**The Thief and The Liar**

By: Breda Murphy

Red wire, blue wire? God, I hate this part of the job… I wish it were like the movies, cut the red wire and the jewel is practically placed in your hands! What did mom always teach me? *Trust your gut and never copy the movies…*Crap, my gut is telling me to cut the red wire… Is that because I saw it in a movie?

Despite the cool night, Isabelle was sweating like a pig. She couldn’t figure out why she was nervous. It wasn’t her first time taking something that didn’t belong to her.

“Damn it,” she mumbled as she cracked her fingers for the tenth time that night.

With a sudden burst of courage, Isabelle grabbed the wire cutters out of the top of her rucksack, placed them over the red wire and squeezed both her eyes and the cutter shut.

She stayed like that for a few seconds, waiting for a siren to go off. Slowly she opened her eyes and looked around.

The same massive garden that came with every ‘old money’ mansion. All the lights were still off. Even though Isabelle herself had seen the elderly couple leave yesterday, one can never be too careful!

Stage one complete. Now to climb in the bedroom window, get the jewels and get out again in less than ten minutes. *Easy peasy! I’ve been doing this since I was eight years old stealing chocolate from everyone in my class.*

Isabelle took a moment before climbing to adjust her wig. *I could totally pull off being blond*, she thought to herself.

She quickly shimmied up the drain pipe and climbed through the master bedroom window. How convenient it was that the new ‘maid’ forgot to close it. She smiled to herself as she quickly scanned the room. So close. No jewels.

Thankfully Isabelle knew where the safe was. Just two doors down. She stepped, quietly as a cat, down the hall and was about to open the door when she heard the safe door being opened.

*Oh, I swear if that’s Cory stealing another one of MY jewels, I will kill him!* Sibling rivalry, ha!

She slowly opened the door, careful not to make a sound, and peeked around the corner.

Her blue eyes widened in surprise. That was definitely not her older brother. Whoever it was, he was tall, a great physique and there was something strangely familiar about him. It was when he walked towards the window, it hit her. She’d recognise that swagger anywhere!

“I thought I could smell a rat, but I didn’t know I smelt the King,” Isabelle spat with all the venom she could muster.

The figure jumped around and stared at Isabelle. He closed his eyes and muttered,

“Jeez, Isa, you scared me.”

“Don’t you ‘Isa’ me! You didn’t just leave, you abandoned me! And worst of all, I trusted you…”

“Well, you can’t exactly blame me, can you? It was your mistake,” replied the man who had broken Isabelle’s heart. Russell.

“Don’t make this out to be my fault! YOU wanted us to work together. I was happy where our relationship was. I told you business and pleasure never mix!” Isabelle shouted.

“Okay, but it did work for a while.”

“Name one time?”

“San Francisco, robbing the bank. Our very first.”

“I remember me telling you the getaway car had a flat tyre, you still robbing the bank and then, me running uphill away from the cops.”

“How about Qatar?”

“Wow, you’ve a really bad memory, Russell. I’d get that checked out. Does Russian roulette sound familiar? “

“Maybe not the best example—“

“The guy next to me bit the bullet! Pardon the pun. I’m scarred for life. That could have been me!”

“Granted, but we had fun!”

If looks could kill, Russell would have been staked, buried, dug up and then staked again for good measure.

“Maybe not a fun time,” Russell stammered.

“Maybe!” snapped Isabelle.

“I’m afraid to ask about Tibet.”

“You should be! I had to shave my head and join the monks all because you heard of some silly legend about the monks having gold! There’s a reason they’re called monks, they’re poor!”

“That wasn’t my fault. I actually asked you if you wanted to do it. And, while we’re on the subject, that legend was-”

“Shh. Do you hear that?”

In the complete stillness of the house, it was easy to make out the faint sound of sirens.

“Did you disable the trip wire when you opened the safe?” Isabelle asked quietly though angry.

Russell gulped, “Trip wire?”

“You only have thirty seconds before the safe sends a signal to the police station, alerting them that the safe has been opened while the oldies are away,” Isabelle fumed.

“Just because they’re old money doesn’t mean they use old safes!”

“Shit,” Russell breathed as he pocketed the jewels.

“I’m not letting you go with those,” Isabelle stated as she pointed at his pocket.

“Fine, but can we have this conversation elsewhere, before we get caught preferably,” he replied sarcastically as he walked towards the bookcase.

“That’s the first thing you’ve said all night I agree with” Isabelle quipped. “What are you doing Russ? Shouldn’t we be running away from the house or do you want to continue organising their books?”

Russell reached for the book nearest the safe on the middle shelf, he turned to face Isabelle and announced,

“Just because there are some new security systems doesn’t mean they got rid of the old ones!” and he pulled the book down.

Isabelle paused for a moment to admire the genius it took to find the hidden passage. Not that she’d ever admit it to Russell but she was impressed… and proud.

“Holding the door? You have excellent manners for a thief and a liar,” murmured Isabelle.

She ran inside to the passage, as Russell laughed at her, then followed her inside the secret doorway.

“Help me close this door, we’ve less than ninety seconds before the cops burst in to the outside room and this door cannot be open,” barked Isabelle.

Russell snapped out of his trance and they hurriedly closed the hidden door with ten seconds to spare. Then they ran for what seemed like eternity. They eventually reached a rusty, old, but unlocked gate and entered a forest less than two miles from the town and Isabelle’s car.

They stayed there, panting, for a while and Isabelle thought of how much she had missed this, the banter they always had, his laugh when she was confused or impressed (which was a rare occurrence during their relationship) and most of all how he made her smile so much her face hurt…

Then she thought how she hated how she felt when he left her, how she vowed never to feel like that again and how she promised herself next time she saw him , she would hurt him like he hurt her!

Isabelle looked up at Russell. He was holding out both his hands. In one was half the jewels she came here to steal and in the other there was nothing.

She looked at his face, and her heart skipped a beat.

“Isa, you can take the jewels, walk away and never hear from me again or you can take my hand and I can spend every day trying to make up for what I’ve done to you.” Russell begged.

Red wire, blue wire? Retreat to safety? Or jump off the cliff and hope Russell is at the bottom to catch me and risk having my heart broken, never to be put together, again?

Isabelle took a deep breath and made her choice…