

The interrogation had gone on long enough that Gil felt like he could draw the cinderblock walls from memory. He'd been there since a little after dawn, answering questions put forward by a revolving door of wannabe flatfoot cops, switching out every three hours or so. Seemed like they had the whole force trying to make him for the First National.

As if on cue, a new pair came in. They were a Laurel and Hardy looking pair. One was short, dark, and greasy, his nose ruddy from too much habitual drinking. Hard to be him, since Prohibition rolled across the country like a bad odor. The other detective was rail thin and blonde, with a knife-sharp air about him. Gil sighed. At this point he could recite his story in his sleep. He couldn't be sure of the time, but they had to be reaching the end of the 24 hours they could legally hold him. Just needed to buffalo this pair, too, and hit the streets.

The dark-haired one sat across the table, dropping his meaty mitts to the table with a thunk. He just sat there, looking a little over Gil's shoulder, his eyes slits. He looked like he was in deep contemplation. "You wanna know how we pinned it on you, Mr. Chandler?" he asked.

This was new. So far that day, Gil had so many people threaten to throw the book at him that he could have opened a library. It'd been hours straight of some flavor of city cop hardass bluster, all roar and no art. There was something about these two that made Gil's gut clench. Something had changed.

"My apologies, Mr. Chandler," the guy said. "Where are my manners? You can call me Dennison, and my associate is Adams," he said, gesturing to the blonde, who had taken up residence in the corner like a malignant floor lamp.

Adams lit a cigarette, took a healthy drag. He held the pack out to Gil, who waved it off as casual as he could. Adams shrugged and tucked it away. "I heard you howlers can't stand the smoke. Sensitive noses, and all," he said. Grey smoke spiced every other word or so.

"My partner has some... conservative views regarding lycanthropes, I'm afraid," Dennison said.

"Ain't no skin off my nose," Gil said. Goddamn did he have to sneeze. The asshole was right, cigarette smoke was hell on him. Letting that slip could land his neck in a noose, though, depending on how much they knew.

"Your deflection is charming, but a waste of effort," Dennison said. "We have a witness who can put you and Miss LeGrand at the First National Bank. Another witness reports two wolves fleeing the scene, in separate directions. And we collected fur at the scene. Your fur, unless I'm badly mistaken."

“You are. I ain’t no moondog, just a guy with a savings account,” Gil said. They must have just found the fur. The whole picture just got a lot murkier for him. He’d seen the bloody patch on his leg when some wannabe hero took a shot at him, but he didn’t think he’d left any fur behind. He just had to play it cool til the clock ran out, though. He’d scam out of town once they cut him loose.

“Well, we’ll just wait and see,” said Adams. A wicked smile cut its way across his hatchet face. “Y’see, what with there being strong suspicion of howlers being behind First National, Congress rushed a new bill through. We can hold you til the full moon, now.”

There it was, the sound of the other goddamn shoe dropping into the core of the earth. Gil tried to see a way out of this, but came up drier than a Temperance Club.

“I see you understand the situation,” Dennison said. His beady eyes crawled all over Gil’s face. It made his skin crawl. “You so-called ‘Moonlight Marauders’ have made a hell of a bed for yourselves. How many banks have you hit? And First National was a crowning achievement none of us could have foreseen. We may not be able to say the fur found at the scene is indisputably yours, I admit, but I’m not sure you could find a dozen reasonable men in the country who’d give a damn.”

“What he means is a jury, any jury, is gonna put you against the wall and pump you full of silver,” Adams said. His voice was steady, maybe even amused, like he made a hobby of rounding up werewolves and was looking forward to adding one more head to the walls of his hunting lodge. Gil’d seen the sort before, sure. Difference here was, he felt like maybe this guy had actually pulled the trigger himself, maybe on multiple occasions.

“If that’s the case, why the song and dance?” This was the wrong tack. He could slip out of this. “If you’ve got me dead to rights, why haven’t you booked me?” No, stop talking Gil, don’t give ‘em an inch. Toe the line and you’ll find a way out. “What are you trying to sell me, here?” Just shut your goddamn mouth.

“He finally gets it,” Adams said. Dennison gestures for quiet as Adams takes a chair next to his partner. He leaned across the table, like he’s going to yell “boo” right in Gil’s face. Instead he just kept on smiling that crocodile grin.

“We are empowered to make a deal with you,” Dennison said. He dug in his pocket and pulled out a leather wallet, tossing on the table to reveal a Bureau of Investigation badge. “Empowered, in point of fact, by two Hoovers you may have heard of. You see, we like you for the robberies, but if I’m being honest—and why shouldn’t I be, good friends that we are—we can’t place

you at any of the banks besides First National.” And you wouldn’t even have me there, if Daphne had stuck to the fucking script, Gil thought.

Dennison went on talking as he placed a nice little line of glossy photos on the table, all of Daphne, from their last half a dozen jobs. The last one was of her in wolf form. “We can, however, place Miss LeGrand at a number of the robberies, not to mention she was seen by no fewer than five eyewitnesses at First National Bank, including the young man that died from his injuries earlier today.” Dennison watched Gil’s reaction as he placed a photo of a fresh-faced kid on the table. Gil tried hard not to jerk at the news of his death, but who knew what Dennison saw. They’d never killed anybody before. At least, not as far as Gil knew. He didn’t make it his business to be sure.

