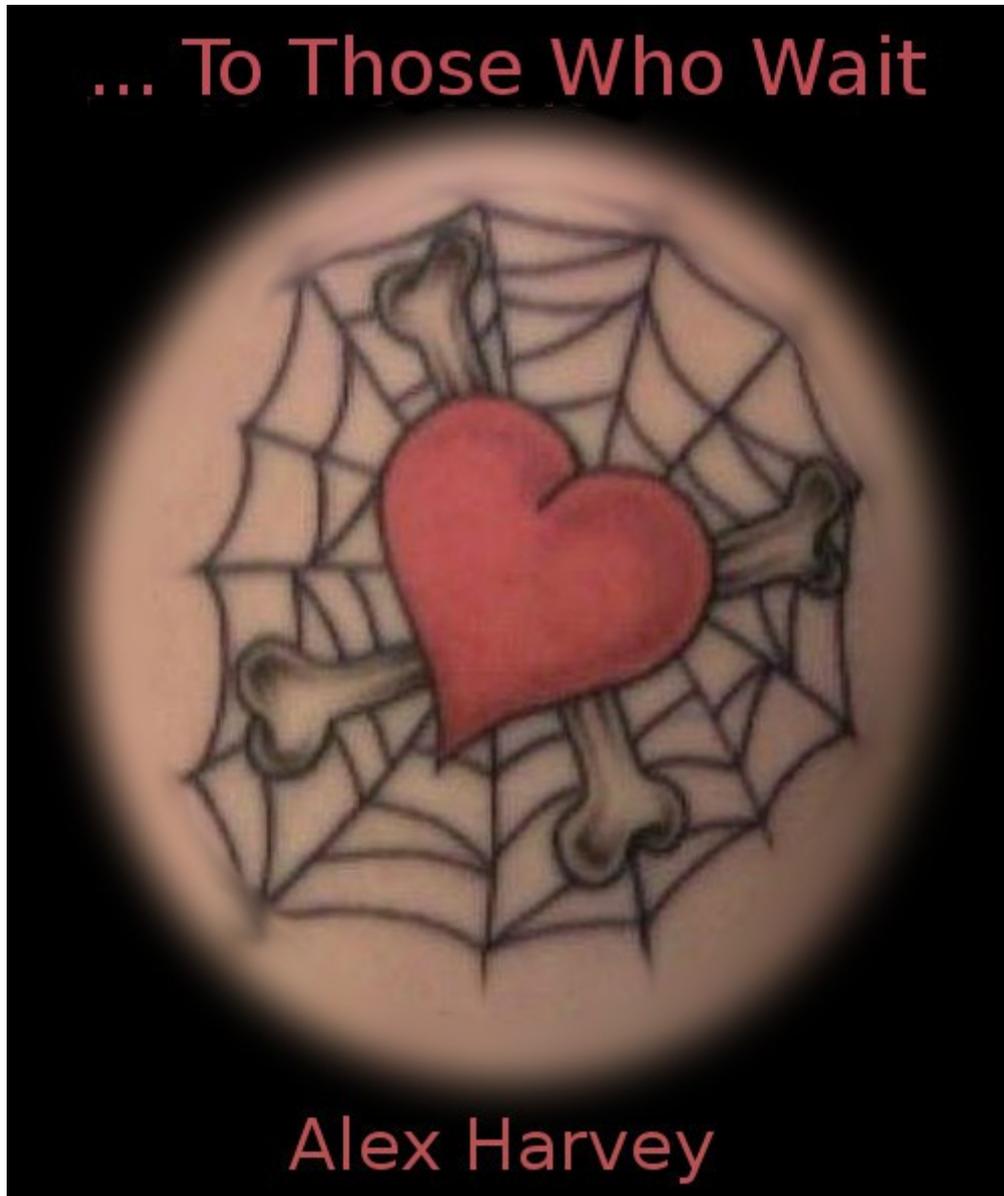


# ...To Those Who Wait.

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# Chapter 1

*Ah, all things come to those who wait,  
(I say these words to make me glad),  
But something answers soft and sad,  
They come, but often come too late.*

Violet Fane (1843-1905) - *Tout vient qui sait attendre.*

\*

Katherine Harrington sat in a police interview room and looked at her watch for the twentieth time.

