

**A sample of
ONE MORE KILL
by Carolyn Arnold**

ALSO BY CAROLYN ARNOLD

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**CAROLYN
ARNOLD**

**ONE
MORE KILL**

A Brandon Fisher FBI Thriller

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Sample of *One More Kill*

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CHAPTER ONE

Huntsville, Arkansas
Saturday, October 16, 3:20 AM Local Time

The moon was brilliant in the night sky, giving him all the light he needed to see his prey. They entered the woods, and he was right on their tail. What a rush! The thrill of the hunt had adrenaline pumping through his veins. It had been far too long since he'd felt this level of euphoria.

He stepped into the woods and listened. The snapping of twigs and the crunching of rocks underfoot. And they thought they'd be safe in the woods. Foolish—and a grave mistake. The Leopard smiled to himself.

He was skilled at the art of listening, of homing in on his targets. He sniffed the air and caught the scent of the woman's perfume. She'd certainly come through this way, and if his instinct was right, she was nearby. He smiled and lifted his archery bow, took a few steady breaths, and pivoted, searching for his target.

"Come out, come out wherever you are," he prattled off in a singsong voice that he hoped sent chills through her very being.

The sound of deep breathing, the bristling of movement—then he saw her. About ten yards ahead. Easy-peasy shot. He pulled back on the bow and let the arrow fly. It catapulted through the air and found its target.

She screamed, and he grinned again, taking such extreme pleasure in her pain and frustration. There would be no one to hear her screams out here! And, oh, how loud people could be! They were certainly louder than animals in the face of their mortality, and more visceral. He loved toying with them the way a cat bats around a mouse in its claws.

Prey One went down in a heap, and he caught up to her, towering above her.

She was still wailing and clutching at the back of her thigh where his arrowhead had pierced into her meaty flesh and rendered her immobile. From the look of the blood pooling on the dirt, he'd struck an artery. He smiled down at her, and her face, a panicked mask, contorted into an expression of absolute horror, and her yells became mute.

"Show your fear," he told her and briefly shut his eyes. "Let me feel your terror." He ripped the arrow from her leg, and she howled into the night.

But there was another noise interfering.

Prey Two—the man. No doubt he had plans of grandeur and that of playing hero.

How lovely, the Leopard thought. "Your white knight is coming, my lady, but he will die just like you."

She let out an ear-piercing, strangled cry that resonated through him, filling him with absolute bliss.

Prey Two emerged from behind a thicket of evergreens. He stood in a bath of moonlight that made its way through a small clearing in the forest, presenting a confident stance, but the Leopard could smell fear. A distinct odor—unpleasant, repulsive. A stench that he needed to put to an end. But first, he had something else to attend to. He needed to make sure the woman wasn't going to risk moving, not that she'd get far if she tried.

The Leopard crouched next to her and removed his Bowie from its sleeve. He held it up for her to see and picked up on the small nuance of her widened eyes reflected in the blade. She tried to back away from him but was unsuccessful.

Her horrified protests became louder—the most pleasant sound to his ears, but there was even better yet to come.

He lunged forward, quickly slicing across her torso, from one side of her belly button to the other. Her intestines spilled from her, and her cries were near deafening.

Much better... A soothing lullaby to my ears...

Prey Two reacted, screaming and coming at the Leopard. Did he not realize that it was far too late to do anything remotely effective?

The Leopard resumed full height and lifted his archery bow. Depending on the male prey, they either ran at this point or challenged him. He so hoped for the latter, as it made it far more fun when they actually thought they could beat him.

“Get away from her!” the man barked.

He was like a tiny chihuahua taking on a bullmastiff. How admirable, yet foolish. The Leopard reloaded the arrow that he’d used on the woman, slipped it into the bow, and released.

It was like the man wasn’t even going to try to escape his pending fate—until the last second, when he turned and started to run. The arrow hit him in the back of the leg, and he yelled out, dropping to the ground. The Leopard smiled.

Perfect. He wanted him alive to have fun with next.

He returned to the woman. It was time to get to work before she died from blood loss. The next step was much more entertaining with the prey still conscious, but he’d be fighting against the clock.

He bent down next to her and slapped her face until her eyes popped open. What many people didn’t know was they could live with their entrails hanging outside of their body, sometimes for quite a while. The body was miracle and hell—depending on perspective. Her body trembled beneath his touch, but she didn’t try to move. She wouldn’t be able to anyway.

