught Jesse Frost about lexigraphic resonance. And... well... we think Frost killed your father because they disagreed over Frost's growing criminal empire. I'm here because I've been tailing the two of you all day. I was hoping to catch up with you here, because—as a representative of the Ordo Caldarium—I'm hoping you can help us stop Frost."

Morten spoke, "Stop him from doing what, precisely?"

Maud shifted her attention to him, and she seemed glad to be talking to anyone but me. "From refining his magic and expanding his empire. You came here to cast a spell using that confession you obtained from Father Forthill, right? Go ahead and cast it."

If you have circled **Marker C1** in your case log, go to 6-7194 on p.57.

4-8868

Staff at the Canadian Consulate were happy to confirm that Maud Labeau was one of their citizens, who had been residing in Manhattan for two years.

4-9392

The noise in Morningside always gave me a headache, and something in the air always made my nose itch—not in an arcane way, more like allergies.

We made our way to Gertrude Burt's door, where we were greeted by an attractive blonde woman in her late thirties with high cheekbones and a generous mouth. A subtle scent in the air around her immediately told me she was clued-in about magic. She looked us over with mild disdain, until her own nose—a cute, pert little thing—twitched. She was smelling us out too—realising we were practitioners. Her eyes went wide, and she nearly collapsed. Morten moved forward to catch her, but the woman leaned against the doorframe and regained her balance.

"He's dead, then," she breathed. "Harry—he's dead." She looked up at me. "Isn't he?"

For a second, it seemed to me she was hoping I'd contradict her. Then, before I could answer, she straightened and retreated into her apartment. "Come in," she ordered, voice cold and regal.

We followed her into a neatly appointed place. Not rich, or anything flashy, but with sturdy furniture, lush rugs, and several paintings on the wall of her sitting room. There were a lot of pink and salmon colours around.

Gertrude emerged from a side room, cigarette in one hand, and a pack in the other. Silently, she offered a smoke to each of us, but we declined. Seating herself on a pink loveseat, she gestured for us to take the armchairs across from her.

"So," she asked, blowing smoke. "How'd he die?"

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Morten replied, voice level. "We were hoping you'd be able to help us."

Gertrude's eyes widened again. "You don't know? I thought you worked with the police." Her pert little nose twitched again. "Yeah, I can smell copper all over you."

"We are, indeed, assisting the constabulary, Miss Burt," Morten said.

She eyed him, blowing more smoke. "Then you ought to know that Harry Harper and I haven't seen each other in fifteen years."

The smoke was making my eyes itch. I waved it off and blurted. "His guard dog was under instructions to look out for letters from you."

Morten gave me a sharp look, then turned to Gertrude, waiting for her response.

The woman let out a bitter laugh. "Of course! Harry was hoping—no praying to hear from me. Probably the only thing he prayed about."

I must have made a stupid face, because Gertrude laughed at me again and said. "So young. Too young for this kind of gig. Harry pined after me. But I knew what he would become, even back then. A monster. I wanted no part of his life. Still, I was grateful for the money he sent. Call me a hypocrite if you like, but I needed to take care of Amanda."

"Amanda?" I asked.

Gertrude shook her head. "So young. Our daughter. Before you ask, she doesn't know Harry was her father. She never needs to know. We were never married. You can find Amanda at the 26th Precinct. Don't talk to her unless you really need to. She has nothing to do with any of this."

I wanted to give her a 'I'll be the judge of that' line, but her jibe about my age had zipped my lips.

Morten jumped in. "Can you tell us about your whereabouts last night?"

Gertrude rolled her eyes. "Sure. I was preparing dinner for my elderly neighbour, Toby Castle. We played Gin Rummy until late."

If you have circled **Marker D1** in your case log, go to 3-9768 on p.39.

If you have circled **Marker E1** in your case log, go to 3-4198 on p.35.

5

5-0921

2-4114 (p.24) contd.

"Boy, would I!"

Morten smiled approvingly. "Follow me."

We made our way over to Thomas' front door, where Morten stopped and reached out to the doorknob with his white-gloved hand, careful to avoid actually touching the brass knocker.

"Do you know what motivates Detective Hatchet?" he asked.

I shrugged. "A desire to serve and protect? Not ambition, that's for sure." I tried to anticipate where this was going.

"Indeed. To serve. To protect. To uncover the truth. He allows me access to his case notes whenever he's done with them. I can extract an… idiosyncratic type of magical energy from them." He concentrated on the door.

Then I got. "You're using Hatchet's 'desire to uncover the truth' for an unlocking spell. Neat! And you got it from his case notes? Did you transfer the magic into your gloves? Or into your hands? How long can you keep it?" I caught myself and shut up.

"Details later, Iris, work now. Just watch and smell."

There was a sharp tang like vinegar, and Thomas' front door clicked as if Morten had turned a key in the lock. I grinned like a fool. "Cool! Morten, you have GOT to teach me that one."

We stepped inside and made directly for the room to which Thomas had glanced. It was as cramped as a ship's cabin, but obsessively neat. A narrow desk sat under a window overlooking the street and, on the desk, we found a crumpled piece of paper.