"Are we boring you, Miss Harrington?" Sergeant Ken Watson referred to himself and Constable Joanne Bell.

"No but I do need to be elsewhere." Katherine replied. "I told you what happened."

"We're still talking to the car driver." Sergeant Watson told her. "So you'd been shopping. Sales?"

"Just a pair of jeans." Katherine sighed wearily. "I was walking towards the bus stop and someone ran at me from behind and tried to snatch my bag."

"That would be your black canvas shoulder bag, not the bag containing your jeans." Ken said ponderously.

"My shoulder bag, yes. It has my purse in it and all my payment cards for my bills." Katherine said, yet again.

"Then what happened?"

"I've told you. The bag wasn't just over my shoulder, it was over my head and across my body. He almost dragged me over and he lost his balance. I booted him in the balls, screamed at him, then ran towards the bus stop. I turned round when I heard a car screeching and when I looked into the road, I saw he'd been hit by a black BMW. There were at least fifty other people in the street. Go and ask a few of them." Katherine said irritably.

"We intend to." Ken said, just as Sergeant Tessa Frost entered the room and spoke to

her colleague. "The BMW driver also says that our snatcher lurched into the road clutching his groin."

"Well a Doc Marten to the balls would do that, yes." Katherine said patiently. "Can I go? I really don't want to be here."

"Seeing as the other witnesses back up your story, yes. I hope we haven't inconvenienced you too much, Miss Harrington." Ken smiled warmly. Kathrine smiled falsely and left the interview room.

"Tough girl." Joanne commented. "Hopefully he'll think twice about mugging again."

"That's if he gets chance to." Tessa said seriously. "He's critical and in the ICU."

"So we'd better get down there and talk to him." Ken decided.

Detective Sergeant Dan Buckley was concentrating on his backlog of paperwork. He actually didn't mind it if he was left alone to it and just now, he was the only one not busy with other matters. A ringing phone at the other end of the office was starting to annoy him.

"Can someone answer that bloody thing?" He shouted, before remembering that he was the only one there. He sighed in exasperation and looked at the clock. 6:30pm and that phone wasn't letting up. Dan weaved his way through the clutter filled desks to put it out of its misery. "Buckley."

"Oh." The caller sounded a bit disappointed. "It's Tessa Frost from downstairs. Something odd has cropped up."

"Oh good." Dan rolled his eyes. "Did you want anyone in particular, or will I do?"

"You'll do, I suppose. I'm in office three." Tessa hung up. Dan saved his work on the computer first, then set off to find office three and Tessa Frost. He briefly thought about having a moan at the uniformed Sergeant, until he saw her. Dan was thirty two and Tessa could give him another ten years. Dan could tell just by looking at her that she wouldn't stand for any nonsense.

"Sergeant Frost. I'm Dan Buckley." Dan took a seat in office three. Tessa began laying papers on the desk.

"We had a car accident earlier today. Greg Peters tried to snatch a young woman's bag and she hooped his nuts up his back for his troubles. He staggered into the road, clutching his tackle and Mr Terrance Cross hit him with his BMW. It was on the main road so although Cross wasn't speeding, he had no reason to be crawling along slowly. He hit Peters with quite a bit of force and he's in a pretty bad way in the ICU."

Sergeant Ken Watson took Constable Joanne Bell and they went to talk to him. This is where it gets odd." Tessa sat on the edge of the desk and looked at Dan. "He asked for Johnny Kennedy."

"Johnny Kennedy." Dan frowned in concentration. "Sounds familiar."