The man was crying about ten yards away where he’d dropped, sputtering nonsensical, incoherent words, but he was no threat.

The Leopard ignored him—for now. He’d get to him soon enough. He traded his Bowie for another blade, this one smaller, super sharp, allowing him straighter, more precise lines. Finally, it was time to finish what he’d started before he’d been so rudely interrupted. He held her head still, which wasn’t hard as she was beginning to slip away into unconsciousness.

He came at her left eye first, and she screamed in terror. *Fantastic!* He proceeded to stab the tip of the blade into her eye socket and began cutting with care and precision. She was bucking now, just slightly, her body more or less twitching like it was having an epileptic seizure. Sadly, it wouldn’t be long now, and his fun with her would be over...

He flicked away the flesh of the eyelid. He held the eye he'd extracted for her to see with her remaining eye, but there was no light there, and her chest had stopped moving. He became livid. No! She was to be conscious and alert for both removals! He did, after all, live, breathe, and prey on his victims' fear and helplessness at his hands—at proving himself the superior hunter.

He put the removed eye into one of two small jars that he had in a pocket of his camouflage jacket. Then he extracted the second eye and put it with the first. Both bobbed in the preservative fluid, and he put the jar back in his vest.

Next, he extracted two large, yellow cat's-eye marbles from another pocket. Prey One was almost complete.

He set the marbles in her now-empty eye sockets and admired his work.

Beautiful, but the fun with her is over!

Still, not all was lost. He had reason to be thrilled. There was one more prey to toy with.

He stood and turned to where the man had fallen, but there was no sign of him. Excitement whirled through his veins.

The hunt continues...

CHAPTER TWO

*Four days later
FBI Office, Quantico, Virginia
Thursday, 12:50 PM Local Time*

The vultures were circling... That could be said of a couple of things, but it immediately applied to the discovery of two murder victims found in the woods of rural Arkansas.

Currently, I, FBI Special Agent Brandon Fisher, was in a briefing room at Quantico with the rest of my team members with the Behavioral Analysis Unit. That included Paige Dawson, Kelly Marsh, and the latest addition, a man named Tony Manning. He was technically our boss—for now. I liked to believe that Supervisory Special Agent Jack Harper would be back soon. Mid-forties, Tony seemed more concerned with carving out his reputation as a badass than actually being effective, though in all fairness, we hadn't hit the field yet. I had a feeling that was about to change.

Also in the room was Nadia Webber, our team's assigned analyst. She was handling the latest briefing, an investigation that promised to finally free us from our cubicles. We'd been keeping them warm ever since our case last month went belly-up—also the reason Jack wasn't around. The director and other higher-ups of the Bureau, who might also be considered circling vultures, had decided it was a good time to dredge Jack's past for any hint of wrongdoing they could hold against him.

We were all seated at a round conference table, while Nadia stood next to a large flat-screen mounted on the wall with a tablet in her hands.

On the screen were images of two victims—one male, one female. Both were sprawled in a wooded patch, but the screen was split vertically up the middle. From what we'd already been told, they were found in the same area of the woods, though not next to each other. As for their bodies, the massacre was similar. Blood was pooled out on the ground in front of them, along with...

Bile rose in the back of my throat, and I swallowed roughly, as I concluded that I was looking at their intestines.

Nadia continued to bring us up to speed. "The victims, identified as Mark and Stephanie Duran, were forty-eight and forty-seven respectively. They were found Monday morning by a local farmer in a patch of woods on their property. They lived in the house on the land but didn't work the fields. They leased that out."

"One of the leasing farmers made the discovery. Name of Keith Owen," Manning inserted out of some sense of self-importance, I figured. Nadia was managing just fine.

"They were both shot with arrows in the back of the upper leg," Nadia added.

Arrows? That was different. Our team hunted the most sadistic serial killers under the sun, but this was a first—at least for me. But I clued into something else this may tell us about our unsub—or unknown subject. "I'm guessing these wounds were not the cause of death." The mess on the ground could lead me to that conclusion, but my mind was starting to formulate something else. I just needed a little more to go on.

Nadia shook her head. "They didn't help, but cause of death was exsanguination." She swept her finger on the screen of her tablet. On the TV screen there was now a satellite image of the property on the left side, and on the right, a shot from ground level. There was a farmhouse on the land, surrounded by fields, which were skirted by woods. "The Durans were believed to have been chased through their property into the woods where they were then each shot with an arrow," Nadia said.

