

SENSES

by

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INT. CHURCH - MORNING

In the midst of morning mass, Detective Brown bursts into church, drawing the attention of several attendants, including her partner Detective ALI. She hurries over to his pew disturbing people as she moves down towards him, muttering apologies. The ensuing conversation occurs in hushed tones.

ALI

All I asked for was that you attend one service. One. Can't even do that right.

BROWN

I know, I know - I'm sorry. But I have a good reason. Autopsy report's back on the Lee case.

ALI

Shhh! Not here! Afterwards.

BROWN

I tried calling and texting you but your phone's off!

ALI

Did you ever think that that could be because I don't want to be disturbed?

BROWN

(ignores ALI)

Listen to this, according to the M.E., "upon external examination the victim appears to be unharmed. Tox reports clean, stomach content normal."

ALI

Will you shut up and listen to the Pastor!

BROWN

I promise I'll pay attention but just let me finish. "Internally, the victim suffered collapse of the spinal column. Multiple vertebral compression fractures although there is no history of osteoporosis. Cause of death,

cervical fracture. No sign of external force like collision or hanging that usually accompanies this C.O.D."

ALI

I regret asking you to give this a try.

BROWN

His neck was broken without any external force.

ALI
(distractedly)

What?

BROWN

Worth being late for, no?

ALI
(angry again)

No. We'll talk about it later.

BROWN

But we've seen this M.O. before!

ALI

LATER.

BROWN

Unusual C.O.D? Remind you of the Stones' case?

ALI ignores Brown.

BROWN (CONT'D)

And they're both alleged child abusers.

ALI continues to ignore Brown.

BROWN (CONT'D)

I think we could be looking at a serial killer.

The person nearest Brown, a boy in his late teens, turns towards them, and ALI apologizes, resignedly.

ALI
(sighs)

Fine, forget this. Let's leave.

ALI gets up to leave and Brown follows him looking excited. They leave the main chapel but are still inside the halls of the church.

BROWN
(bursts into conversation)

I have a couple of theories but -

ALI

Why did you say you wanted to give this a try?

BROWN

What?

ALI

This. Church.

BROWN

Well I wanted to -

ALI

No. You didn't want to. You didn't want to learn, you didn't want to keep an open mind. You just wanted another place to talk about work.

BROWN

That's not true. I -

ALI

This means something to me you know. And I don't appreciate you ruining my Sunday service with work, just because you don't have a life outside of it.

BROWN

I-I'm sorry. I really did - do - want to give this a try. I was just excited about the development.. After weeks of no leads. I'm sorry. Let's go back in. We'll talk about the case after.

ALI

Forget it. Just tell me what you've got.

BROWN

I'll come back next week. Sans work. Promise.

ALI

Fine. Alright. Go on.

BROWN

The vic's bones were broken in multiple places, without any external force. The M.E.'s never seen anything like it. It's like he, I don't know, imploded or something.

ALI

And what were you trying to say about the Stones case?

BROWN

I think something about the M.O. is similar. And the fact that they're both alleged child abusers? That's interesting.

ALI

(shaking his head)

Stones was strangled.

BROWN

With no ligature marks or bruising around his neck?

ALI

What on earth are you suggesting? That some Jedi used the Force to kill these people?

BROWN

I don't know. But there's something going on here we're not fully seeing.

ALI shakes his head dismissively and takes his phone out to turn it on.

BROWN (CONT'D)

Wasn't the whole point of me coming to church about opening my mind? Is it that hard to believe something could be happening we can't yet understand?

ALI
(sighs)

What were they accused of?

BROWN

Stones' for trafficking and Lee's a paedophile. Allegedly. But you know how these cases go. They're both prominent names. More likely than not the allegations are true.

ALI's phone buzzes frantically with a flurry of incoming messages.

BROWN

Jeez. Didn't know you were this popular.

ALI

It's personal stuff. I - stay here. I'll be back in a bit.

As he walks out of the building, the young boy sitting next to him in the sermon comes up to Brown.

AJ

You a cop?

BROWN

Yeah, I am. Is something wrong?

AJ

That stuff you were saying in there..

BROWN

Oh shit. Sorry kid, didn't mean to scare you. Don't worry about it.

AJ

You think someone with powers is killing these people because they're child abusers?

BROWN

Uhh - well - I didn't say anything about powers.

AJ

But you believe it.

BROWN

I really don't -

AJ

Because you have powers.

BROWN
(pause)

What?

AJ

I know you have a heightened sense of hearing.

BROWN

How could you possibly -

AJ

I also know that you use it as your personal lie detector. Go on. Hone in on my heartbeat. Am I lying?

Brown is silent for a while, her brows furrowed in concentration.

AJ (CONT'D)

I know who you are. But you don't know who your partner is.

BROWN

How - What - How -

AJ

He's dirty.

BROWN

No way, he's the best detective in the city. And how did you know about me?

AJ

He's the cop that got Stones and Lee off their charges.

BROWN

How did you - those charges are not public record.

AJ

Yeah. But I knew the victims. They were my friends.

Brown is silent and breathing hard, processing what she's hearing.

AJ (CONT'D)

Didn't you notice that's when he asked you to leave the sermon? When you made the connection between Stones and Lee? He's scared you're going to connect him to it too.

BROWN

How do you know about those cases?

AJ

Because I killed them.

BROWN
(pause)

How did you kill them?

AJ

I have powers too. Yours is hearing, mine is touch. I can mould, break, change things I touch.

BROWN

I didn't think there was anyone else like me.

AJ

There's a lot for you to learn still.

BROWN
(shaking her head)

That doesn't mean you're allowed to get away with murder. Put your hands up, we're going to the station.

AJ

That's not happening. I'm leaving. But with a promise. If your partner isn't charged in the next week, he's going to be my next victim. He's as bad for keeping the scum out of jail. If he gets put away, I'll let him live.

BROWN

This isn't right. The law doesn't work differently for you.

AJ

And you think them getting to walk scotfree was the law working in my favour?

BROWN

You think murdering them makes you better than them?

AJ

Absolutely. If murdering them means I've saved even a single child from their hell, I'm the fucking messiah.

BROWN

You don't get to operate above the law.

AJ

But you do? I know you use your power to convict people. Probing with questions that'll let you know when someone's finally telling you the truth. I admire that about you.

BROWN

How could you know that?

AJ

You're questioning the wrong guy. Your partner's going to come back and tell you the next victim, Kurt Grey, has no history of child abuse. It's a lie, listen for it. And charge him, detective. Don't let us down.

BROWN

Us?

AJ

There are 5 senses aren't there? You and I have Touch and Hearing. When you're ready, I'll introduce you to the others.

AJ turns and walks away, leaving Brown dumbfounded. ALI comes back to find Brown looking pale.

ALI

I got a call from the station. We have another body. You okay?

BROWN

F-fine. Who's the vic?

ALI

Kurt Grey. I checked though - no history of child abuse. I think you were wrong linking the cases. Come on, we've got to get to the scene.

ALI turns to walk towards the car park and Brown tilts her head, brows furrowed, hearing the lie in his heartbeat. She takes a deep breath and follows him.
