

Your Story #34: Marionette

"You won't believe what came in the mail today". (Writer's Digest contest, May 2011, 750 words max)

"You won't believe what came in the mail today."

My heart crawled into my throat. "What?" I said.

"You won't believe it."

"What?"

"You know."

A cold sweat broke out on my forehead and cheeks. Dinner rolled around in my stomach.

"Do you know what this means?"

"No."

She scoffed. "Yes you do. Don't play games. Not now." I heard the grin in her voice. I sat down.

"Really?"

"Yes."

I planted my face in my hand. "So what now?"

"What now? What do you mean, what now? Our plans are still on. Now we're scot-free."

I didn't know how to respond.

"Look, I'll bring it over. You can see for yourself. This is good, hun! This means we did it like pros!"

I brought the phone with me to the closet, letting her ramble in my ear as I dug through the pile of grungy laundry. I found my suitcase. Empty. Because I never thought I'd need it. You don't even take your wallet to prison. Just your skinny white ass.

"Are you still there?"

"Yeah," I said.

"Say something."

"I don't know."

She sighed. "I swear to god, babe. It's got her name on it. All of it! The credit cards, the accounts, the condo—everything!"

It couldn't be this easy. "I don't know."

Another sigh. "What don't you know?" she growled. Her fist was probably on her hip right about now, her left foot tapping.

"I don't think it was heavy enough. That bag with one of her legs. I've been thinking about it ever since. I was nervous—"

"—Shut up—"

"I didn't double-knot it!"

"Shut up shut up SHUT UP!"

"It didn't sink."

"It DID."

"This was too easy."

She didn't respond. I heard the jingle of keys, the hinges on the door squeaking, the sharp click of her heels in the hall. "I'm coming over."

Great.

"Maybe you shouldn't."

"We're supposed to be married, hun. I think people would feel something was off if we're *not* living together."

I peeked into the street through the blinds. A cop car was in the parking lot across from my building. I watched it leisurely back up and pull into the street, driving away.

"Yeah, you're right," I said.

"I miss you." Her voice was soft and garbled in the receiver.

"Miss you too."

"I'll be there soon. I'll bring everything. You'll see." She opened the car door.

"What about your dad?"

"What about him?" The car started up.

"You haven't talked to him in twenty-three years. You don't think he's going to notice?"

She burst out laughing. "My dad? Are you kidding? Have you two met?"

I could see her point. That man was senile long before her sister and I even started dating. Kaya would step into Sadie's life without missing a beat. "Sadie" would show up for lunch on Thursday and tell him all about how she and I spent our anniversary taking the boat out for the weekend. Then she'd surprise him with the news about the baby. And the new living arrangements. We were selling the condo.

And as far as he was concerned, Kaya was lost somewhere in Rio, totally disinterested in the lives of her father and sister.

"It's kismet," she said. "That's why we were twins. That's why we did it without a hitch. It was always meant to be this way."

I was silent.

"Baby?"

"Just get here fast, will you?" I said.

"I will, I will. Jeez, where's the fire?"

"We just have to talk."

She huffed. "Sadie's alive, hun. It's Kaya that's no more. I love you. Got to go, don't want this cop to see me on the phone while I'm driving."

She hung up.

Click went the recorder.

"Got it," the detective said, standing and reaching for my phone. I handed it to him. "Atta boy."

It wasn't heavy enough. I knew it wouldn't sink.