

Edewlogics

Ade Ronke

Excerpt for A case in point: a Lila Orileda Mystery

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Author's Note

This book marks the inception of a series for the Orileda detective agency. There are aspects of this book indulging some of my experiences with trauma. This project is very important to me. I wanted to create a flawed, ordinary and dignified character immersed in a world of perpetual mystery solving and discoveries. The mysteries will indulge a varied range of subjects especially science and experiential reality. This book is scheduled for this year, publication of which will introduce you to the next in the series. Bami& the Time Weavers is another book that must be released this year because it is the main book of the year. Your support means the world to me. Please support the life saving free books for life cause. Thank you for being here.

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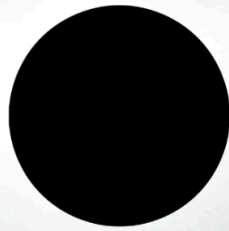


Eleven year old Bami Dele is the experimental boy immune to what scientists get to know as the Femuran invasion. He and the chosen bearer of the only artificially engineered artedermal skin protector must get past every formidable detection of the Time Weavers. They must find the game inside a dead cat by a corner, finish the play, find the location of the secret of secret places, make the journey to get the Polarcapper and turn the wheels against their doomed fate.

[BAMI& THE TIME WEAVERS EXCERPT](#)

Ade Ronke

A Case in Point
A Lila Orileda Mystery



LIKE A POKKER DOT ON A GRILL, LIFE IS AN ENIGMA

A very small but potent capacity captures dynamics in more than one infinitely possible mode, devaluing its deviation. Its distinction is never in its extraneous surfacing but in the merit it carries over the impressions of time.

Lila Orileda's concentration in the tiny office was broken by an oddity within an oddity she knew to expect. Allen Tenser came into her office walking backward, which to her, implied he was yet in some unfinished thought process. Accompanied by the backward progression is the fact that he closed the door to her office. They had an argument over the closing of the perpetually open door to her office.

He didn't understand the need, and complained her home was like some hideaway prison yard, some massive panic room camouflaging as a livable habitation. She explained her home was a different issue—one with a resolve to privacy. Her office was a public space. Why was he in such a habit of forgetting the space wasn't his? It wasn't fractionally his either. He had promised to try to observe what she imposed as a rule. He apparently failed at that.

She exhaled at the thought he had sooner forgotten his promises. But the closed door also implied something was happening outside it. There was someone, something on the other side of the door making him think, closing the door to engage his thoughts, and inducing his need to make a private attempt to correspond with her thoughts? Was it a client? Her excitement over some economically viable event stopped her from complaining. "What's going on Allen? Do I dare ask why my door is closed?"

His six feet, three inches tall frame paced briefly, ruffling his dark straight hair with cautious fingers.

She narrowed her eyes, studying him, reminding herself to be patient with his instincts. They met when he introduced himself as the help she needed who needed her more. A jerk of all nerdy trades, educated in mathematics, the deterrent to a polished career path was his anti-authority attitude, tendencies and quirks. Her initial instigations largely leaned towards disregarding his instincts but his relentless determination to work with her, coupled with his countless hours of volunteer work encouraged her to adopt his instincts.

She had never regretted it. She adapted to his quirks to her benefit. She offered him minimum pay. He had modest leanings and his inheritance ensured his economic stability for life. He refused. He offered to work with her without pay. Their relationship was great for him in the investigative milieu he craved. His presence was a blessing without the usual financial detriment. She agreed.

He stopped pacing, faced her, reconsidered his instincts before opting towards fulfilling his promise. He stepped away to open her office door. And came back to stand in front of her, looked down at his feet to make sure he was standing on the same exact spot he was before

obliging, an act she was used to, a spot demarcated as an exact midline to her office table. "As a matter of fact, there are two clients out there."

She rushed to a standing position.

Without uttering a word, he ushered her to sit back down.

She exhaled, lingered on her stance briefly, before indulging his instinct. Allen had a compulsion with space. It seemed space was calculated rather than fluid for him. He had the habit of going places normal people will be scared of, refrain from places common to others, and picking meetings in strange spaces. She often pretended his unpredictable compulsion was more menacing than it really was. She minded it with complaints because she was afraid he could go overboard with such instincts.

His self indulging quirks and dismissive compulsions made him unworkable outside her. He sometimes worked with her as if her business, a business she had painstakingly established and optimized, was his. A stranger could have thought so in passing. She had barely been able to live with his odd instincts when he volunteered. Without pay, she absorbed them easily as their understanding of each other's personalities grew.