"Before your time. I've been here forever and so has Ken Watson. Johnny Kennedy was the DI here before Maggie Price." Tessa explained.

"*Before* DI Price?" Dan said in surprise. "How long ago was this?"

"He retired about ten years ago. Peters is in his late fifties so their ages fit. We do have a problem though. Johnny died three years ago. I went to his funeral." Tessa shrugged her shoulders.

"Well that's that bugged. Did Sergeant Watson tell Peters this?"

"Given Peters' fragile state, and not knowing exactly what his connection to DI Kennedy was, Ken just told him it wasn't possible. Peters told Ken to make it possible because it concerned a murder." Tessa said and Dan blinked a few times in shock. "That was all he could get out of him so he phoned me here to get on to you lot. DI Price is on berevment leave, isn't she?" Dan nodded. The DI's father had died suddenly in Spain so she'd flown out immediately.

"How bad is Peters?"

"Bad." Tessa said ruefully.

"I'd better get over there. I'll contact the Super tomorrow if I need to. Peters had better not be pissing about here." Dan stood up.

"It wouldn't be worth it to him, if he's in that bad a shape." Tessa said. "Do you want me to do anything here?"

"If you don't mind, yes. Would you pull up Peters' information?" Dan asked and Tessa nodded. "Thanks, Sergeant."

It was a miserable night and rain drizzled down constantly for the thirty minute drive to the hospital. Ken Watson met him outside the ICU and introduced himself, and Joanne Bell.

"He's pretty bashed up in there." Ken nodded towards the door.

"What did he say, exactly?" Dan asked. Ken took a notebook from Constable Bell and handed it to Dan.

"Joanne wrote it all down. He told me to get Johnny Kennedy. I told him that wouldn't be possible but I didn't tell him why. I'm pretty sure he knew Kennedy because he was a villain but I wasn't absolutely certain that was the only way. He could be a distant relation for all I know and I didn't want to give him any shocks. Anyway, he said anything was possible in the police force. I told him again that it wasn't possible. He told me to piss off and make it possible if we wanted a murder cleared up. I called Sergeant Frost at the station. It's all in Joanne's notebook."

"It says here that his voice was laboured. Whispering?" Dan asked.

"I had to lean in close to hear him. Joanne was at the other side." Ken nodded.

"And he definitely mentioned a murder?"

"Definitely." Ken replied.

"Absolutely." Joanne said at the same time.

"I think if he'd been a relation, then either you or Sergeant Frost would know about it. I'll go and see him." Dan tapped on the door and walked quietly inside. A young doctor looked up from a chart and shook his head slightly, indicating Greg Peters' failing health.

"Kennedy?" Peters whispered from beneath a mass of tubes, bandages and monitors. He had one arm in plaster and his skin was blotched with black bruises.

"I'm DS Dan Buckley, Mr Peters." Dan moved closer to the battered patient.

"Get me Johnny Kennedy." Peters hissed.

"Johnny Kennedy died three years ago. He'd already retired six or seven years before that. We have a new DI but unfortunately she's out of the country just now." Dan said clearly.

"Died? Kennedy's dead?" Peters looked at Dan through swollen eyes.

"He is, yes. Anything you wanted to tell him, you can tell me. I'm in the same department that he was." Dan urged.

"I don't suppose it matters a bugger to me now." Peters closed his eyes and struggled to breathe. "I killed Andy Storey."

"I'm sorry? Can you repeat that?" Dan leaned in very close.

"Andy Storey. I killed him. Me and Cliff." Peters whispered.

"Mr Peters? You and Cliff killed Andy Storey. Is that what you said?" Dan asked and Peters nodded. "Who's Cliff?" Three alarms went off at once and the doctor sprang into action. "Damn it! Mr Peters?"

"Excuse me please." The doctor elbowed Dan out of the way and the crash team moved in.

Tessa had pulled Gregory Peters' files. He had a sheet a mile long and two convictions for burglary, but nothing relating to violence and certainly no mention of any murders.