“What my partner is driving at here,” Adams said, “is that you’re a guppy on our line. We want the shark. We know you’ve kept tabs on her, probably helped her drop off the map. Point us to her, and you walk out that door tonight. We’ll even do you a favor and forget your name. Keep mum and we can deal with this in a week’s time, when you do your presto-change-o act in a cell. I’ve heard you howlers get real aggressive when you’re wolfed up, and the boys in blue here got itchy trigger fingers.”

Images of the aftermath at First National flashed through Gil’s head. The blood, the panic, that crazy light in Daphne’s eyes as she pulled off something she’d always joked about. Turns out she was serious as the morgue this whole time. Gil knew this wasn’t a bluff. The BOI boys here didn’t need to bluff. J. Edgar Hoover could make unpleasantness go away without questions getting asked, and nobody was going to go digging to find out what happened to a werewolf bank robber. Bank robber, and anarchist, Gil supposed, though he never gave a shit who was running the joint as long as he had some greenbacks to rub together.

The image he couldn’t shake was Daphne, reveling in the chaos of it all. First National wasn’t a fluke, she’d planned it, and left him out of the room when she did it. They’d shared everything from day one, split the take down the middle, planned every step of every job to a tee. Then she fucking lost it.

Gil looked from Dennison to Adams, waiting for the words to come. “Walk me out the door and I’ll tell you whatever you want to know.”

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Daphne looked thin, like she had tried to waste away before this day could come. Gil wanted to yell at her, demand she explain why she did it, apologize for sending her up the river, plead with

her for forgiveness. But he just stood there in the back of the crowd. He didn't want to be there, shouldn't have been there, what with his pockets full of cash he'd grabbed from their various stashes around the city. But he couldn't leave without seeing this through.

An officer led Daph to a broken stretch of brick wall. Gil figured that must be about where the vault was, with its three-inch-thick steel walls propping up the cinderblocks. A line of six policemen marched in front of Daph, about ten paces away, rifles at the ready. They each had bandoliers loaded with shiny silver rifle rounds, as if any one of them would need more than one shot to end this. They looked as eager as if they were lining up for a parade.

Another officer in a crisp, clean uniform, buttons polished to a high shine, stepped forward with a document in hand. "The State of New York, and the United States Bureau of Investigation, have found the accused, Daphne LeGrand, guilty of sixteen counts of grand larceny, two counts of murder in the second degree, six counts of attempted murder, four counts of sedition, and one count of anarchist terrorism." He lowered the paper and looked at the crowd. "Today we will execute this... beast, for her heinous act of wanton destruction. She has followed the path so many of her kind have trod before her, escalating from bank robbery to detonating explosives in a brazen attempt to destroy the very foundations of our city. We are incredibly fortunate that she only wreaked her havoc on the First National Bank, and it is fitting she should lose her life on the ruins she created that day. She destroyed this building to forward a despicable agenda of terror among the werewolf community. We will not tolerate it."

He turned to Daphne and asked, "Do you have any final words?" The officer turned away to clear the firing line, but was stopped in his tracks when Daphne raised her head, her dirty blonde hair falling away from her clear blue eyes, and said, "I did it for you. It was always for you."

The newspapers would speculate on her words for days. Most would declare it was a Joan of Arc moment, given how her words bound lycanthropes across the country together, lighting a fire in them and starting a revolution that would claim not just banks, but government buildings, police departments, the very tools that had been used to keep the downtrodden under the thumb of the world. Those words would spread beyond the werewolves, to be heard by millions of people around the country who had been run to the ground by the Depression and the Dust Bowl. It was the beginning of a movement.

But that day, Gil knew it was none of that. She knew he was there. He had her scent, so it was guaranteed she had his in return. She always smelled something like strawberries to him, and that day the smell of her was like a magnet, drawing him closer. She didn't smell like fear, he noticed. She'd accepted what he'd done, even if he hadn't.

He'd handed her up on a silver platter. The way was clear, he could walk off into the crowd, roll out west where nobody knew him. He had enough cash on him to live fat and happy for years, if he was careful. And damn it, she'd gone off script. She blew up the fucking bank. But he'd be lying if he said that day was just a horror lurking in the back of his head. It was a goddamn rush. Daph had lit the match with a crazy glow to her eyes, but some part of him wanted to see it again. To be with her again, in the thick of it, scaring the shit out of the normies and disappearing into the night.

He'd sold her out because he thought he wanted to walk away rich. But here he was holding a fortune, wondering whether it was worth it, to never smell her strawberry-scent again. Gil pulled the wads of cash from his pockets and started peeling off bills, throwing them up into the air to be caught by the breeze that whistled through the bank ruins. The green paper fluttered through the air like wilting leaves. It only took a hundred or so before someone in the crowd noticed and raised a cry. Dozens of hands shot into the air, bodies crushed to try and grab the money in a frantic rush. The cops on the firing line suddenly found themselves enveloped by desperate people with little to lose.

Shooting a werewolf was one thing. But Gil figured these boys in blue didn't have the guts to pull the trigger on somebody just trying to grab enough cash to buy a meal. Daphne barely seemed to notice the chaos, only looking up once Gil had maneuvered through the panic of bodies to cut her bonds and pull her through the gaping hole where the bank vault had been.

"You're right," he said, as they ran through the alleys, sirens wailing through the city around them. "It was always for you."