She often made sure to pick up coffee, restaurant payments and other small bills they incurred together whenever she could. He also has the habit of paying for things. They worked greatly together. Their differences were made for great resolutions. He reasoned with a strangely impenetrable display of emotional decorum she could barely handle, tried harder than life to make emotional corrections for stranger circumstances. He was trying. She couldn't argue with the detached aloofness that made his reasoning skills distinct from hers. Their relationship, which the investigative community usually awed at and audited for understanding, was a much earned professional chemistry.

"Whatever is making me sit here patiently at the moment when there are two clients outside my door?" she asked.

"The differentials require strategic rather than dynamic approaches," he replied.

She studied him, cognizant of the importance of approaches in the possibilities of retaining a curious client. She didn't voice the fact that she was scared to leave him alone with any client for too long because of the possibility of what may happen. She didn't know what may happen because she had never allowed it. He, she was certain at the moment, wanted that privilege. "The curious case of curious things?" she asked.

"The curiosity of knowing there is always necessity for chaos as much as there is for refined procedural techniques," he replied.

She studied his demeanor briefly. "Who is who of this story?"

He engaged her eyes with the keenest hint of excitement evident in his. "One is a hopeless middle class middle aged wife in search of proof she is almost certain of—her significant other is cheating. The other is a rich woman in search of answers on who may have murdered her kin—a keen curiosity on both who and why. Neither makes sense to her."

She frowned. "Let me assume correctly or incorrectly but please correct me. You're assuming because the murder case may involve strategic rather than dynamic reasoning, I, emphasis on the fact that I have to do this... will let you have it while I handle the case a woman should handle because I am a woman after all?"

He hesitated briefly. "I didn't quite say it like that. But you are a woman after all and I am sure you have endured disloyalty in such a way—"

"You're handling the cheating husband case," she said simply and got on her feet.

That instant, he took four steps, one leg after the other, legs closed, before repeating the process again to have his back against her office wall—eight steps for a disagreeing stance she was beginning to learn not to resent.

She studied him. His mind worked like a ruler in such cases as his stance in the middle of her table took him there in dissent and he never missed a beat back to her office wall— caged resentment. Was it his way of showing his disdain for her feminine authority, her authority in general? There was once he got too uncomfortably close to her to prove a point, arousing the anxiety she harbored with proximity.

It was her duty to get him to the place she needed him to be, to help him see the deliberate instinctual parameters behind her reasoning so she could energize his analytic skills. "As a business owner, I can not allow myself to risk the potential billable hours for the murder case. It could take six hours or less...however much I allow myself to believe in stuff from movies. It could take six months. But it could also take six years. And those are billable hours ensuring I keep a good and reasonable...hmm...emotional relationship with the client. Something, we both know I cannot entrust you with."

He squinted. "I know you to be someone who would not necessarily fake hours you didn't work for. Am I wrong?"

She raised an eyebrow. "Yes and No. I will never want to get paid for work I didn't do at all but I always round working hours up reasonably well. Billable hours do matter."

He was silenced briefly, thinking. However much he tried to hide it, his tone held a hint of threat when he spoke. "If I handle the cheating scandal case alone, my hours will be billable."

She exhaled, studying him, realizing there was little possibility he would threaten to quit, having made her business part of his everyday professional life, and the only social life he knew. She

squinted. "A cheating husband case," she corrected. "You said you don't want to get paid. I can only afford minimum wage. I know you know that."

He held her eyes steadily. "I know you know you can not afford my real billable hours."

She studied his unshakeable demeanor. He hardly had to convince her. She knew she was beginning to need him more to solve her cases faster than she was able to do before. His input was important to her and they both knew it. She was envisaging in some years to come, she could sell him part of the business and she could work less or do something else, share her burdens with him in a genuine, profitable and decent manner. But she wouldn't dare tell him that at the moment. Will he need her less then? She needed to get to know him more, to have the time to experience him earning the trustworthiness she was suspicious he was capable of. She spoke in a low reassuring tone. "I tell you what Allen, why don't I interview the murder case client, and you interview the cheating scandal."

The silence in the room presided for a while before a figure approached the doorway.

The woman she presumed was the richer of the two clients, dressed accordingly in expensive clothing and solemn but evidently expensive classic jewelry, stood at my office door.

"I was wondering if the delay was because you were considering turning me down. Dr. Hammel spoke highly of you Ms. Orileda," she said.

