Lights Out

Phoebe S.

The heels of Max's shoes clacked against the floor of her sister's secured storage room. When she reached the end of the aisle, there was a large metal door. She smiled and lifted her leg. Max pressed a small button on the heel of her shoe and out popped a lock pick set. She jabbed it into the side of the lock. With a soft click it popped open. Max peeled back the door revealing a velvet platform holding a ruby necklace. She walked over and picked it up with wide eyes. Suddenly a loud alarm went off. BEEP! A booming female voice filled the room.

"Lady in Black! Stay where you are! Police are entering the building!"

"Not this again," Max mumbled under her breath.

Max calmly walked over to the glass wall. It was the only thing between her and freedom. Max snatched at her big black hat and an arm length spear tumbled out. She held it against the wall and started drawing a circle. It was cutting the glass! As she finished, the first policeman approached. She kept her head down as she searched through her pockets. The policeman grabbed her arm firmly. She shook him off and found what she was looking for. Max pulled a small ball from her pocket and threw it at the policeman, as she jumped out the hole. Smoke exploded everywhere. Max stabbed the spear into the side of the building so she wouldn't fall to her death. She slowly lowered herself to the ground, hopped down and strolled away.

Max entered a dark alley that shrank as she walked. She squeezed herself in and shuffled to the end. There sat an old shop with a dusty glass door. She carefully opened it and closed the blinds behind her.

"Well, well, if it isn't the Lady in Black," a man's voice groaned.

"Hi Rodney," Max whispered, taking off her black hat and long coat.

Rodney was an 86-year-old man who had been running this shop for over four decades. Max folded her coat and placed her hat and boots on top. She pulled out the ruby necklace.

"What can you give me for this?"

Rodney looked the necklace up and down, eagerly.

"$2000!" Rodney exclaimed. He opened the cash register and pulled out a huge wad of bills. Max slid the necklace across the counter and snatched Rodney's money.

"Pleasure doing business with you." Rodney smiled.

Max nodded and closed the door behind her. She ran down the cold street in her sleeveless turtleneck and black jeans. As soon as Max got home, she tore open her bed-side table and pulled out a box. She stuffed her money in, flopped onto her sofa, and fell asleep.

That morning Max didn't wake up until 10am. Her eyes lazily opened and she dragged herself to her feet. Max jammed two pieces of bread into the toaster and forced herself to get dressed. By the time she returned, her toast was burning. Max ripped it out of the toaster and threw them in the bin. She sighed, walked over to the couch, and turned on the news.

"…And on an unrelated matter, The Lady in Black has struck again! Stealing from our beloved Prime Minister, Lilly Crisifern, once more. Here she is to tell us what she thinks."

On the screen appeared Max's sister, with an evil look in her eye. Did she know who the Lady in Black was? Max slammed the 'off' button so hard that her finger hurt. She hurled the remote at the table and stormed out to her car. It was time she gave her sister a visit.

Max drove for what felt like a lifetime before reaching her sister's five-story house. She forced a smile as her car sat in front of the thick gate.

"Hello?" Max hesitated.

"Who is this?" A loud voice questioned.

"I'm Max Crisifern, sister of Lilly Crisifern."

"Mm. I see." The man's voice replied as the gates creaked open. She drove forward and parked her car in the pristine carpark. Max cautiously approached the towering wooden door and pushed it open. Inside were endless hallways lined with huge computers. She strolled through the halls, shielding her eyes from the machine's bright lights. Max was peeking through windows looking for her sister. Eventually she reached a room reading 'Lilly's Quarters.' Max strained against the door, feet sliding. Finally, the door swung open, tripping Max. Lilly turned around abruptly.

"Hello Max," Lilly greeted coldly.

"I need to talk to you," Max stated.

"I need to talk to you too. Come see," responded Lilly.

She dragged Max over to a room filled floor to ceiling with computers, sat down, and started typing.

"The Lady in Black struck again, but one of the policemen placed a tracker on her coat," Lilly said.

"What?!" Max gasped.

"Yeah. We traced it to a shop run by some guy, Rodney. I think she hides her stuff there. We still don't know where she's hiding the money."

"What are you going to do to Rodney?" Max asked curiously.

"Execution."

"I-Is that really necessary?" Max stuttered.

“Of course. I need to set an example.”

Max’s face turned pale.

“I can’t do this anymore. Please, don’t hurt him. Take me! I’m the Lady in Black!” Max shrieked.

“Oh Max, I know. I’ve known the whole time.” Lilly scoffed.

Max felt like the floor collapsed.

“If you knew, then why didn’t you arrest me?!” hissed Max.

“Because it’s more fun this way… So, tell me. Why are you stealing my artefacts?” grinned Lilly.

Max snarled in disgust. “You’re sick.”

Lilly stomped on Max’s fingers so hard she heard them crack.

“Ok! Do you want to know the truth? Because I don’t want you to have it.” Max hissed smugly.

The blood rushed to Lilly’s face.

“I gave you a chance. You asked for this.”

Lilly smacked a button on her desk as she strutted away.

“Lights out, Max.”

…Three, two, one.