The picture in my mind was taking on more shape and distinction. The woods were a fair distance from the farmhouse, but the entire property appeared remote and isolated. The killer

would be able to do whatever he or she wanted with no one to hear their victims' screams. It made me wonder why an arrow and not a gun. But one thing was clear. "Our killer is a hunter," I said. "After the thrill. Chases the victims, shoots them with an arrow, guts them..." As I spoke, I looked around the room and latched my gaze with Kelly's.

She flicked a finger toward the screen and said, "Go back to the crime scene photos, Nadia." She might be new to the team, but she was probably one of the least squeamish. It made me wonder about the cases she'd worked previously when she was with the Miami PD's homicide division.

The crime scene returned to the monitor.

"They *were* hunted," Kelly reiterated exactly what I had said as if she were surprised that she was in agreement with me. But that was what the two of us did—disagreed first, joined forces later. She continued. "They were shot with an arrow simply to immobilize them. He—because often thrill killers, specifically those who are hunters, are male—wanted them to be alive and conscious while he worked through his MO."

It was certainly a sick method of operation judging from the display in front of us, and her driving home the sad fact the victims were probably alive for all of this suffering had a dark, suffocating cloud descending over the room.

"Were the arrows recovered? Can they tell us anything helpful?" I asked.

"They haven't been found. It's believed that the killer removed them and took them with him," Nadia said.

"To use again," Kelly muttered.

"Arrows, even if they were left behind, wouldn't give forensics much to work with, not like that of a bullet," Paige said. "And bows and arrows are not a registered weapon."

"True enough," Manning piped in. "But if we did find out what brand was used, that might help lead us to the killer's identity." He shrugged when all eyes went to him. "I also know a little about archery. I used to go north with my dad and uncle when I was young. Anyway, continue, Nadia."

“All we know about the arrows is they had a lot of pressure behind them and penetrated deeply enough to chip bone,” Nadia said. “It’s believed that he is using either a crossbow or a compound bow.”

“Both are rather accurate if handled by an experienced archer.” Manning cut in again to show how smart he was. “Both those bows are used in hunting, though the compound bow is more traditional. Of course, not as much as the longbow. Think Robin Hood. With that one, however, it’s all driven by manpower and packs less punch. With a compound bow, it utilizes a pulley system that assumes some of the weight on the drawback. The shooter would still get the feel of a longbow without needing as much strength, and the arrow would pack more wallop. Didn’t mean to interrupt, Nadia.”

Sure you did...

Nadia changed the image on the screen, and I’d expected it would be a more graphic display of the Durans’ guts, but it was something else that was equally as disturbing. Their eyes and eyelids were gone, and in their place were large, yellow cat’s-eye marbles.

Paige groaned, and I glanced over at her—implying concern, but it simply masked my desire to avoid the screen for a second or two. But if someone like Paige who had been FBI for years could react like that, I had a right. I’d only been a Fed for four years. Kelly, as expected, didn’t really show much of a visceral reaction, except for maybe some sadness for the plight of the victims.

I sometimes wondered about Kelly’s mind. I was aware she’d witnessed her mother shoot her father at the age of six. Regardless of whether the man was abusive, and the murder was technically self-defense, that had to affect a young psyche. Not to mention her mother ended up being charged with manslaughter and going to prison for fifteen years.

“They were alive when he took their eyes.” Nadia put a hand over her stomach. “The type of knife is yet to be determined. But as you can see the cuts were made rather cleanly. It’s believed that something sharp and non-serrated was used, most likely a scalpel.”

“And to slice their abdomen?” Kelly asked.

“Likely something larger, a type of hunting knife.”

“He takes their eyes as trophies.” Paige’s voice was low, and she kept her gaze on the screen as she spoke.

“That fits with a hunter,” I said. “He probably wants to relive the kill and be reminded of it.” The marbles in the Durans’ eye sockets had my mind going to a mounted stag and brought something else to my attention. “He’s also proud of what he’s done.”

The door to the briefing room opened, and Jack poked his head in. He made eye contact with Manning and said, “In the hall.” In usual Jack fashion, it was more directive than question or request.

Manning stiffened and made a show of looking around the room at us. “We’re in the middle of a briefing, Harper. Can’t it wait?”

“In the hall,” Jack said again, then retreated.

Manning sighed and got up, rebuttoning his suit jacket as he did so. Just before leaving the room and shutting the door, he said, “Prepare yourselves for wheels up.”