The mentioning of the former state forensic pathologist's name caught her attention instantly. He had always had a romantic interest in her and while she never engaged his interests, his referred clientele always paid well. She was never going to take his referrals trivially with the possibility the referrals would dry up once he knew she was never going to reciprocate his romantic interests. She shook her head. "Absolutely not Ms..."

"Mrs. Castle...Mrs Eleanor Castle," Allen informed.

Another figure moved into the space between the office door frames. "What about me? I was here first?"

The woman was in her mid thirties, rough on the outlook, simple looking in jeans and oversized shirt. And Lila wondered briefly if the woman Allen had measured as middle class was actually of a lower class. Allen, after all, was never raised middle or lower class. "Hello there Ms..." Lila greeted.

"Mrs Cook...Mrs Rebecca Cook," Allen informed.

Lila held the woman's eyes fully. "We were just speaking about it. Allen has a specialty in cases like yours. So he will be interviewing you but we will both be investigating the case. We do the cases together. Neither of you will regret working with us. Meanwhile, Mrs. Castle, please step into my office. I would like to hear about the murder case that's bothering you."

Mysteries are the sentinels of time, like dust, they bite, like bouts of wizardry, they recline into void deranged of trace, their graces thrown apart in their sway, and against discovery, their recovery never truly comes. There is a reasoning for causation from effects drawing on whims too close to their mark. They are easily missed not for what they represent but for what they can't.

Mrs Castle appeared to be in her late sixties with a proximal appearance of someone much younger. Lila was accustomed to higher end clients having conflicting appearances to their looks. Her age she surmised from the appearance of her hands rather than her face. Her neck area was yet unforgiving of the times. The aches of time appear to us in its totality, yet in fractions it is coveted and stroked like some pet easily roused, easily viled to attack and demean its beholder. We are betrothed to time, perpetually betrayed by it.

Lila forced the usual pleasantries, flashing a forced smile. "How are you doing today Mrs. Castle?"

"I am not fine," she replied solemnly.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Lila managed a lowly tone.

Mrs. Castle exhaled sharply, hardly paused. "But my grief keeps growing...so I know I must do something about it or it would snatch out my heart and chew it without a care. Something is determined to destroy me for who I am and it will kill my already tragic heart."

"Who you are?" Lila asked.

"Rich beyond the imaginations of those surrounding me," she replied. "Rich, definitely, not directly of my own doing."

Lila frowned.

Mrs. Castle paused. "First, my husband died in that extremely suspicious car accident. I mean, why would he not just call a taxi? Why rent a car? And why would a perfectly new, perfectly luxurious car break down?"

Lila narrowed her eyes, wondering why the woman was discussing the case as if there were two dead bodies. Was she to charge for two murderous events separately by event timeline differences? Chasing two separate events could be chasing after two different cases possibly

independent of each other. Chasing two separate murders occurring in the same space and time was chasing after one event with disparity. Nature of events mattered. "A suspicious set of circumstances indeed," she said,

Mrs. Castle nodded in agreement. "Indeed, there is Theo, my husband's brother who resented my life with my husband, and would have wished him dead if he could. But why not wish me dead instead? There is Youyi, the son who believed he was conceived with a Chinese prostitute. And then there is the sister, Olivia, the entitled bitch who spent her inheritance and continued to rely on my husband's generosity until he died...I mean, was that supposed to have gone on forever? But again, why not wish me dead instead?"

Lila gained silence, unable to foretell the premise of some actionable murder investigation, and wondered briefly if what the women truly needed was a damned good psychotherapist or psychiatrist in the making. Harsh, it seemed, but yet something was truly amiss in the reporting for a murder event and the handling of the consultancy. Was it symptomatic of grief or rather hopelessness? "There were many who could have wanted him dead?"

Mrs. Castle nodded. "Indeed. That's why it makes no sense that he could have been serial, just some victim of some random act. There is no way anybody could convince me of that. It's ridiculous."

And as sudden as a splash of a pungent clue could be to an array of seemingly endless unusable assemblage of information, Lila's eyes widened. "Random and serial...couldn't be five by the swimming pool at the PlinePrime Hotel, could it?"

Mrs. Castle shook her head slowly, tears escaping her eyes for the first time. "It's the three at the roof party at the Stellarstar building."

Lila was silenced briefly, realizing the heaviness of the case she was about to take on. She narrowed her eyes, leaned forward slightly and spoke softly. "Your husband died at the Stellarstar?"