"Harry Harper, Bruno Larsson and Richard Forslund," Morten read, without picking the paper up. "Men like you are a curse upon this city. You will burn in hell for what you did to my wife. You might not have fired the bullet. But you are responsible. Your triggerman is dead. Though I do not have the power to kill you myself, my friend will see justice done. Harry Harper. Bruno Larsson. Richard Forslund."

"Hmmm… Look closely," Morten commented.

"Yep," I said. "Handwritten by someone in an unpleasant state of mind. It's barely legible in places."

"And yet," Morten bent over to sniff the page. "All the rage has been extracted from it."

"And transferred into the three invitations, you think?"

He nodded. "Fits. Look closely at the handwriting. You can see the anger petering out towards the end." He started tapping one finger against his lip. "But why is it here in John Winter's room?"

Circle **Marker G2** in your case log.

5-1518

3-2537 (p.34) contd.

After we introduced ourselves as new friends to Mr Cunninghan, the doorman spoke up. Lucky for us, he was the observant type, and he'd gotten a good look at Cunningham's assailant.

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"Short for a man. About your height," he said, looking at me. "Strong, though. Big shoulders. No sag to his gut." He pointed at his temples. "Grey hair. And he had a silver ring on his left hand."

Morten thanked him and turned to leave when a radio announcement come warbling from the wireless on the man's desk.

"This WNYC, Manhattan's voice on the airwaves. News just in from Hell's Kitchen: A violent gunfight erupted around two a.m. on West 55th Street, startling residents from their sleep. Unlike earlier reports uptown, this incident may have resulted in casualties. An unknown number of individuals were transported to an undisclosed hospital. Authorities have not yet released the extent of their injuries. Police investigators are on the scene. Stay tuned to WNYC for continuing coverage."

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

5-1609

If you have circled **Marker R1** in your case log, go to 3-1800 on p.34.

5-1817

The Bochner's Pub was a ragged-looking place—a real dive. Honestly, if Morten wasn't with me, I'd be scared to go in there alone.

"We're looking for a Mr Daneil Harris," Morten said to the barman, a rake-thin man who was scratching himself like he had a bad case of fleas.

"He's in the cooler," the man chuckled.

We were directed to a dingy backroom. Inside it, we discovered a slovenly man, wearing a tattered raincoat, passed out on the floor, a blissed-out expression plastered on his bearded face. Next to his body, we uncovered a notebook scribbled with theories about how Judge Samuel Winter was a visitor from outer space, sent to battle crime, starting with Harper, Larsson and Forslund. According to the notebook, he was receiving divine help from a gang of dwarves.

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

5-2002

2-3942 (p.24) contd.

The warehouses belonging to Azure Phoenix Traders are surrounded by a tall metal fence, and patrolled by enough guards to give anyone pause.

"No one in that place is going to supply answers, or let us snoop around," Morten observed, his voice dry as a cracker. "If we are going to follow Mr Cunningham's advice, we should return after dark."

5-2777

8-0960 (p.64) contd.

The Baskerville Bar was filled with boozehounds of the lowest type. Men who should've been working this time of day were nursing cheap liquor and cheaper cigarettes.

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When Morten started asking questions about Larsson, Forslund and Harper, the noise died instantly, like someone had flicked a switch. The rough men gave me all kinds of evil looks. The few women in evidence were even more hostile. Morten got heckled, with lots of, "Go back to England, you dandy!". We got nowhere fast. Then, Morten mentioned Jesse Frost, and the temperature in the room grew icy.

Accepting defeat, we left and strolled around aimlessly, until a decrepit-looking vagabond across the street got our attention.

"You'll not loosen any tongues in there if you're asking about Mr Frost. Too well-loved round these parts."

Morten got down on one knee, putting his face on a level with the vagabond. "How's your tongue?"

"Parched."

Morten smiled. "How about I fix that for you?"

"Not here, you won't. Walk me to 6th Avenue. There's a great place there, where honest men can have honest conversations without angering the working class, you understand?"

Morten and I all but carried the old man to the Public House on 6th where, I noticed, prices were significantly higher compared to the Baskerville. Even so, Morten made no objection to buying our new acquaintance something substantial to eat, along with a beer, contenting himself with tea, while I got coffee and a bagel.

"So, Mr… um?" Morten asked.

"Sam Smith," the old man said between bites, giving me severe exposure to halitosis.

"Right," Morten said, and I could see he knew that 'Sam Smith' was not our friend's real name. "Why are you so charmingly forthright, when everyone else has been giving us the cold shoulder?"

"That so-called 'Gentleman' Frost ain't done nothing for me. Not personally. But it's true he's done good by a lot of folk in the Yards."

"What kind of things?"

"Goes by people's houses, especially if they've lost loved ones to gang fighting. Promises to do something. The way I heard it, some time ago—can't remember when, exactly—he got the three big wigs to meet up and agree to 'fair play' or some such."

"Would that be Richard Forslund, Harry Harper and Bruno Larsson?"

"It would. None of them would quit being scum, of course, but they'd at least agreed to killing as few innocents as possible—not that many folks around the Yards are innocent, save for Father Forthill. But there's something odd in the way Mr Frost goes about it."

"Yes?" Morten asked.

"Well, you see he gets people to write letters."

"What kind of letters?"

