



SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

A Noir Tale

What's the difference between reckless and smart?
Especially if you are a writer...

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Walter Neff had been a well-known and brilliant writer, but he'd clearly become reckless with age. Now he was a smudge on the floor. Several detectives circled the scene, examining every aspect of the room. The far wall contained a large picture window, sunlight streaming through the Venetian blinds. It was flanked by bookcases. On one side could be found scientific journals, physics textbooks, a copy of 'What Would Ben Stein Do?' and biographies of scientific greats. Across from this sat books by great explorers, handbooks on business decision making, and works on World War I fighter aces.

Barton Keyes pulled one of the books from the later shelf. "A Guide to Serious Risk-Taking by Phyllis Dietrichson," he announced to no one in particular. He'd been called in by the insurance company. Everyone had been convinced Walter had been murdered, but Barton had his doubts.

Looking up at the ceiling there was a rope extending downward several feet. It had been holding something up over the writer's desk. The bottom appeared frayed, but there was no sign of it being cut. The victim's blood had seeped out under the broken pieces of the heavy metal sculpture. Attached to a hook at the top of the remains was another rope, its ends equally frayed.

Detective Jackson glanced at the remnants. "What do you think it was?"

"Biplane," Barton explained with a breath of air. "Specifically, the Wright brothers' 1903 flyer."

"First powered machine to take to the sky," Detective Joe Pete added.

Jackson rubbed his chin. "What was he doing sitting under a heavy sculpture? He was asking to have his neck broken if you ask me."

Pete examined the rope. "This was way too flimsy to suspend something this heavy. Damn thing must have been as heavy as a stone block."

"Stone block is right." Jackson gave the others a wry laugh.

"What do you think was keeping it up there?"

Barton smiled, "Imagination... and it looks like it ran out." He glanced down at the remains of the body on the floor, the ruined pieces of a desk scattered about. In his hand, Walter was still holding a pen. Strewn about were pages of blank paper.

"So, you think it was murder?" Jackson asked.

Barton Keyes shook his head. "Accidental death."

"You're kidding."

"It finally got him."

"What?"

Barton grinned. "Wright Airs Block."