Mrs. Castle frowned, shook her head. "No, my husband died five years ago. It is my son that was killed at the Stellarstar."

Lila held Mrs. Castle's eyes unwaveringly and with the element of emotionality for the first time that evening.

The silent preying of nature on the living over time is ingrained in irony—engaging tragedy never from the innocence of some beginning but from the infinitely intertwined perpetual entanglement the guilty pleasures of being alive dictates—tragic-comedically the perpetrators of its victimization.

Bella Mashley, five feet two inches redhead with reckonable beauty was the closest thing Lila had to a friend. Despite having different socioeconomic backgrounds, they had been friends since college. Despite the harshness their relationship had endured through Lila's enduring years of chronic hardships, Bella remained. She was mostly willing to do anything to retain their sometimes fragile relationship.

Bella was priceless to Lila, and could have been in Allen's position with profit sharing privileges. But Bella wanted to be her own woman without fumbling around in Lila's. Lila had suggested her current business because of her family's deep rooted and historic involvement with the city's police department. The choice was also a smart move for Lila's career, a very smart investment

There were two privileged positions Bella's friendship afforded her. Her company, *Bella's biohazard and crime scene cleaning services* let her into crime scenes entrusted to Bella. Her services to her, like Allen's, were free, except for when she very often picked up dining and services tabs. Bella's aunt, Marie Heimlich, head of the evidence unit, gave her most of her crime related requests and background information in an effort to support her career. Ms. Heimlich's seldom requests for expensive gifts never went unfulfilled. They were also never straightforward. She simply understood them to be demands, some form of payment for privileged services rendered.

The latest crime scene photos were extremely hard to get. It was her first unsolved serial killing murder case—her first murder case. Mrs Heimlich wasn't having it. It was riskier, she resolved. It's like handing her two separate cases for the blow of one. It took more than the usual wiles, more than the expensive gifts, the pleading and begging. Ms. Heimlich, lonely by choices from her profession and incessant need for bad motorcycle men who never stuck around, wanted her to come along on her vacation. It was time she didn't have to lounge around and do nothing. Ms. Heimlich instructed her to think about it without mentioning the causative relativity of the request to her demands for crime scene photos and information. She had thought about it, reasoning the professional over the convenience of time and chosen companionship.

She needed Ms. Heimlich's help on every difficult but necessary informational aspect or she was doomed to end up a failure on the case, a failure she could not afford to simply allow herself to indulge in such an instance. She fantasized about the possibility of some dead man in some luxury vacation island hotel room and her taking up the case pro bono before she screamed loudly in her head and sealed the agreement. She was opening the door to an aspect of her career she had always wanted to indulge. Unlike her job as a software engineer, she had never doubted her path in detective work.

She told Ms. Heimlich she would gladly clear her schedule and vacation with her. Ms. Heimlich was happy to indulge Lila as a "friend", all expenses paid. They both understood the expense Ms Heimlich had asked her for was her time and company. It was expensive.

There is a science to obvious reality demeaning to mind, to life, to reality, rendering it commonplace—choicewise, without discipline. There is what's taken devoid of grace that cannot be faced—it's peril never to be phased.

The trio stood on the dark rooftop with headlight helmets on early at dawn. Bella was earlier than her crew for the purpose of Lila's inspection.

The area was too underwhelming of blood for a space involved in a killing spree which told of the type of firearm used. Was it homemade and equipped with disintegrating bullets? Was it equipped with some further specialized type of bullet? A military background, a defense or enforcement background, or something extraordinarily sinister?

She couldn't shake the feeling of relaxed determination, cautious calculation. The crime scene was strangely neat, unentangled with the nature of the crime. Lila had to see it up close and personal, putting in a request with Bella barely an hour after Ms. Heimlich offered the crime scene photos at the barbecue invite she arranged with her and Allen. They had burned the copies of the photos by the fireplace afterwards, assured Allen had imprinted and committed most of them to memory.

One of the ways she insured her relationship with others she worked with was to build and assure trust. It was important to her to assure trust in any way requested or possible or she was no one reckonable in the business. She was inevitably reckonable.

The space was in chaos. Scattered debris everywhere every which way—broken glasses, tables, chairs, all things broken and discarded for the sake of survival. That made perfect sense from the perspective of a killer. Live survivors had a habit of running to escape horrible fates. The dead tell the most mysterious tales. It was more often than not that they ran Helter skelter disoriented and flighty all the same.