"Do you remember any murders of any Andy Storeys?" He asked Tessa and her mouth opened wide in surprise.

"Good God! Is that what he said? Andy Storey?"

"You remember it?"

"I certainly do. I don't believe it! I don't know many official details because I was only a plod back then. Andy Storey was a Sergeant right here in the station. He was found murdered in his back kitchen. His ... Oh shit!" Tessa had to sit down. "His girlfriend shared the house with him. She was convicted and jailed for the murder."

"What? Wait!" Andy screwed his eyes shut. "There was a conviction?"

"There was and that's not all. It was Katherine Harrington and we had her in here this afternoon. It was her who's bag was almost snatched. Holy hell I didn't even click on to the name!" Tessa said in astonishment.

"Back up a bit here." Andy wafted his hands at Tessa. "She was in here today? How can she be here if she was jailed for the murder of ... Hang on. How long ago was this?"

"Ten years ago. DI Kennedy had the case." Tessa shook her head in wonder.

"Bloody hell. So how long has this Harrington woman been out?"

"I've no idea. She was only nineteen when she killed Andy. Andy was twenty eight. So what did Peters have to say about that?" Tessa asked.

"He confessed to killing Storey." Dan said and Tessa was dumbstruck. "He told me him and someone named Cliff killed him."

"Bull! Katherine Harrington was banged up for it! How can he have done it?" Tessa exclaimed.

"You said yourself he has nothing to gain by bullshitting. The doctors say he'll be lucky to see the morning." Dan tried to organise a few thoughts in his head.

"So you're taking this confession seriously? Won't that mean re-opening the case?" Tessa asked.

"That would need a higher authority than me. Just now, that would mean the Super." Dan involuntarily grimaced. "I'll have a poke about by myself first. I appreciate your help today, Sergeant. Pre Price names mean nothing to me." He referred to the current DI. "Home time, I think. I can't poke anything at this time of night."

"Single man, aren't you?" Tessa smirked and left the office.

# Chapter 2

Dan lay awake in bed and his brain refused to switch off. Was Greg Peters talking crap? Given that there'd already been a trial and conviction it seemed likely. But why? Why now after a decade? It couldn't be to get Katherine Harrington off the hook because she was already out. Had Peters recognised her in the street? Dan had no doubt that the media would have been all over a case involving a murdered copper, but a lot of news had passed by in ten years. Also, if he had recognised her as someone who had served time for a crime he committed, why run up and mug her? That seemed a bit too ridiculous. His bedside clock told him it was 5am. Rather than risk dropping off and oversleeping, Dan decided to get up and shower. Over coffee, he tried to visualise all the male officers from the station. Of those he could recall, Ken Watson was probably the smallest at the 5'9 mark. How had a nineteen year old girl murdered a trained, adult, male policeman? Was he asleep? Doubtful, seeing as he was found in his back kitchen. Was Katherine Harrington built like an all in wrestler, and therefore physically capable? Possibly, but why would a mugger target a heftily built woman and risk a right hook? The phone ringing disturbed Dan's thoughts. It was 6:30am and Ken Watson was on the early shift.

"Sorry to bother you at home, DS Buckley. Greg Peters died thirty minutes ago. Not a surprise, I know. For some reason his ex wife is down as his next of kin. Probably an oversight during the divorce or something. She doesn't know yet. What with all that weird stuff yesterday, I didn't know if you wanted to go and tell her yourself." Ken said. Dan could use this opportunity to find out a bit more on Gregory Peters.

"Give me thirty minutes and I'll come into the station. Are you free to come with me?" Dan began shrugging his jacket on.

"If you want me to, yes. I'll go and sign for plain car. As long as it's not that sodding Skoda, we'll be fine."

Ken had managed to get a nice Astra and not the sodding Skoda. He handed Dan a sheet of paper with Irene Peters' address on it, then got into the driver's seat.