"Say you want some of Frost's men keeping an eye out for you—keep you safe from criminal activities. First you need to write him a letter asking for his protection."

"Interesting." Morten ordered another beer for Sam. "Is that the only variety of letter?"

"Not the way I heard it. Sometimes… well, say you've been fired from your job. Gentleman Frost, he might give you some money. Hell, he might even give you a new job at his place—Azure Phoenix Traders. Or he might let you eat at his soup kitchen."

"What soup kitchen?" Morten asked.

"48 Little, West 12th."

Morten scrunched up his face. "I thought that was a condemned building."

Sam shrugged. "Mr Frost must have bought it. It's all renovated now."

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"Alright, so what kind of letters does Mr Frost require for his largesse?"

"He makes people write letters to their former employers, explaining how angry they are for getting fired. Now, Mr Frost, he don't actually mail the letters to no one. Just keeps them. Says it's good to get the bad feelings out, so I heard it. Strange man. But let no one say people under his protection aren't safe."

As we made our exit, I nudged Morten with my elbow. "That was very kind of you."

He smiled. "Sometimes a little kindness goes a long way."

I thought of some of the people we'd met today. "Yeah, and sometimes it's like cleaning graffiti with a toothbrush."

Circle **Marker Z1** in your case log.

Circle **Marker F2** in your case log.

5-2809

8-0960 (p.64) contd.

Since we had no other means of tracking 'Sam Smith', we returned to the Baskerville Bar. It was a hit!

Our friend was sitting by the bar, dressed in new clothes, with a glass of decent bourbon to hand. He had also enjoyed the benefits of a bath and toothbrush—which was a relief to my nose.

'Sam Smith' still didn't relish the prospect of being seen with us in public, but thirty minutes later, he met us outside the Baskerville and led us into a convenient alleyway.

"Nice jacket," I commented.

"Isn't it?" he beamed. "Turns out I was all wrong about my buddy Gentleman Jesse Frost. He knows about me after all. Came to the bar, bought me these new clothes. Gave me an apartment. Even gave me a job at Azure Phoenix Traders."

"Very nice," I chirped, all smiles. "Did he ask for anything in return?"

'Sam Smith' blushed. "Only that I write down how angry I was at him for taking so long to help me out. Frankly, I didn't even realise how angry I'd been. Getting it out took a weight off my shoulders, I can tell you."

"And that's all he wanted?"

"That's all he wanted. Heart of gold, our Gentlemen Frost."

"There's none better in the city," I said bitterly.

5-3429

605 Park Ave, UE-59

Mr Archie Potter's home was nothing like the glamorous addresses we'd been treated to earlier, barely good enough to fit his more lavish Upper East Side neighbours.

When we approached the front door, it took me a few seconds to spot the cop hiding in the shadows of the porch. Luckily, he recognised Morten and let us in, where we found two more cops—one watching the street from the wide windows of the sitting room, while the other one played some card game with Potter in the kitchen.

"Might we have a private word with Mr Potter?"

The cop playing cards with the bodyguard gave us a suspicious look.

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"To aid Detective Hatchet's investigation, please?" Morten explained.

The card-playing cop acquiesced and joined his buddy by the windows of the sitting room.

Mr Potter was a spare man, with narrow shoulders, but impressively muscled forearms, and a messy collection of scars on his face.

"Mr Potter," Morten said in his most polite British tone, offering the bodyguard a cigarette. "I'm sure you understand your predicament."

The scarred gangster grimaced, and I was surprised to hear an Irish accent when he spoke. "Some bad people out there are going to make bad conclusions about how the boss died. Maybe come after me. Does my reputation no good that you lot are hanging round my place."

"Then help us point the blame where it belongs," Morten pressed. "Your boss opened that letter himself. How often does that happen?"

"As often as politicians speak the truth. I got the invitation off a courier on a motorcycle. When the boss heard it was, 'An invitation to dinner', he told me to pass it direct to him. Normally, that only happens with five people: Judge Samuel Winter, Thomas Nelson, Father Bartholomew Forthill, and Anastazja Ciesielska."

At the mention of the last name, Morten grimaced.

"Someone you know?" I asked.

"Only by reputation," he answered, before turning back to Mr Potter. "Thanks for the information. At the risk of asking an inane question, can you think of anyone with sufficient motivation to put your boss in the ground?"

The gangster laughed bitterly, making the scars on his face wriggle like worms. "Half the city, but you're getting nothing else from my pie trap. I say anything more, and it's the final nail in my coffin. Assuming I ain't already on borrowed time."

On that cheery note, we left Mr Potter to the company of the cops.

If you have circled **Marker M1** in your case log, go to 5-7945 on p.54.

5-3695

8-9137 (p.65) contd.

This time, Morten was allowed into Anna Bartosh's home.

"Yes," she replied to my question. "Maud Labeau has been following you. She is a member of the Ordo. Don't worry about her. Her instructions are to watch your back and protect you from harm."

A thought struck me. "Does that mean all her concern for Richard Forslund was fake?"

Anna nodded. "Maud is a fine actress, and a brave young woman. She infiltrated Forslund's organisation with the aim of bringing it down from within. She was sending key information to me. Very soon now, we might have amassed sufficient evidence to share with the police, but Forslund's death changed things. We won't act until we know who killed him and what's likely to happen next."