The power of fear on the path of death, pandemonium at the edge of stillness, belonged to evil-may-know. And to evil-may-know is a most egregious history waiting to happen.

Why was there little blood work pattern on inspection? Lila was always painstakingly patient with her deductions and the pathways to their eventuality. Allen was hardly ever patient with her. Most of the time, he needed her insight to form more deductive thought patterns for himself.

Her silence was much prolonged. They had walked the room several times to come to stand on the same spot. They had done so again without linearity.

Allen, dizzying against the repeated nonlinearization, came to a stop despite her urgings. "We are not just walking around and around to get a sense of disorientation, are we?"

Bella stopped as well. "Bloody hell hail Mary without much of the blood."

Lila stopped, turned to face one before the other. "You two are lazy."

Allen raised an eyebrow, thinking. "I'm not lazy...intellectually. I just hate physical stress and exertions scurrying on without culpable limitations. They are not necessary."

Lila nodded in agreement. "No doubt about that. Your privilege helped you with that too much."

"I can't be lazy," Bella stated. "I love and do physical work. People are fine with that, while most teachers disliked you."

Lila hesitated briefly, smiled slowly. "Indeed. It was something about deep seated insight of what was wrong with what rather than shutting up and taking whatever is fed as knowledge. There must have been something wrong with that coming from me. I almost hated myself before I took a keen eye to private investigation...something about the unexpected being some auspiciously suspicious reckoning."

"And Aunt Marie couldn't but urge you on, a price she has to pay for," Bella added.

Lila smiled. "And I have to pay for it as well. You and I will be paying the price for that price this time. I'm paying you to vacation with us while she's paying for me to vacation with her or I'll die of sheer boredom. That's some unexpected suspicious auspicious anticipation, won't you say?"

Bella smirked. "You're paying me to go on vacation with you?"

Lila twisted her mouth, amused at the insinuation. "I'm paying you to go on vacation with me and Ms. Heimlich, the revered. And you must enjoy it whether you like it or not. You're the choice babysitter. In fact, you're the best."

Bella smiled. "And you're my best alibi. I silently swear to commit horrible crimes with the first hot guy I see. This job is un-enlivening. I deserve it."

"Not on my vacation dollars you don't," Lila replied.

"Are you two kidding me?" Allen asked dumbfoundedly.

They stared at him, amused at his reaction to their small talk but not surprised at it. He had no tolerance for such.

"Indeed," Bella voiced, turning to him. "We must be kidding." She turned to face Lila again. "Now you know why I could never be your Allen."

Lila held Allen's eyes. There was a glint of life returning to him at the thought of having her attention at the moment. A moment to relieve his thoughts and insinuations on the subject at hand?

In an attempt to relieve the tension between the two, Lila took their hands to either side of her, interlocked them with hers and proceeded upon the path again, pulling them along.

They obliged and eventually came back to the same spot.

Lila faced them again. "To answer your question Allen. We are not considering orientation here but rather randomization from a fixed point of stance."

"Target indifference from point of view?" Allen asked.

Lila shook her head. "The opposite, as points of view could culminate from different points. The narrowing focus must come from the source. So it's not Target indifference but rather spatially marked indifference. The spatial differentials are set, but the shooter is indifferent to the target on the spot or proximal to some marked spot in his head relative to the location. Spatial location matters."

Allen frowned, rethinking her statement. "This struck me as having a sign of marked intelligence. This is not an intelligent person?"

Lila hesitated briefly. "I agree with the signs of remarkable intelligence but not from the perspective you envision necessarily. The choices are not just randomized but unintellectual. By this I mean insensate. The targets are not rationalized to the patterning important to his deliberation on choice of target. The pattern from point of view was. There was no such deliberation per se. These are marked differentials with randomized possible values."

The room turned silent.

Allen held her eyes fully. "There are no victims?"

Lila shook her head. "There is always a killer. They are victims of randomized fixed inter-location based on the location of the killer, thus a randomization of a fixed location..."

Allen's eyes flared brightly with intrigue. "The interlocation is a fixed point of stance."

Lila nodded in agreement. "There is no personalizable essential form of victimization. So you are correct, somewhat... But it is rather that it doesn't matter who the victim is. There is the set quality of someone being in some set space dependent on the dislocatable turn of an inter-location spot or rather, a point as my intuition builds."

"The signature card," Allen replied solemnly.

