

Title: The Perfect Murder and Sins

Soundtrack link:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5MKKYaPVDhy7j3RSyHSeL5?si=a1886f2bf75948dc>

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I ran. I didn't look behind me, I just ran. I heard footsteps behind me. On the left, then on the right, then on the left again. Fuck, fuck, fuck. Where the hell is that tree? *The tree with the cross carved in its trunk.*

I stopped for a second to look around, spotting the tree after a couple of seconds. Fifty steps. One, two, three. I started to run again. Twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three. My feet hurt and my surroundings seemed to sway to the rhythm of my running. Forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight. I stopped, fell to my knees.

"You're late," he said, wiping the blood from his nose with his sleeve, "Are you serious?" Panting, I wipe the sweat away from my head. "I'm sorry," the sarcasm dripped from my words, "You're bleeding, Curtis."

"I know, Hayley, let's get down to business." I hold the urge to roll my eyes. "Fitzgerald, honestly, be real with me." He narrowed his eyes on me, more blood dripping down his lip, "*Clayton*, when do you ever care what's wrong, business." Curt, such a dismissive tone.

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Crouching behind a hedge, I rub my hands up and down my jeans, smoothing down the material. The leaves crunching under my feet; a sickening crack in the silence. "Shush, you stupid girl." My bones shake under my skin, "*Curtis*." He shakes his head, a silent chuckle escaping.

"Hayley, you know the plan, don't screw it up," his nose scrunches up, "I like being precise." Right. So, what was step one again? Oh, yeah, "Got it, Curtis."

"Good, I won't be afraid to snap your neck with my bare hands," he scoffed out, barely masking his irritation to the matter, "The plan is perfect, flawless. I don't need your sarcasm today." I didn't resist rolling my eyes this time, grumbling out, "Shut up." His glare stabbed into the side of my head, a headache swirling in the confines of my mind.

"Three, two, one, go!" his muttering of commands barely reached my ears. Stumbling onto my feet, Curtis fumbled something into my hand, shoving me forward. *Run, Hayley*. My feet took steps on their own, making up a teetering pattern of where I placed my soles. Breath, pace, pace, breath. Repeated pattern. Over and over.

Staggered breaths claw at my throat, closing the small place. I pushed the earpiece into my ear, that wouldn't stop mumbling. "*Hayley, Hayley, CLAYTON, Jesus,*" the cold voice was losing patience easily, something that Curtis never really had. "Shut – up," my oxygen kept coming in little gasps, short bursts.

"Get it together, step one, sneak into the house – can you do that Clayton?" I sharpened my eyes at the old door beside me, "Back to last names, really Fitzgerald? Yeah, I can do it, give me ten." Sliding the grip out of my hair, I snapped it into two pieces and stuck them into the lock. My fingers fidgeted with the pieces of metal, turning the inner lock of the door.

"Bingo," I whispered, sighing in relief. Twisting the handle, I hold my shallow breath and push the door wide open. Gathering my confidence wasn't easy. It was in little dwindles, hard to collect. My boots pushed against the wooden floor, creaking it ever so slightly. I winced internally, *God, why am I doing this again?* Left, right. Clear. "You're running out of time, Clayton." He really was getting the best of me, "Shut up, dammit," I hissed, "You'll get your *sadistic* desires soon."

"And I won't be afraid to snap your little, precious neck, move on upstairs, I'm already at the window," the smirk was evident in his voice. *That little* – My eyes went wide, my breathing silent. Still. A small, little creak sounded upstairs.

I shuffled up the stairs, spinning on my heel to look at the window. Curtis' eyes were glaring slits into my forehead, his nose dripping blood, again. Huffing, I unlatched the window and push the frame up. He stepped through the space, pushing the window back into its place. "Took you long enough," he reached into his pocket, grabbing a cigarette, "Let loose a little, Hayley."

He grabbed a lighter from his other pocket, sparking the flame and burning the stub of the deathly substance. Curtis grins, blowing a drag of nicotine – blood smeared onto the paper. "You need to sort out your priorities, Curtis, really," I scrunched my nose up at the smoke.

"Fine, fine, only because you're pretty," he threw it onto the floor, stamping his boot-clad foot over the cigarette. I pushed a lock of my brown hair behind my ear, "You flatter me, really, so what's the actual plan?"

Looking down the corridor, his head perked up ever so slightly, his nose seeping more crimson paint. He tiptoed towards the door – his ear rested against the birch. Listening, *intently*. I went to open my mouth but sealed it quickly. Curtis situated his index finger against his lips, silently shushing me. *Don't*, he mouthed slightly.

Sliding his hand down the back of his slacks, he gripped onto a hidden object. I clenched my eyes shut, *oh god*. Curtis pulled the shiny object out carefully, sliding his long fingers over the blade. Delight sparkled in his eyes, his lips twitched in excitement, his body jittered with impatience. It was a rare sight to see, really. But he's going to *murder* someone.

Are we going to live in *fire* and *blood* and *anguish* for the rest of our lives, for a sin we **want** to commit? We need this: for pleasure, exhilaration, the pure **intoxication** of the cloud nine.

Tilting the door handle, Curtis nodded at me. I nodded back. We may not get along, but we can work together. The birch wood swung open slowly, the creaking as sharp as Curtis' knife. A man lay up in his bed, eyes wide, lips quivering. And Curtis' face formed a genuine grin, *we're going to murder a man, oh god*.