I pushed for more information, but Bartosh kept her teeth together, insisting we solve Forslund's murder first.

5-3784

500 W. 57th St, HK-2

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If you have circled **Marker G1** in your case log, go to 2-5569 on p.26.

5-6230

2-5169 (p.25) contd.

Father Forthill treated us to tea again and, although my heart will always belong to coffee, I couldn't help but smile at seeing the blissed-out expression on Morten's face. It sure would have been nice to shoot the breeze all day in the pleasant company of Morten and Father Forthill, but, sadly, we had grim matters to address.

Morten led the interview, "Father Forthill, has anyone in your parish lost a wife recently? This would be somewhere in the last two or three months?"

"Several, I'm afraid to say," the old priest answered while mending a pair of boots. It seemed to me his hands were always busy with something practical. "Arthur Moss, for one. His wife was shot during a suspected gang-related incident. Unfortunately, no one was willing to speak honestly with the police, including Arthur himself. The fear of retaliation from the Big Three runs too deep. Then, there's Harry Fowler. His wife was also lost to gang-related activity. From what I've been able to learn, his wife was struck down by a truck fleeing police inspection somewhere to the north of the Yards. Again, no one was willing to say much to the police, or even to myself. I only ever gleaned the barest outline of what happened. Kieran Conway and Donald Culkin also lost their wives about three months ago. Both to tuberculosis. They've moved out of Manhattan since then."

5-7945

5-3429 (p.52) contd.

When we arrived at Mr Potter's house, I'd expected to see signs of violence. Nothing. Inside the house, we found the criminal safe and sound.

One of the cops was still playing cards with Mr Potter, and he proved happy enough to explain what had happened.

"Some teenaged nutcase showed up on the curb. Pulled a freaking Chicago typewriter from his coat and it looked like he was about to open up on my buddy on the porch. Luckily, I was outside taking a smoke. The kid hadn't spotted me, and I put two slugs in his chest with my .38—sad to say." The cop rubbed at his eyes, and I noticed his fingers were shaking. He sure looked like a hard-bitten man, but even so he clearly didn't relish killing. "Couldn't figure what else to do. Kid's dead. No identification yet, but odds are he's just someone who wanted to make a name for himself by avenging Bruno Larsson. If you're looking for details, head over to the 19th Precinct."

Circle **Marker N1** in your case log.

5-9767

153 E. 67th St, UE-48

If you have circled **Marker N1** in your case log, go to 4-3625 on p.42.

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5-9818

"Well, that was a useful stop," I said to Morten.

"Indeed," he grinned.

A helpful secretary at the Association of the Bar—who never took her eyes off Morten, the tart—shared some insightful gossip. It turned out that Thomas Nelson was widely regarded as a rising star in the legal world, and that Judge Samuel Winters commanded such respect, the integrity of his rulings was never questioned, even when unpopular.

6

6-0028

If you have circled **Marker U1** in your case log, go to 1-7370 on p.20.

6-0448

Forsyth Tenements looked as hygienic as a landfill, and as beautiful as the inside of a factory's chimney. Paint was peeling off the walls. Cracks had opened in the plaster, and a gang of teenaged boys were using chalk to draw… anatomically unlikely pictures on the walls.

Cunningham's apartment was 3B, near the very top of the building. Morten knocked, and the door opened a fraction, showing a blue, bloodshot eye. "What do you want?" a surprisingly cultured voice asked.

"Hello, Mr Cunningham. We have reason to believe that a certain Mr John Winters is presently residing at this location. We'd dearly like to speak to the man. Could that be arranged?" Morten enquired in his most polite tone.

"Presently residing at this location? Think you're from Oxford?"

"Quite so. Now, may we speak with him?"

"How do I know you're not here to kill me?"

If you have circled **Marker X1** in your case log, go to 1-1383 on p.15.

If you have circled **Marker V1** in your case log, go to 7-5120 on p.62.

If you have circled **Marker E2** in your case log, go to 8-1551 on p.64

6-1015

155 E. 71st St, UE-32

If it is Day 1: We met a heavy security guard at the gate, who told us that Mr Jesse Frost is unavailable.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 1-5289 (p.18)

6-2091

5-1609 (3-1800 on p.34) contd.

Detective Claudia Field gave us the kind of look a bored schoolkid gives a dissected frog in biology class. However, by degrees, her eyes narrowed as we explained our reasons for dismissing Judge Winter as a suspect in the murders of Forslund, Larsson and Harper.

She nodded slowly when we'd finished, and I felt a smug sense of satisfaction fill my belly like a cup of hot chocolate. We'd done well.

"Your turn," I chirped. "How can you help us?"

She leaned back in her chair, eyeing the ceiling. I started tapping my toe until she made eye contact again. "There are rumours that someone in the criminal underground has gained… I suppose you would call it magical abilities. The kind of tricks you two can do." She stopped speaking—started chewing on her lower lip as though considering her next words carefully.

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"Your father once talked to me about a personal project. He had taken on an apprentice—someone who, according to your father, could help to curb crime in the city. I have a feeling his plans went sideways just before his death."

Detective Field rose from her chair and crossed her office to look out the window. "We also have a particular interest in Judge Winters' son. Find him. Report back to me, and I will give you more information."