Wheels up, meaning we’d be boarding a government jet for Arkansas as soon as possible. It also meant we might be about to find out how useful Manning was in the field. But there was a part of me that stirred at Jack’s appearance, and I hoped my feeling was right. My confidence in Manning wasn’t founded, and it was already shaken. For him to tell us to “prepare,” he was off the mark. As field agents, we were always prepared, and though we’d been riding desks for about a month, we all had a go bag at the ready.

“Wonder what that’s about?” Kelly bobbed her head toward the door, saying what we were all thinking.

“We’ll probably find out soon enough.” Me, the voice of reason, whenever it suited to irritate Kelly. Our relationship had started off as one of animosity, both longing for Jack’s approval, but we’d moved beyond that—mostly—and settled into a sort of sibling relationship. Hence the “disagree, then agree” shtick we had going.

Kelly glared at me briefly and smirked. “Just always have to be the smart-ass.”

“Don’t mind him. He’s good at it.” Paige shot me a narrow-eyed glance and snickered. I wasn’t amused.

“Let’s just focus on...” I nudged my head toward the screen.

Nadia dropped into a chair. She wasn’t saying anything, but her roving eyes were telling.

“You know what’s going on,” I guessed.

“Don’t worry about me. Worry about the monster behind that.” Nadia pointed at the gruesome crime scene on display.

I turned back to the images, allowing them to really sink in, as gross as they were, and balanced it with what I’d learned about this case already. I was quite confident of one thing. “Whoever’s behind this, it wasn’t their first time out. Not given the organization I’m already seeing, the forethought. He’s murdered before.”

The door opened, and Jack came in. There was no sign of Manning.

Jack regarded me, his face dark shadows and hard lines. “You’d be right, Brandon. I believe the man behind the Arkansas murders has finally come out of hiding.”

CHAPTER THREE

Jack Harper was tired of jumping through hoops and answering to barking superiors who all had their own way of doing things. They couldn't agree on protocol if it bit them in the ass, and with the rules changing all the time, no one had a chance of deciphering them. Still, he'd messed up; he'd take that burden on his shoulders. Someone had died. Someone who didn't need to. Someone who would still be alive if he'd only figured out another plan to ensnare the serial killer that he and his team had hunted last month. But the past was the past, and Jack was well aware at fifty-four, there was no going back—no do-overs. Yet here he was again, haunted by his past. He was just grateful the FBI director had agreed to reinstate him for this investigation. Then again, it would have been stupid of him not to.

Jack and his team were on an FBI jet headed to Arkansas. They'd land in Fayetteville, meet up with those from the local FBI field office, and then make the half-hour drive to Huntsville. They had four and a half hours until touch-down, providing them ample opportunity to become more familiar with the person they were hunting.

"He calls himself the Leopard," Jack said. "Male, as you may have already concluded. He's been dormant for fifteen years. Before that, we believe the same man was responsible for the murders of six people—all couples, all Caucasian—in the past twenty-five years. The same killing method was used for all of them. And then there's the killer's signature."

“Caucasian,” Kelly said, not touching on the “signature” bit. “So the killer probably is as well.”

Jack nodded. “As we all know here, a serial killer rarely crosses ethnic lines, though there are always exceptions. In this case, you’re correct, Agent Marsh. He is a white male, estimated to currently be in his mid-to-late forties.”

“‘The Leopard’? Why that name?” Paige asked.

“Leopards are quite the hunters. They ambush or stalk their prey and hunt alone.” Jack’s face twisted with shadows. “They are solitary animals, opportunistic, and hard to find.”

“That’s on the mark for this killer by the sounds of it already.” Paige sighed.

Jack nodded, deciding to loop back around to the killer’s final touch. “Then there’s the cat’s-eye marbles. His signature. The victims’ eyes are removed, and we can only assume he takes these with him as his trophies. In the past, we theorized that the killer might have wanted to be the last thing his victims ever saw, and that’s why he removed their eyes. We also figure he chose a golden yellow, and not green or some other color, to more closely resemble a leopard.”

“But fifteen years is a long time to be dormant,” Brandon tossed out. “Maybe he’s killed victims we’re not aware of.”

Jack met Brandon’s gaze. “There’s no way.” *Or is there, and I missed finding them?* What Brandon and the others didn’t know was Jack had stayed vigilant for any signs of this killer’s MO, and nothing had popped in the system. Anywhere.

