





--\$#@%--

I SAID--



TCHK--

--NO.  
WEAPONS.



YOU'RE A CHEATER.  
THIS ISN'T THE GAME.



IT ISN'T THE WAY--  
SIR!



SIR, I'M AFRAID THE DEAL WITH THE WARDEN WAS TO BRING THE PRISONERS BACK ALIVE...

YES...  
MY... APOLOGIES, WESLEY...

GUH!



"...MY MIND WAS ELSEWHERE."

EXCUSE ME. DO YOU WORK HERE?

WORK AND OWN--



--WHICH MEANS I HATE MY BOSS. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...



...I NEED SOME HELP FINDING A BOOK.

I'm not a creep.



But I feel like one a lot of the time.

BLEAK HOUSE.

I can't see, but my other senses are greatly heightened.

DICKENS?

And secret.



So she doesn't know I can hear her heartbeat, which holds steady. Her body temperature steady as well.

Almost everyone gives off some sign of discomfort when I walk into a room, even briefly. Curiosity, fear of embarrassment.

But this woman didn't skip a beat.

YES, I'M LOOKING FOR AS EARLY AN EDITION AS POSSIBLE. FOR A FRIEND.



WELL, HONESTLY, THE EARLIEST I'D HAVE WOULD BE FROM THE '90S...

It used to *anger* me to be seen as a curiosity because of my blindness. Nobody fears staring at the blind man. And I can *feel* them stare.

But they don't know what I know. About me, about them.

For example: Between her scent, her heart, her *heat*...



...this woman's not attracted to me at all.

...BUT TELL YOU WHAT, I'LL ASK AROUND AND SEE IF I CAN GET YOU ONE. WHEN DO YOU NEED IT FOR?

HIS BIRTHDAY IS THE 24TH, SO--

THE 23RD, GOT IT.



FEEL FREE TO CALL ME AT WORK.

WILL DO, MISTER... MURDOCK.

WAIT A SECOND...

The musty books are a bit too much for me, but her smell cuts through it all--vase water and oakmoss. Lilac and lemon. Salty skin tamped down by dust.



Intoxicating.

...WEREN'T YOU MAYOR?



FOR A HEARTBEAT. AND YOU ARE...?

MINDY LIBRIS, I LIED WHEN I SAID I WAS THE OWNER. MY HUSBAND'S FAMILY OWNS THE BOOKSTORE.

Damn.

WELL, I LIED WHEN I SAID I HAD A FRIEND.

I JUST LOVE COLLECTING OLD PIECES OF PAPER.



YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT STILL MAYOR? YOU GOT THE "FALIX CHARMING" PART DOWN.

She's unchanged. But I feel a rush of warmth to my face.

I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I GET A COPY "YOUR HONOR."

DOOR'S TO YOUR SIX.



Intoxicating.

BZZT BZZT