When we left Field's office, my brain was fizzing with the news about my father. There was a sour look on Morten's face, too.

"Did you know anything about this personal project?" I asked him. "You were, like, really close friends."

Morten shook his head ruefully. "I figured we were best friends, but I knew nothing about this project."

I chewed the inside of my cheek. My father had been murdered, and I'd coped by focusing all my energy on learning magic with Morten. Now was a bad time for distractions like this.

If you have circled **Marker S1** in your case log, go to 3-6071 on p.37. Return to 3-1800 (p.34).

6-4938

6-0448 (2-0289 on p.22) contd.

When we returned to Cunningham's apartment, Morten was forced to break open the door with magic. Inside the stinking, dingy little hole, both men were lying still—each trapped in a coma, each clutching a blank piece of paper. We also found a single envelope with Cunningham's address scrawled on it.

I knelt down to sniff at the paper in Cunningham's hand. "Well, well. Smells like our friend Sam Smith."

Circle **Marker T1** in your case log.

Circle **Marker P1** in your case log.

Circle **Marker W1** in your case log.

Return to 2-0289 (p.22).

6-7194

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (4-8516 on p.46) contd.

Morten stepped into the tiny, cluttered living room, where I could only see the dim outlines of battered furniture. Reaching into his coat pocket, he retrieved the confession letter. I stood back, ready to watch and learn.

But Morten looked over his shoulder at me. "Join me Iris." His voice was as serious as a judge's gavel.

Suddenly, there was a lead ball in my throat. Swallowing it down, I stood beside him.

"Here," he said gently, "place your hand on the letter."

I did, and there was a sucking sensation where my fingertips touched the paper. Real magic doesn't look the way most normal people imagine. There's nothing flashy, nothing that would break the budget of a Hollywood studio. The smells, however, made my head spin. Gradually, my brain put an emotional label to every smell that rose from the letter. Fear. Guilt. Desperation.

Morten gestured at the living room and, looking around, I could see dim shapes. Arthur Moss was there. I couldn't see him—not exactly.

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There was just a vague outline, but somehow I knew it was him. He was right in front of us. Sitting in a chair in front of him was Daniel Fassbender, tied to the chair and gagged.

Without warning, my vision spun, and I was looking up at the shape of Arthur Moss from Fasbender's perspective. Clinically, my detective's mind categorised the emotions running through Fasbender's body. Resignation. I'd known... that is, Fasbender had known there was something strange about the order to kill Moss' wife. She was nobody. Not the kind of person who warranted a rich man's bullet. I'd known there would be a price one day, that's why I'd reached out to Father Forthill. And the man who'd paid me to murder Moss' wife was right there—standing behind Moss. If only I wasn't gagged, I'd tell Moss.

The man was short, built like a fighter, with grey temples and a cleft chin. On his left hand, I saw the silver ring I remembered from when he hired me. The letters HF were engraved on it. He was talking.

"... like you wanted, and like I promised. This is the man who pulled the trigger. Not the man who is ultimately responsible. Only a tool of Harper, or Larsson or Forslund. But you wanted him, and here he is. Does our arrangement stand?"

I recognised the names, of course, but I'd never worked for any of those three!

I watched Moss put a revolver to my head. His hand was shaking. He was no cold-blooded killer. But he was filled with enough rage to burn Central Park to cinders.

"No one will report his death," said the man who had hired me. "Everyone in this building knows that justice must be served. Those who hear the shot, will say nothing. I will make the body disappear. Trust me."

Arthur Moss pulled the trigger.

My mind snapped out of the vision rendered by the spell. I felt sick. I had recognised that silver ring. It has been my father's. HF. Harker Faith.

Looking around the tiny, lonely apartment I felt an unsettling combination of Fasbender's resignation, Moss' rage, and my own grief.

Maud was standing beside Morten and I turned, heading into the kitchen, when I heard the door to Moss' apartment nudge open. I had only a split second to notice the man standing in the doorway, and the twin barrels of a sawed-off shotgun pointing at my chest.

Gunshots are loud. Terribly loud—especially in confined spaces. The flash of light seared my eyes, but my shield was ready—powered by the letter from my father.

The shot slammed into an invisible barrier and dropped to the floor, as harmless as marbles.

The gunman fled. My feet carried me after him as far as the door, when I stopped. Morten had trained me better than this. There might be a second assailant waiting to shoot me in the back.

I figured I knew who had sent the hitter. Why stomp on the tail of the snake, when you can go for the head?

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

6-8545

6-0448 (1-1383 on p.15) contd.

"And this attacker was after you and Johnny because you'd stolen a document from him?" I asked.

Cunningham gave another bitter laugh. "You mean that death threat Johnny took off him? Nah, my theory is, he'd already tapped that

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

death threat dry to kill...." He stopped himself, swallowed and continued. "Let's just say, he sure didn't attack the two of us to try and get it back."

"Then, what did he want?" I asked.

"To teach us, to 'respect our betters'—his words, not mine." Again, Cunningham shook his head. "He's cold as a reptile, that man. Clinical as a scalpel. Which gives him more reason than most to source his magic from other people's writing. I'm not sure he feels anything but naked ambition."