“Even out of state?” Brandon added, as if reading his mind.

“Anywhere.” Jack heard the bite to his tone, and it had his team looking at him, but he wasn’t apologetic for it. He’d been doing this job for almost as long as Brandon had been alive.

“All right, then,” Paige said gingerly. “It only leaves the possibility that something had prevented our unsub from killing. Those who kill for pleasure don’t typically stop unless they’re forced to do so.”

Jack nodded at Paige, glad to have her on his team. The two of them went way back. “That’s correct, but this guy also has a pattern. For the three sets of murders that we’re aware of besides this latest one, five years had passed between each one.”

“So, couple one twenty-five years ago,” Paige began. “Couple two twenty years ago. Couple three, as already touched on, fifteen years ago. Now the Durans. So what prevented him from killing? Incarceration or illness perhaps?”

“Could be anything. It’s far too soon to know.”

“Five years in between kills, though, seems very specific,” Kelly started. “Did you ever figure out why that was the case, Jack?”

“Not really. Obviously he can control his urges to kill.”

“He could have chosen to lie low.” Brandon shrugged when they all looked at him, and added, “It would make it easier for him to evade capture.”

Jack nodded. “This case was the first one I picked up as FBI—twenty-five years ago. And, as I touched on a moment ago, this killer is a chameleon. He gets off by first immersing himself into his victims’ lives, blending into small communities. He stayed in each location for five years before killing his victims.”

“Now that’s commitment,” Kelly said.

“And dedication. As you know, that was not the case with the Durans, so we’ll need to figure out why he changed that aspect of his MO. All of you have a recap of the previous case files in the folders in front of you.” He gestured to them. “You’ll get the gist of the investigation’s progress which, sad to say, hasn’t been much. In the past cases, though, the unsub leased farm property. Each one had a farmhouse, a barn, fields, and woods. He integrated himself into the community and became one of them.”

“That would have been more of a...high.” Brandon had shuddered as the plane buffeted with some turbulence.

“Absolutely,” Jack agreed. “He was a killer, but no one would have had a clue. In fact, he became everyone’s friend in the small towns he chose. He got involved with the communities. Built up trust. You have photos taken by the townspeople of the unsub—but don’t get excited. He disguises his true appearance.”

“He thinks of everything,” Brandon mumbled.

Jack was ready to get ahead of the curve. “Yes, so we can’t discount him. He knows exactly what he’s doing. He’s organized, methodical, intelligent. It’s believed that childhood trauma may have led to him doing what he does.”

“How did he get the victims to his place?” Paige asked.

“The unsub would invite his would-be prey over for dinner. They’d go without hesitation because, as I said, he was a friend.”

“Huh,” Paige said. “Wonder how he worked things with the Durans.”

“We’ll certainly need to do some digging. He still could have inserted himself into the community. History, at least, tells us he was good at stalking his victims and becoming a part of their worlds. There’s no doubt he utilized some of these gifts this time around too. His method of disposal was different with the Durans than the past cases as well. The Durans were left in the woods to bleed out, but with the previous six victims, he dragged them back to the barn where he hung them from the rafters. By the time anyone noticed the victims were missing, the Leopard was long gone.”

“You said he rented the properties in the past,” Brandon said. “Were you able to narrow in on him with financial records?”

“Nope.” Jack had this gnawing in his gut. There were times this case had him feeling like a failure and questioning his abilities as an investigator. “Nothing much to find. He did open bank accounts but did so under assumed names. He also used these aliases to rent the properties. Each name was different and led nowhere, just like the money. For each account, only a single cash deposit was made to open it, from which he paid for rent and living expenses.”

“Cash deposit, so no tracking there. Unless he was captured on bank video,” Kelly said.

“And he was, but it still didn’t get us anywhere. As I mentioned a minute ago, he changes his appearance. He had money at his disposal, but where that source is, we have yet to find out.”

“I can’t believe he stayed at the various rental properties for five years,” Brandon said.

Paige shook her head. “He has to be a psychopath to blend in and become everyone’s friend.”

Brandon angled his head, studied Jack’s eyes. “Did you ever get close to him?”

The answer to that question pained him more than almost anything—*almost*. “Not really. He never leaves anything behind that we can use forensically to track him, no prints or DNA.” Jack’s mind fed him a haunting recollection from the first scene twenty-five years ago.