Lila nodded slightly. "A single dot on a blank card. Ms. Heimlich said it was a reason they implied irrelevant motivations for the killings, the main reason they believe the two massacres belong to the same unrelated proximal serial killer.

Bella, who had over time learned to trust Lila's judgment calls and was instantly trusting of them, spoke. "Does that mean he's not crazy?"

Amused, Lila raised an eyebrow. "If he is crazy, he is a specialized type of crazy."

But Allen was doubtful. "How do you know this?" he asked solemnly.

Lila remained silent briefly, pensive. "Have you read *Power House*?"

Allen, squinted, studying her briefly. "Your fiction on the serial killing rapist? Of course I have."

"And so have I," Bella added.

Lila continued. "In it, the villain argues that when nature gives you beauty, it means your life is fair. Apportioned fairly as it is an asset, you can use it to achieve other things. There are some things you cannot afford to have despite your beauty or rather fairness, such as inner strength beyond your measure. If you force feed yourself what you cannot naturally afford to have, he believes you must crash and burn."

Allen engaged her eyes fully. "Is this about his ideation and unrelenting belief that beauty is unified chaos?"

Lila nodded. "Straight to the point. Yes. Not on some auspiciously suspicious discreet tenure of perpetual mystery where none exist. It is very much perceptible. And it will be crazy for chaos to expect calmness rather than the chaos it craves."

Allen's eyes widened. "It will indeed be in opposition given the set of circumstances you prescribed."

Lila studied him briefly, before she reserved against speaking on the matter in a remarkably charged emotional tone. "But my intuitions are not merely peripheral. This is a direct opposition to the modus operandi of Dr. Harold Nemxis. He was all about marked differentials—smart, independent achieving women—damageable goods."

Allen narrowed his eyes. "Intuitions and peripherals are hardly on the same differential platform when it comes to deductions won't you say?"

Lila's tone was slightly charged when she spoke. "My intuitions are mainly targeted from experiential induction towards deduction to complete my analysis and conclusion in this case and not the other way round."

Bella cast an indignant glance Allen's way.

Allen struggled with the emotional implication of the moment. "I'm sorry," he voiced.

Lila shrugged. "Why? It's mainly for the purpose of illustrating the details here. Why is it that Harold's name brings everyone close to pity."

Silence presided around them.

Bella spoke, implicating Allen had no emotional intuition on the matter. "I don't know why anyone would choose pity. You're the one who survived."

Allen turned to face Bella. "Do you ever have the courage to criticize her?"

Bella held his eyes fully, sparks of anger evident in them. "Are you accusing me of being in fear of my best friend? Or you're mad I have more fun with her than your rigid so called stoic ass ever do?"

He shrugged. "Someone has to be realistic with her."

"Do you mean someone has to be able to overly-criticize her?" Bella asked.

"Now if you two will let me finish my line of thought," Lila started indifferently.

Sparked out of their expressions of the strange dislike they harbored for each other, they both faced her.

She exhaled. "All the target spots seem equidistant from some certain central point and also equidistant to some two points out of three which have a displacement that should not exist. There is no point of oddity worse than 33.33 and there is no derangement of oddity more unoriginal to resolve. This clearly pitches high contradictions relative to the simplicity of a point on a blank page. it becomes clear to me that unlike Harold who springs chaos from chaos, this killer springs chaos from calmness. "

Allen frowned. "Wait, is the villain in *Power House* the owner of the chaotic theory or Harold?" he asked.

Without saying another word, Lila walked away from the crime scene.

Someone great must make the worst of times the best of homes, someone greater the worst of homes, the best of times. Hopes are calculable tragedies timeless and lost.

The open barred window blew in highly pollinated wind from the flowering trees on her street. Lila was used to it and counting on the prescription allergy medication to numb her to the expected symptoms. She faced the wind bravely, exhaled with pleasure in the sensation of warmth blowing against her barely clothed skin, lingered by the window briefly, consciously washing away the monotonous events of the work day.

Her software engineering job for the Llithgon Bank was yet predictable and unfulfilling. The investigative aspect of the insurance department of the banking endeavor was becoming more favorable than her job generally. Investigating fraud was not part of her job description. Yet, she was making up strange excuses to accomplice the investigator and read the details of the cases.

Was she in the wrong profession? Was her wandering mind clue for unhappiness, some undiagnosed depression hangup? She couldn't have it all but she wouldn't want anything close to that. The farthest from it. She wanted the simplest of lifestyle aside from the occasional need to travel, escape the monotony of everyday life. But who was she fooling? She was very efficient at her job accommodating, commanding and programming the everyday outlet, proficient in the fluidity and dynamic implementation of everyday economic life without the need to participate in the socio-economic aspect of the community.