"How did the attack go down?" Morten asked.

"Just when the cab dropped us off last night, our attacker was hiding behind some dumpsters near the entrance to the building. He did his best to break our necks, but we managed to get past him and into the building. At that point, witnesses were pouring out of their apartments—always keen on getting their entertainment. So, our attacker pulled his fedora over his face, and beat it. Close call! I can tell you that."

7

7-2252

35 E. 76th St, UE-10

Richard Forslund's girlfriend was in the penthouse suite at the Carlyle Hotel. The suite had a foyer the same size as Morten's library. After that, we entered a dining room, and I swear to you, it was twice as large. Next, we found a tiny sitting room—clearly designed for intimate conversations.

The walls had been done up in white marble with black veins, and everything was lit by brass lamps with the shades designed to imitate flower petals. The small sitting room, however, was almost dark. Only a single, red candle lit the room, sitting on a tiny table in the centre of the room. In front of the table with its candle, a slender young woman was kneeling on the thick black carpet, her hands clasped together in prayer. She seemed about my age—around twenty—with a trendy bob haircut that made me a little envious. A lot envious. I wondered if Morten would like it.

We stood there, waiting on the threshold of the sitting room for five minutes before Morten cleared his throat.

The girl opened her eyes, rose to her feet, and seated herself on a black lounge chair. "Tell it to me straight," she said in a tiny voice on the verge of cracking. Her accent was vaguely French. "Has my Ricky passed?"

"No," Morten answered.

The girl released a long sigh, cast her eyes upward and mouthed a thank you to the heavens.

I interjected, "You want to help us find out who did this to him?"

The girl rose from the lounge chair, gathered herself and joined us in the sharp light outside the sitting room. Her face became as hard as the marble walls. She produced a cigarette in a dainty holder and said, "Yes. Anything you need."

Morten took the lead. "May we start with your name, miss?"

"Maud Labeau. From Quebec."

"Thank you, Miss Labeau. Who opens most of Mr Forslund's mail?"

"I do." There was a challenge sparkling in her eyes, as if she dared us to try something like, 'you seem too young and vapid'. "I am his personal secretary, and the love of his life." Again that challenge gleamed like a knife.

"But you did not open the letter that got here tonight?" I asked.

Miss Labeau turned frosty eyes my way. "No. Now you suspect me?"

"What we need to know is, how often did that happen? How often did Mr Forslund open mail himself?" I asked.

Her cold eyes scanned me from head to toe, and a frown creased her delicate brows. "Have we met before?"

"Nope."

"Hmmm..." She held her cigarette out to Morten, expecting him to light it. She probably assumed he had a lighter on him, and she was still looking at me, so she didn't see him light her cigarette with a tiny flame coming out of his index finger. "I was under instructions to open all his mail, except for three people: Judge Samuel Winter, Thomas Nelson, and Father Bartholomew Forthill. And anything marked 'an invitation to dinner'. Tonight was the only night such a letter arrived."

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"When did Mr Forslund issue that last order to you?" I asked.

"A month ago."

"This Father Forthill, where's his church?"

"St. Agnes. Hudson Yards."

"You think tonight's card came from any of those three people?"

Labeau shook her dainty head. "Tonight, the envelope was not signed by any of them. It simply read, 'An invitation to dinner'. I told him so, and he immediately asked me to pass the envelope to him."

I glanced around the spacious suite. "Does Mr Forslund keep any bodyguards on hand? It seems like a compulsion for someone in his line of business."

Labeau's eyes turned to flint. "My Ricky can protect himself well enough. He needs no bodyguard."

About a hundred ironic quips leaped into my mind, but I opted for giving the grieving girlfriend a pass. Look at me being all diplomatic.

"Thank you, Miss Labeau," Morten said. "We'll show ourselves out."

7-3039

21 W. 38th St, TL-21

If it is Day 1: The Reliable Courier Company was closed when we arrived.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 4-5862 (p.42)

7-3888

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (3-9258 on p.38) contd.

If you have circled **Marker B1** in your case log, go to 2-5788 on p.27. Return to 3-9258 (p.38).

7-3901

At the front desk to Lerner Apartments, we got hold of the doorman who was on duty last night, but he wasn't happy to drop dirt on any of the residents, and refused to say anything.

If you have circled **Marker H2** in your case log, go to 2-9373 on p.33.

7-3973

325 Spring St, HY-68

If it is Day 1: St. Anges was closed for the night when we arrived. Odds were if we hammered on the door, we might wake some Good Samaritan, but we decided against it. Hell, I needed sleep too.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 2-5169 (p.25)

7-4950

Day 1 - End of Day Briefing (3-9258 on p.38) contd.

If you have circled **Marker A1** in your case log, go to 4-8516 on p.46. Return to 3-9258 (p.38).

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7-5120

6-0448 (p.56) contd.

"By the way," Morten asked Cunningham. "Do you know a certain Daneil Harris?"

Cunningham rolled his eyes. "Unfortunately, I do. He's freelance like me. Unlike me, the man's an idiot. Some time ago, he uncovered a link between Harry Harper and some woman named Gertrude Burt. The two of them had a daughter, called Amanda. That, however, is about the only truth Daneil Harris ever turned over. He's a nut. Gives all us freelance types a bad name, if you ask me."