“There’s something you need to see.” An FBI crime scene investigator comes over to him.

Jack’s been staring at the bodies dangling from the beams since he stepped into the barn at least an hour before. He’s counting the passing seconds until they are down on the ground and afforded some human dignity. A medical examiner and his assistant, along with some investigators, are working on that now.

“Jack,” the CSI prompts.

“Ah, yeah.” He turns, and the CSI is holding two small evidence bags.

He extends one to Jack. Inside is a handwritten note that reads, “I’ll never stop.” It is signed, “The Leopard.”

Jack feels rage curdle up within him, but he turns to the other bag and points. “What’s that?” he asks the CSI.

“The other part of the message. Though I’m not quite sure what to make of it.” The CSI hands this bag to him.

If it’s possible to feel something from an object, Jack is sensing something just holding the items through the plastic. It is hard to pin down what exactly, but he lands on darkness and pure evil. Still, he doesn’t give it back to the investigator.

Yellow cat’s-eye marbles.

“I’ll never stop.” Jack feels himself go cold and rushes toward where the bodies are being taken down.

The female is already freed, and her remains are on a black tarp. Jack gets in closer, despite grumblings from the ME, whom he waves off. Jack has a suspicion... When the victims had been hanging, something was off with their faces, though it was hard to figure out what with how far up they’d been, but their cheeks were stained with blood.

He holds up the bag with the cat's-eye marbles and crouches down next to the woman. His image is reflected back at him in the marbles that are in her eye sockets. He looks over his shoulder at the CSI, who had trailed him to get his evidence back. "It was part of the message, all right."

"I'll never stop..."

"Jack?" Paige prompted him.

"I'll never stop," he repeated. "Those are the words the killer wrote in a note that he left at the crime scene twenty-five years ago. His first couple. He even left an extra set of marbles to show his intent. Brandon's right. Maybe I just haven't been looking in the right place. Maybe this guy wants us to think he's been dormant all this time, but he hasn't been." Jack fell silent, guilt rolling over him.

"His circumstances could have changed," Paige offered.

"Actually, Jack, if he had killed in the last fifteen years—sticking to his MO and signature, anyway—I'm sure you would have seen something in the ViCap database," Brandon said.

ViCap—the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program—was a national, searchable database used by the FBI to house statistical data from serial violent crimes.

Jack considered and sighed. "Obviously, we're missing something, but he could have altered his MO more than we know."

"So we look at different aspects of it, let each methodology stand on its own," Kelly suggested. "Maybe he hasn't targeted couples during the last fifteen years or cut out eyes... The list of possible variation goes on."

"I'll have Nadia run some searches, plucking for the various elements." He hated that he hadn't thought of that himself—particularly the couples' bit. It just seemed like such a critical part of the unsub's MO, Jack found it hard to imagine that he'd let that go.

"I'm sure it's in here"—Paige patted the folder in front of her—"but what else stands out about victimology, besides the fact the victims were all Caucasian and targeted as couples? You mentioned they were from small towns?"

“Yes. Also something to keep in mind... He seems to choose people who are about the same age as he is, so the age of the victims would change as time goes on. Oh, and another thing. With the previous cases, the victims had secrets they'd held from the rest of the world. Could go as far as saying some of them had led double lives.”

“Such as adultery and domestic abuse?” Kelly asked.

Jack regarded her, well aware of her past and understanding why she'd gone there. “Yes to both. As you read the past files, you'll find this out. One was in hock with gambling debt, another was a highly functioning alcoholic, and so on. Best all of you can do right now is get familiar with what's in those folders. This guy's always been one step ahead, and it's time for us to get ahead of him.”

Jack's eyes landed on Brandon, who held his gaze, then nodded and turned his attention to the folder in front of him. Kelly already had her nose in a report. When he shifted to Paige, he noted she was watching him. She'd always been able to see through him, whether he liked it or not. She'd probably witnessed his desperation to close this case, possibly more.

But he was no longer in the mood for talking. He was in the mood for a cigarette, in part thanks to this killer who had him starting the filthy habit in the first place. But he had hours to go before he could light up and take a few deep hits of nicotine.

Jack pulled out his phone and called Nadia. He'd have her check country-wide for the different aspects of the killer's MO, including single murders, see if anything popped. As he made the request, it returned to his ears as a shot in the dark, but he couldn't just surrender. If he stood any chance of actually bringing the big cat down this time, he had to try every possible angle he could conjure up.

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