

BETWEEN LIES AND DEATH

Written by

AITANA CACERES PIOLA
CLAUDIA VIZCARRA ALCÁNTARA
PIERO CARDENAS GUTIERREZ
ZOE RIMARACHÍN SAN MIGUEL

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

A passport-sized photograph of a young woman (23-25) lies on a desk. It rests on top of an open file containing her information: Name. Age. Occupation. Address: La Casa Roja. Allergies. Habits. Hobbies. Date and time of death. Cause of death. Two hands close the file.

DETECTIVE (OFF)

Lucía Marzal Gutiérrez. Twenty-three years old. Music student. She rented a room at La Casa Roja, a boarding house known among artists and musicians. Found dead at 6 p.m.

INT. WAITING ROOM-DAY.

In a waiting room, two girls and one boy sit apart from each other. One of the girls is visibly nervous, the other girl appears calm and the boy looks disorientated.

DETECTIVE (OFF)

Cristina Goyeneche. Lorena Martínez. Armando Castillo.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

On a desk, a file is opened, revealing a photograph of ARMANDO (22), with a punk look. DETECTIVE (28) begins the interrogation.

DETECTIVE

Armando, correct?

ARMANDO nods.

DETECTIVE

When was the last time you saw the victim?

ARMANDO forces a serious expression but subtle movements betray his nervousness. He looks directly at the DETECTIVE and begins.

ARMANDO

Tuesday. I woke up early. Around eight... maybe eight-thirty. I had to go out.

INTERCUT WITH:

FLASHBACK: INT. LA CASA ROJA-DAY.

ARMANDO walks quickly down the hallway with a towel over his shoulder.

ARMANDO (VOICE OVER)

I was heading to the bathroom, when I ran into her.

DETECTIVE (VOICE OVER)

Did you talk? You noticed anything unusual?

ARMANDO (VOICE OVER)

No, not that I recall. I just apologized for bumping into her.

LUCIA (23) exits the bathroom. They bump into each other. ARMANDO instinctively grabs her shoulder to steady.

ARMANDO

Are you okay?

LUCIA

Yeah, yeah no worries.

ARMANDO enters the bathroom. LUCIA walks away. After a few steps, she briefly turns back as if searching something, but finds nothing and continues down the hall.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

ARMANDO looks at the DETECTIVE.

ARMANDO

(nervous)

I didn't see her again after that.

The DETECTIVE writes something down his file.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

CRISTINA (21) sits across from the DETECTIVE. Her posture is rigid. She avoids eye contact.

DETECTIVE

Did you have any conflict with her?

CRISTINA

No, none...

DETECTIVE

Were you friends?

CRISTINA hesitates.

CRISTINA

(with a hint of bitterness)

Not really. She was... closer to Armando.

The DETECTIVES studies her reaction.

DETECTIVE

Closer how?

CRISTINA shifts in her seat.

CRISTINA

I've seen them together, getting a little too close. More than once.

DETECTIVE

Together where?

CRISTINA

Around the house... In the cafeteria, in the hallway. Even near the bathroom.

A pause.

DETECTIVE

Did you see them on Tuesday?

CRISTINA

Yes. Just my luck... I saw them in the bathroom hallway together.

INTERCUT WITH:

FLASHBACK: INT. LA CASA ROJA-DAY.

CRISTINA watches from a distance.

ARMANDO and LUCIA collide near the bathroom door.

CRISTINA (VOICE OVER)

He was hugging her.

From CRISTINA's angle, it looks less accidental. ARMANDO's hands remain on LUCIA's shoulders a bit too long.

CRISTINA steps back, hiding behind the corner of the wall.

CRISTINA (VOICE OVER)

I hid so they wouldn't see me. I wanted to know what would happen next.

ARMANDO says something inaudible. LUCIA pulls away and walks off. ARMANDO watches her leave. CRISTINA remains still, observing.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

DETECTIVE

And what happened?

CRISTINA

Nothing. She left like... I don't know... full of herself.

DETECTIVE

Did you confront her?

CRISTINA

No. But I did confront him. I asked him what was going on.

DETECTIVE writes something down.