7-5574

48 Little W. 12th St, HY-10

If you have circled **Marker Z1** in your case log, go to 4-8180 on p.45

7-5838

1 Bowling Green, FD-86

Sadly, the US Customs House had nothing useful for us. The officials working there looked as ragged as old shoes, with bags under their eyes and shaking fingers from lack of sleep.

"Poor sods," Morten commented.

7-8672

20 E. 73rd St, UE-25

If it is Day 1: Parchments & More were closed when we arrived.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 1-4338 (p.18)

7-9005

950 Park Ave, CM-58 (apt. pnt)

If it is Day 1: The building has been locked down. No admission, even for magical police consultants.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 1-2117 (p.16)

8

8-0364

14 E. 75th St, UE-17

I was looking forward to seeing the inside of Keith's Restaurant, having heard so much about the upscale eatery. Just never had enough scratch to take myself there, or a rich enough beau. Detective Hatchet drove us past the bright neon sign, into an empty parking lot.

"Officially," he said, "they're closed for the night, except for 'special' customers."

"And who's our Mr Special here?" Morten asked.

"Bruno Larsson," Hatchet answered.

"Wait," I interjected. "I've heard of him. Morten told me you suspect Larsson of selling drugs and guns."

Hatchet smiled at me. "Been on his trail for five years. Even got your old man to help out. He and Morten nearly clinched a case against Bruno."

"But ultimately nothing stuck," Morten said bitterly.

"Yep," Hatchet carried on. "And now Bruno's dead after getting 'an invitation to dinner' just like Harper. In fact, I figure they died mere minutes from each other. Same story. An anonymous courier dropped off the invite at around 10h40. Some kid on a motorcycle, though no one got a name. Bruno's guard dog had the same instructions as Harper's: Pass the invitation directly to him. But, there's one difference. Come and see."

Sadly, instead of taking us into Keith's proper, Detective Hatchet opened a backdoor, which I had assumed would lead into kitchens or something. To my surprise, it opened onto a long, narrow corridor. We filed in, and Hatchet opened the single door at the far end.

"Nice," I commented. The door opened onto a charming, intimate room with a single round table and two chairs. A candle burned on the table, and the walls were all dark wood, festooned with autographed pictures of Veronica Lake and Alan Ladd.

One of the chairs had fallen over and, splayed on the floor, was a fat, bald man with a toothbrush moustache.

"That's Bruno," Hatchet confirmed. "No one's getting drugs or guns off him anymore."

"Looks to me like the consequences of a bad diet," I quipped.

"Sure, sure," Hatchet growled. "Could be."

"But," Morten cut in, "we don't like coincidences, do we, Iris?" He gestured at the white envelope clutched in Bruno's left hand, and the blank card in his right.

"True," I conceded. "Detective, you said his bodyguard called you, right? Where is he?"

"Uniforms had to escort him to Lenox Hill Hospital—the man looked like he was about to die of shock himself. Before you ask, he was the only person in the room with Bruno. Apparently, it was their habit to have drinks here every Wednesday night. Something about doing a 'business review'."

"Business review?" Morten asked.

Hatchet shrugged. "My suspicion is that Archie Potter—that's the bodyguard's name—took care of blackmail and intimidation for Bruno. Which means, every Wednesday they decided who needed dealing with." Suddenly, Hatchet slammed a fist against the wall, making me jump. "Of course, if I could prove any of

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that, Archie would be rotting in the slammer. As it stands, my officers are protecting him. How's that for irony?"

"What do you mean?" I asked. "Why does he need protection?"

"He was the only man here. He might catch heat for Bruno's death," Hatchet answered. "There's zero evidence he killed anyone tonight—for now, at least—but some hothead hoping to make a name for himself might try and avenge Bruno."

"But he's not high on your suspect list, is he?" Morten asked.

Hatchet shook his head. "Doesn't explain the overlap with the other two deaths. Do me a favour and smell that card in Bruno's hand."

I piped up. "On it." Hatchet made a face as if he thought I was too young for such gruesome work. "Hey Mister Chisel Chin, I've seen my share of 'gruesome'. Besides, did you complain back at Harper's? No you didn't. Now, let a girl work."

I bent down and inhaled. "Same smell as on Harper's body. No poison I can detect, but there's a clear trace of hostile magic."

Morten spoke up, "You said there was something different about Bruno's death."

"Yep," Hatchet answered. "According to Archie Potter, Bruno didn't just drop dead like Harry Harper. He lingered for about a minute, clutching his chest and gasping for air." Hatchet shrugged. "Might be nothing."

"Might be something," Morten mused.

"Factor into your equation," Hatchet added, "that our third victim for the night hasn't died. Not yet. He's in a coma at Lenox Hill."

8-0960

100 Vandam St, HY-69

If you have circled **Marker Y1** in your case log, go to 5-2777 on p.50.

If you have circled **Marker T1** in your case log, go to 5-2809 on p.52.

8-1551

6-0448 (p.56) contd.

"Did you steal some letters from Mr Frost?"

"Yep," Cunningham admitted. "That's how he powers his shields. Letters from the grateful folk at the soup kitchen. I just wanted to be certain. That's why I stole them. I don't know enough about magic to pull the stunt myself, but I wanted to look at the tone of the letters and see if they'd fit the bill. I figure they do."

