



Preparing to Kill

"We know that part of the Killer's art and his ultimate success is in the preparation." A Life Observer

The thought of cutting into that pale skin and watching the first rivulets of blood flow down her beautiful face sent shivers of excitement through his body. He shuddered with anticipation. He went over his plans for her step by step. Beads of perspiration covered his face, as he laid the large, sharp knife, his tool of choice, against the palm of his hand. Not unlike a surgeon, he would carefully cut, explore and move on. But there was so much more to do to this delicate creature.

He was no stranger to death; his work in the mortuary had prepared him, and he was quite familiar with Necrophilia, an all too common practice in cemeteries and mortuaries.

For a long time, even before he tried his hand at writing, he had been a student of human nature; now he awaited his ultimate opportunity. He would witness the emotions of one who is about to die. He would make notes as he worked or simply sit back and enjoy her reactions to each moment of torture. As a child, he had tortured and mutilated small creatures and treasured the moments of their pain. Can you compare the suffering of a dog or cat to that experienced by a human being? There were things he had not done to an animal that could only be fully appreciated by a human, such as how does one feel when made to eat one's own flesh? Does a partial mastectomy cause deep shock and if only the nipple is lopped off can one endure the pain? The things he had planned to do to his perfect victim might well be considered pure science.

Almost every night his dreams were of this one—the “perfect” victim.

The moment he had first spied her would stay with him forever. He was watching his wife through one of the coffee shop's dirty windows; she was flirting with a customer. Suddenly this vision of pure beauty appeared, a young, dark-haired waitress with the body of a goddess and a walk that mesmerized the males who beheld her.

Even through the window, he could see her warm full lips, moist with fresh deep red lipstick, the porcelain skin appeared flawless. She'd stuck a

white orchid in her flowing black, black hair. Her green blue eyes danced playfully as she spoke. As she breathed, her tits moved up and down. Did he see them or did he imagine it? He so wanted to touch her, but he was cautious.

No one must know how he felt or that he had singled her out.

When he got home, he asked Georgia, his wife, "Who's the dame I saw you working with today?"

"You mean Bette? She's from some place in Massachusetts, she's got asthma and the cold gets to her. She won't be here long. She's heading for Hollywood, to be a star. Besides, she thinks she's in love with a guy named Gordon. She has this thing for military men."

He wanted to press her for more information, but wisdom dictated that he not appear too interested.

He went back to the coffee shop the next day. There was no Bette; she'd left to seek her fortune in Hollywood.

Anxious thoughts whirled through his head. He must get busy; who did he know who was in films, who might have connections and could help him find her?

Fortunately, he was unemployed at the moment, but he knew he could get a job anywhere.

Experienced bellmen and night clerks were always in demand.

He had prepared down to the selections of rope that could bind her ankles and wrists; it was rough and prickly so as to cut through her skin, dare she move even the slightest. Watching her wriggle and bleed was pure joy. But the sounds, the sounds had to be there. He must hear her screams, her cries of pain, and her pleas for him to stop. The agony of a pain-filled moment...each moan, each groan...each terror-filled moment was ecstasy revisited.

Each item he examined and lovingly placed in his leatherette, overnight carry-on, a little larger than a shaving kit, brought shivers of anticipation. He had to stop momentarily as he experienced an orgasm. He grabbed a Kleenex and dried himself.

He began at the beginning; the rope, duct tape for silencing her screams, the knife, the large leather dog harness, 50 yellow jackets in an unlabeled small bottle, tweezers for plucking her pubic hairs, a shower curtain, and a coconut fiber brush, great for sloughing skin in preparation for a good scrubbing. If his victim was still a virgin, he must clean her. Great artists wish to present their work in the best light. He could see her alabaster skin gleaming in the moonlight.

He was having wet dreams as he fantasized. Have you ever found yourself trembling with anticipation? He saw himself as a strong male,

well in control of his emotions and ordinary feelings. But he was also aware that he was no ordinary man.

The very act of creation requires a degree of destruction. Yet, most men don't have the guts to take on the process.

What he was lacking, at this moment, wasn't desire or imagination in creating his masterpiece. What he was lacking was the final details of how he would meet and capture his prize.