DETECTIVE

Was that the last time you saw Lucia?

CRISTINA

No. Unfortunately, I saw her at lunch.

DETECTIVE

And?

CRISTINA

I ignored her.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY.

The DETECTIVE studies LUCIA's photograph. He flips through the file and pauses on a picture where LUCIA is standing next to another young woman. In the file, near the picture, says: LORENA (22), LUCIA'S BEST FRIEND.

LORENA is sitting right in front of the DETECTIVE.

DETECTIVE

She was your best friend?

LORENA

We knew each other for years.

DETECTIVE

Since you were kids?

LORENA

Yes.

DETECTIVE

What was she like?

LORENA

Quiet. Focused. Always studying...

The DETECTIVE glances at the file.

DETECTIVE

I understand that you both were studying the same?

LORENA

Yes. We both were studying music.

A slight pause.

DETECTIVE

And how was that? I know you both were preparing for an audition.

LORENA

Yes, we were.

DETECTIVE

For the same role? Guitarist?

LORENA

(with a slight hint of pride)

Yeah... but I already got it.

DETECTIVE

And did you see her on Tuesday? Between 2 and 5 p.m.?

LORENA

Yeah, but just for a few minutes. We had lunch together.

INTERCUT WITH:

FLASHBACK: INT. CAFETERIA-DAY.

A WAITRESS approaches the table where LUCIA and LORENA are sitting, and sets down two plates of food and two cups of coffee. She moves to another table and leaves a dessert for CRISTINA. She scans the place, making sure everyone has what they need.

All three girls are having lunch. LUCIA looks calm while LORENA seems exhausted. On the other table, CRISTINA eats the dessert reluctantly.

CUT BACK TO:

LORENA

But then I left. I had a rehearsal.

INT. CAFETERIA-DAY.

The WAITRESS returns with a cup of coffee and a bottle of water. She sets them on the table and sits.

The DETECTIVE shows her a photo of LORENA, LUCIA AND CRISTINA.

DETECTIVE

Did you see them that day?

WAITRESS

Yes. They always eat here. Lucia and Lorena sat together

that day.

WAITRESS

The other girl sat apart.

DETECTIVE

Did you notice anything unusual?

WAITRESS

Not really. I mean they looked more tired than usual, but I figured it might be because of the audition they told me they had coming.

DETECTIVE

Nothing else?

WAITRESS

Well... Now that I think of it. I saw something happen when Lucia went to the bathroom. While she was gone, Lorena added something to her coffee. I thought maybe it was sugar, so I asked if she wanted sweetener. She said no and that she had brought her own new sweetener, which she had told Lucia to try. Told me it was less harsh and would help her focus. I watched, but because they were best friends, it didn't seem strange at the time.

The DETECTIVE, lost in thought, rolls a sugar packet between his hands.

INT. DETECTIVE'S SECOND OFFICE-NIGHT.

The DETECTIVE holds a sugar packet in his hand and walks over to the wall where photos of all the suspects and their connections to the victim are displayed.

DETECTIVE

They all made me doubt... Even with Armando's behavior, he's the least suspicious. Cristina on the other hand, had apparent reasons to commit the crime, but deep down, her conflict was more with Armando, and she already knew it.

The DETECTIVE fixes something in the wall. Someone is nearby.

DETECTIVE

The one who initially raised the least suspicion was Lorena. Mostly because of her calm demeanor. However, she seemed very composed... for someone whose best friend had just died.

LUCIA (VOICE OFF)

(incredulous)

Lorena?

DETECTIVE

As I continued with the interrogation and found a key witness, many inconsistencies in Lorena's story became clear.

The DETECTIVE pauses.

DETECTIVE

That day... did you know she put a new "sweetener" in your coffee?

LUCIA

WHAT? No, I didn't. What are you talking about?

DETECTIVE

Just what I thought. That wasn't sweetener. She drugged you so you would never make it to the audition. You need better friends. A higher dose... you wouldn't have survived.

LUCIA

I... I can't believe she would do that. She was my best friend.

DETECTIVE

It was all to win the role in the National Music Orchestra.