If you have circled **Marker F2** in your case log, go to 2-0289 on p.22.

8-2817

440 Riverside Dr, MS-65 (apt. 1c)

A quick chat with Toby Castle confirmed Miss Burt' story. We were even treated to cookies and a glittering account of what a wonderful person Miss Burt is.

"Pity her daughter works such long hours at the precinct."

"Did anything unusual happen last night?" Morten asked.

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"Not at all. Well, there was someone at the door at one point, I don't recall the time."

"Who was it?" I asked.

"Didn't see him," Mr Castle replied. "Gertrude answered, but she called him Winter, I think."

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

8-4706

401 W. 25th St, CS-36

We discovered that Anastazja Ciesielska was a medium and fortune teller by trade.

"Do you think Bruno Larsson banked on Ciesielska being able to divine the future of his criminal enterprise for him?"

Morten shrugged. "Could be. Stranger things have happened. True diviners are scarce as hen's teeth, though."

"But you've heard of Ciesielska before, right?"

He rubbed his eyes. "Heard? Yes. But nothing of substance. I have as clear an idea of what to expect as you do, Iris."

I noticed Morten wasn't calling me 'kid' anymore. Welcome change.

Ciesielska received us in a darkened room, with heavy drapes of blue and black everywhere. The woman herself was pushing sixty, and her motherly face seemed like it could tell soothing bedtime stories. Perhaps that was exactly what her trade really entailed.

"Yes," she answered in a voice as warm as freshly-baked cookies. "Bruno Larsson regularly visited me for readings." She gestured to a deck of Tarot cards on the round table in front of her. "He encouraged me to keep an eye on the futures at his behest, and to write to him should I see anything to his benefit."

"Futures?" I asked. "Plural?"

"Plural, my dear," she affirmed with a knowing smile. Then her eyes flicked between my face and Morten's. She winked at me and I blushed like crazy.

"Did you write to him?" Morten asked.

She shook her head. "Readings are best done in person."

Reaching for her Tarot cards, she shuffled the deck and drew three.

"You two must cross paths with a cold man. A man strong of body, stronger yet of will. No… perhaps two such men. Similar in outward fashion. But they tread different paths." She frowned, then snapped her eyes up at me. "More than that I cannot see. There is a shroud about your futures, my dear. You would do well to seek out the Ordo Caldarium. They are close at hand. Its head, Anna Bartosh, will see you at any time." Anastazja Ciesielska closed her eyes for a second. "I have just notified her to expect you."

Circle **Marker J2** in your case log.

8-9137

264 10th Ave, CS-36

If you have circled **Marker J2** in your case log, go to 3-3322 on p.35.

If you have circled **Marker H1** in your case log, go to 5-3695 on p.53.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

8-9266

79 Allen St, BO-45

If it is Day 1: The Bochner's Pub was closed when we arrived.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 5-1817 (p.50)

8-9625

20 Bloomfield St, HY-16

If it is Day 1: The Azure Phoenix Traders compound is surrounded by a metal fence, and patrolled by guards.

"Interesting," Morten muttered.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 2-3942 (p.24)

8-9847

950 Park Ave, CM-58

If it is Day 1: The building has been locked down.

If it is **day 2 (Thu Sep 16)**, go to 7-3901 (p.61)

DOCUMENTS

STOP!

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

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END

Conclusion

I went downstairs to find Morten and the others.

"… warehouse was jam packed with illegal goods," Hatchet was saying. "Drugs, guns, ammunition, some of which we might be able to trace to Harper, Larsson and Forslund. Looks like the guns and ammunition were being shipped to Spain."

Detective Field spoke, "A full investigation is underway against Azure Phoenix Traders, but Jesse Frost remains in a coma."

I froze on the stairs, just as the wood creaked under my weight, and six eyes turned my way. He's alive? I thought, but managed to keep my trap shut.

Field's face was an unreadable mask, but Hatchet looked at me with naked suspicion. His mouth moved, as if he were chewing on live worms. I could almost see his desire to question me about my whereabouts last night, and I prepared an answer, but the handsome detective's mouth stayed shut.

"By the way," Hatchet said, eyes still on me. "Forslund died several hours ago." Then he turned back to Morten. "From now on, you stay out of my cases. Both of you." With that, he left.

Detective Field hung around for another few seconds, her poker face impenetrable. Finally, she gave me the tiniest smile, and said, "If you need some quid pro quo, call on me. Us girls should look out for each other."

Once we were alone, Morten set about making tea. "You lured him in close," he said. "Frost I mean. Close enough that he wouldn't see the gun. No time for a shield. I got rid of the gun, by the way."

I joined him at the kitchen table, saying nothing. What was I supposed to say?

His voice was very gentle when he said, "I suspect the time has come for us to accelerate your training in lexigraphic resonance."

Still, I said nothing.

After a long silence, Morten said, "Here." He passed a silver ring to me. "Your father's."

Questions

Questions here.

Final Scoring

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

- Q1. Max score of 25: _

Question details

Behind the Scenes: Postscript from the Author

Behind the scenes

Full Walkthrough

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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.