She was unhappy at her job being a lot that was needed to operate the everyday implicit activity of the banking systems while her importance on the scale of things was negligible when it came to what actually ran the community—people skills. She had no tact in dealings, no dealing in tactical engagement. They presumed her inexperienced in such things because of the scientific nature of her job. She had that overwhelming need to have a job slightly engaging her need to adopt the people skills she secretly coveted.

She got into bed preoccupied with the thoughts of the security her job supplied compared to the improbable sufficiency of a different calling she was uncertain of at the moment, closed her eyes, ruminating briefly on some dream job that could eventually make her happy in her vocation.

Trying to drift into sleep, she couldn't relax her nerves to subdue her conscious thought for the snooze.

By the time she noticed the shadow movement, he was pouncing onto her bed, his left hand grabbing her neck. The fear rushed into her, un-ceiled, yet his hand on her throat could not allow her screams to escape her voice box.

He stretched his tall full form on top of her, enveloping her into the comfort of the bed, his troubling, throbbing erection pushing against her leg.

"Are you ready?" he whispered in a hushed husky tone, sharper than some unknowable effect of brain damage, burning into her mind immediately. Yet the voice was soft and hushed. She could

have imagined within a dream that he was her boyfriend at play with foreplay rather than the inevitable burglar rapist she took him for at the moment.

"We're going to have immense pleasures tonight."

There was something else about his voice—a ting to his tone she had noticed earlier. It told her he was used to being considered deterministic in decision complexes. He was used to authority in some way she couldn't easily discern, one she was certain indulged his wishes. Relaxed with his hands holding her neck tightly, she wondered if he hadn't indulged in the same manner of criminality before.

Life has a way of writing itself out of triviality, its screen cannot undermine its script. When it is taken for granted, the human presence is trivialized, diminished, and what doesn't minimize becomes memory.

She picked at her fruity oatmeal, comparing it to his large plate of cholesterol loaded toasts, bacon, eggs, sausages and steaks. Why wasn't he worried about weight the same way he couldn't worry about paying for the meal he was certain was essential to solving the cheating husband case.

They were sitting inside a Hilton hotel restaurant, and she couldn't shake the fact that the client wouldn't be able to afford the eventual billing for the food. She considered how to present the troubling fact to him. Their economic view was extremely different as he grew up with riches. However humble his appearance most of the time, his attitude with money is always that of a rich man. Hers was an opposition.

She ordered oatmeal and he ordered a cholesterol ridden extravagant breakfast. She could ignore discomforting his natural inclination towards money for as long as she could restrain her instincts to remind him of the disparity. She couldn't ignore his economic disposition on the behalf of the eventual customer billing, she reasoned. They were eating at the Hilton! On a saturday! It was supposed to be their day off. Allen had no day off. She knew that. Unfortunately her lacking romantic life ensured that she had little choice when he called to say the meeting was important, reminding her she promised they would work both cases together.

"You know Allen..." she started.

"Hmm," he hummed.

She sat back in her seat and held his eyes slowly. Was that a slight smile crossing his cheeks? She had learned in reasonable time never to take his reasoning for granted. "Sometimes comfort can be a fault," she announced.

A full smile graced his mouth. "Now, that is quite an interesting paradoxical take on life."

She narrowed her eyes, studying him. "It is indeed paradoxical, but it depends on perspectives."

"How so?" he asked, holding on to his smile.

She contained her reaction to his indifference at the moment. "Well, comfort can in some instances give you a sense of satisfaction and progression fully seemingly aware of these facts. From some other perspective, it makes you regress on life without even freaking knowing it."

He didn't release his awkward smile. "Who is this unaware fool?"

"That's where this paradox in this case is ... I am the unaware fool, unknowing with the certainty of regression."

He broadened his smile. "I am paying for this smile, this breakfast and picking up the client's tab whenever she can't."

Lila stiffened, the shocking expression on her face louder than any words she could mutter.

He studied her, holding on to his smile. "Is the frown another paradox?"

She squinted, unwilling to react harshly while he sustained his cool. He always managed to retain his cool. "You didn't dare!"

He shook his head. "I don't believe there was a daring attempt involved."

She cautioned her tone before she spoke. "It is my business we're discussing. I have every right to be involved, to know what's agreed to not by me but my terms of service."

