

AFTER MIDNIGHT
By Danielle Brame Whiting

Paul stands downstage looking out over the audience. He appears to be waiting for someone. Cass approaches from upstage.

CASS

Isn't it dangerous for you to be out here by yourself?

Paul looks back to assess the new comer and sees no real danger.

PAUL

No more than you.

CASS

One A.M., we can barely see two metres in front of us. Over a dozen places within reach for someone to hide and no-one around to hear a call for help. Anyone could come along and do anything to you. It would hours before you'd be discovered.

PAUL

The perfect storm, huh?

CASS

Did you know there is no such thing as a perfect murder?

PAUL

I did not.

CASS

Think about it.

PAUL

I rather not.

CASS

Indulge me.

Beat.

CASS cont.

To be a perfect murder it means you are able to plan, carrying out and walk away from the crime completely free of consequence. Nothing residual. No trace or trail that could lead the police back to you.

PAUL

And you don't think that could happen?

CASS

Well no.

PAUL

I would think if you planned well enough, took every precaution to cover your tracks and chose a subject who had no ties to you whatsoever, it might be possible.

CASS

Ah, but you are forgetting the psychological factor.

PAUL

Explain?

CASS

It's two-fold. Firstly, ego. You commit the perfect murder, spend all this time concocting the plans and then you manage to carry it off without a mistake, without getting caught. It would be a very special person indeed who could undertake that and not boast to even one person about the achievement. Even if it's an anonymous letter sent to a local newspaper. We need to stroke our ego, right?

PAUL

I'd argue that there are some people who are driven to commit murder from a purer perspective. Innately driven by a need to do this thing, without any desire to share the experience. And, because of this, the murder being a primal need and not a means to another end, they don't share with anyone. Maybe we don't know about them. You couldn't possibly know.

CASS

You forgot about the second fold. What it does to a person inside. The intrinsic consequence of murder. Even without a conscience, the act of taking a life has a profound effect on the perpetrator. It leaves a hairline fracture in your soul, slowly separating you further from your humanity, moving you closer to an animal, a predator who is controlled by unconscious instinct. That, my friend, is a consequence that will be noticed by someone, and a perfect murder must be without consequence.

Pauls covetous look rests for a few beats on Cass and then he releases a sardonic laugh.

CASS

That's amusing to you.

PAUL

I'm going to guess... psychologist with insomnia.

CASS

You think?

PAUL

I have a nose for these things. You head doctors think too much. The fact is you can't really know what drives a person to do anything like murder. You can't assume that there aren't people out there who have the ability to kill without conscience or consequence. You can't really know what goes on in the mind of a murderer.

Cass drives a knife into Paul's belly.

CASS

You don't know how much I wish that were true.

Slowly Cass assist Paul to the ground, determined to accompany him until he takes his last breath.

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Danielle Brame Whiting

danielle@pedestrianingredients.com.au

www.pedestrianingredients.com.au

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