He closed the kit and placed it carefully in the dresser drawer, then covered it with a blanket. He sat on the side of the bed, in the small motel room. He must think this through. It was difficult to plan at home when his wife and baby were there. He used this motel room as an office. At this point, he only knew that he must get out to the West Coast. Surely, one of the hotels had an opening for a bellman or a night clerk. He would tell his wife he was leaving to look for work; she always believed him and did as she was told.

He was deep in thought. So much of his work was done, yet he was filled with depression. He experienced this sometime when he was writing; he'd get so far and then for some reason he was stuck, unable to figure out what came next. Suddenly he had an inspiration. Jeff, his writer friend in San Francisco, might know of an opening at one of the hotels. It made sense to seek employment in that city; it might help him

establish his alibi. After all, a man employed in San Francisco couldn't very well be in L.A. or Hollywood.

He went to the Western Union office and wired Jeff.

Jeff replied that the Devonshire in San Francisco was looking for help. It was arranged. He'd go there and renew his friendship with Jeff who knew a number of people in the film industry. He figured that Bette would easily buy into friendship with him if he could offer her the potential of becoming a star.

And there was the real possibility that this could be so. She didn't know it, but he did. He would make Elizabeth Short a new kind of star; there are many stars in the firmament, each with its own destiny.

Leslie Duane Dillon, AKA Jack Sands, the potential writer, was not a stupid man. He was careful to plot, plan, and do what was necessary to make his goals a reality. Whether employed or unemployed, his lifestyle was footloose and fancy free. His attractive blonde waitress wife knew that she was on her own; although he was possessive of her, he came and went as he chose; ever since the birth of their child, she was just there to service him. Pregnancy had spoiled her body and his taste for her; she was not surprised to find he had left her again.

Before heading for San Francisco and what seemed like sure employment, Leslie Dillon decided to check out Los Angeles and Hollywood and not rely on his friend Jeff's help.

On a hunch that he just might spot his quarry, he stopped one night to see the girlie show at the famed Florentine Gardens. There was an outside chance that he might see Bette, sitting with some celebrities; the types she needed to become a star. He did see her with a white flower in her dark, dark hair. She was sitting with a serviceman but from her body language, he appeared to be a stranger, not Bette's fiancée, his wife Georgia had told him about. She might be the Black Dahlia to some because of her propensity for black clothing, but he saw her as the Flirt.

He hung around for a couple of days, hoping to see her again and perhaps land a position as a night manager at a local hotel; then, needing funds, he went up to San Francisco to work at the Devonshire.

Before he left he said hello to his old friend, Mark Hansen; Hansen introduced him to Niles Granlin. You never know when you might need the friendship of such men, especially since they had connections in show business.

Mark Hansen, wealthy show business entrepreneur, and his friend, Swedish born Niles Granlin (NTG) had long had their eyes on the beautiful brunette who hung around the Florentine

Gardens nightclub and was always angling for a free meal. "Granny" had been hired by Hansen to be Master of Ceremonies at the Garden.

He had an apartment over the garage of Hansen's home. It was well known that "Granny" would take a dancer from the club and spend the night with her. At one time in his life, "Granny" had been a smooth show business performer; that was back on the East Coast. Now as age caught up with him, there was something "creepy" about him. Bette Short managed to keep her distance from him, even while she stayed at Hansen's home.

One way or another Bette Short survived. She sincerely wanted to be an actress and be famous: at times it almost seemed possible. But how many times do you ask your friends and play with the emotions of others? A tease can only be a tease for so long before she must deliver.

Her poor choices and questionable friends would get her into trouble sooner or later. In her heart she knew this. But there was always the hope that she might get a chance and change is so difficult!

What you have read so far is an attempt to get into the mind of the killer, the killer of a female who didn't deserve to die. My father, a psychiatrist who was way ahead of his time as a profiler, would die knowing that the true killer was no serial killer. He didn't need to be. The murder of Elizabeth Short was the Grand Masterpiece, the

climax that every creative lust murderer dreams about. What happened to Elizabeth Short was no accident.

Lust murderers follow certain patterns of behavior; put them in touch with the right potential victim and what do you expect? Experienced profilers have learned to recognize abnormal personalities. If Dillon was the killer, why didn't he kill and kill again? Dillon was no serial killer. He was the type that hunts and plans and prepares for the "perfect crime", the once in a lifetime "Masterpiece".