He studied her. "You will get your money and I will get car tunes, washes, and repairs free for as long as it takes from their car shop. If I never need the services, that's fine. But you get more than your share of compensation, you may even have fun along the way. We should discuss what matters..." He hesitated, examining her reaction.

"You didn't dare," she said simply, reconsidering the client's perspective on the issue.

He sustained her gaze with an attempt at a serious one. "I have an announcement to make. I have officially joined a secret arm of the KKK."

Lila smiled, sarcastically, holding his eyes fully, seeming unaffected by his statement. "What you do with your leisure hours is your business..."

He smiled. "Whatever will happen to your reputation?"

She shrugged, relaxed into her seat again. "It's always a secret arm or leg with the KKK which knows no appendages...I mean what the heck are they hiding under that dark-cored perpetually beige hood and what's that got to do with me?"

"Stop it," he urged devilishly.

"You stop it!" she snapped. "Stop this crap right now. Dragging me out of bed towards an expensive meal to tell me you're joining the bloody hell KKK! You stop the crap right now!"

He dimmed his smile. "Okay, whoever, for whatever reason Mr. Cook is cheating on his wife? I needed to infiltrate the so-called boogeyman arms and legs of the KKK to find out."

His approaches, she often disagreed with as an extreme measure to hers, which made him a fit for eventual resolutions for her cases. His motives towards preserving the integrity of the discovery process was impeccable. She had never been able to argue against his motives. Yet she lingered on the possibility something could go wrong. Was that possibility at the moment? "We can always say no to Mrs. Cook. By the nature of her associations, she probably had it coming some way or the other. She married him."

"The intrigue surpasses the danger," he replied simply.

She raised her eyebrows. "Now what sort of metric rule obliges that ridiculous notion?"

"The very fabric of mysteries and detective work," he replied simply. "Besides, I gave Mrs. Cook my word, invested in it. And I can't do this without you. I don't want to do this without you."

"How did you know of the superiority of Mr. Cook's race, aside from the dark-cored beige covering itself that is?" she asked.

He smiled. "Mrs. Cook allowed me access to all computers in the home. I also cloned his phone."

She leaned forward in her seat, her hand rising to grace her forehead. "Why am I here?" she muttered under her breath.

"To have a meeting," he replied.

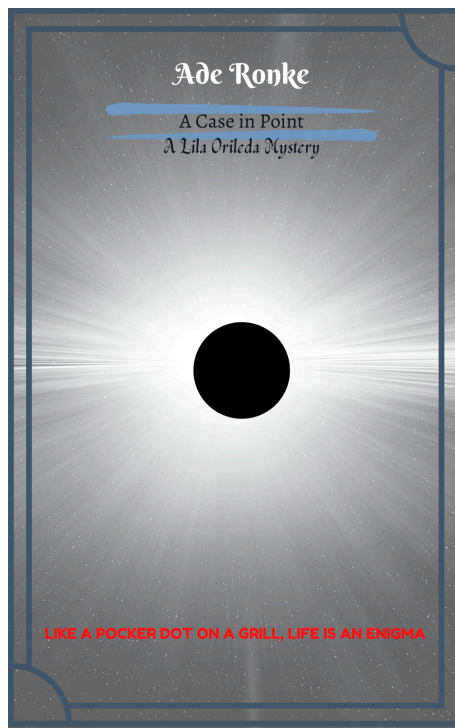
She exhaled, held his eyes fully. "Why am I here at the Hilton eating inexpensive food while you pile your plate with expensive excess fat?"

He smiled. "Would you rather have the fatty stuff?"

"No, but it is delicious." She stretched her arm to take away the large plate of excess in front of him, pushed her bowl of barely eaten fruity oatmeal towards him, "You eat the oats," tossed a strip of bacon into her mouth. "Why am I here?"

"To have a meeting before the meeting before the meeting," he replied. "I am checked into the hotel early for a night meeting with an unknown person to pay my dues and say my vows...merely compounding... so I can go to the cloaked meeting...which is exponential, yet irresistible."

She picked up one of the large fried sausages on her plate. While chewing on it loudly and seemingly uncaringly, she smiled.



Five people are dead in the swimming pool of a high end resort hotel. Only one of them, a fame hungry politician is the suspected target. Three people are dead at a roof party on a high rise luxury building. The target is unidentifiable. The killer's calling card is a single black point on a blank. Lila Orileda is hired to find out who killed one of the random targets as the police run out of viable clues and suspects.

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