"I take it they weren't in touch, otherwise she'd have been at the hospital. Redlane Estate. How nice for this time in the morning." Dan grimaced.

"Redlane isn't nice no matter what time of day it is. It says in Peters' background files that his old girl divorced him nine years ago after he'd got banged up." Ken informed Dan as he pulled up outside of Irene Peters' shabby house. It was an ugly square construction with a weed choked garden and a peeling front door. Mrs Peters was non too shining either with her peroxide hair and a cigarette dangling from her mouth.

Dan and Ken both introduced themselves and showed their ID.

"May we come in, Mrs Peters?" Dan asked.

"No and it's Ms Wilson. What do you want?" Irene flicked her cigarette end into next door's garden.

"It's about your ex husband, Ms Wilson. He died earlier this morning." Dan delivered the news.

"Am I supposed to care?" Irene rolled her eyes. "Drink or drugs? Stupid old bastard."

"Actually he was hit by a car." Dan stated bluntly.

"Matterless to me." Irene shrugged her skinny shoulders.

"So you've had no contact since the divorce?" Dan asked.

"Not on your nelly. Why would I do that? He was an arsehole when we were married and I doubt he changed."

"So you wouldn't know about his friends or associates?" Dan tried.

"Would I hell." Irene folded her arms, another lit cigarette in her mouth. "I'll tell you one thing though, they'll all be scumbags."

"What about from when you were married? He mentioned someone called Cliff before he died."

"Cliff Davies? Arsehole's not worth mentioning. He's a bigger shit head than Greg is ... was ... whatever." Irene sniffed.

"Do you know where I can find him, Ms Wilson?" Dan asked.

"How the hell should I know? His folks used to live over on the Banks Estate but that was years ago. Look, I haven't seen or heard from any of Greg's low life mates for nine years. The lot of them were scum. Worse than scum. Anyway, thanks for telling me he's kicked the bucket. You've made my day. Anything else? It's bloody freezing out here."

"No. Thanks for your time, Ms Wilson. I won't keep you any longer." Dan walked down the path and back to the car with Ken.

"Rough arsed old boiler." Ken gave his opinion.

"Well Greg wasn't exactly the epitome of genteel, was he? Do you know much of what's going on, Ken? Sergeant Frost helped me alot yesterday." Dan said.

"Personally I think Peters was talking bollocks. I know you're obliged to follow it up but I think he was just taking the piss." Ken nodded.

"Can you remember the case?"

"Just from the papers. I was a plod like Tessa at the time. I can't believe neither me or Tessa recognised Katherine Harrington's name! Come to think of it, how could we not recognise Harrington full stop? She was in every newspaper you opened at the time. I wonder how long she's been out?" Ken mused.

"I don't know. You know more about the whole thing that I do." Dan let out a sigh. "I can only dig so far without getting the Super in on it for the authorisation."

"Do you think it needs digging? Harrington was jailed for it."

"Well like you said, I'll have to check it out as much as I can. Pull up in front of the Newsagents here, Ken. Go and ask if the Davis family still live here." Dan nodded towards the shop and Ken pulled over. The Banks Estate was a huge improvement on Redlane. It was one of the posher estates in the area while Redlane had always been the roughest. Ken exited the shop chomping on a pork pie.

"Well the old couple are dead but the son still lives in the house." He handed Dan a piece of paper with an address on it.

"Cliff?"

"Derek. The bloke in the newsagents said Cliff was a twat."

"We do deal with some lovely people." Dan rolled his eyes. "Come on, we'll go and visit Derek Davies." Derek Davies' house was edged with a neat lawn, pretty flowers and its windows were gleaming. Fancy lace curtains hung in the front windows and hanging baskets hung at the front door.

"Well he's not on his own." Ken observed. "My missus got some of those curtains and I fought on with the buggers for two hours before she took over and had them up in five minutes." He climbed out of the car, Dan following. Derek Davies was alot more accommodating than Irene Wilson had been. He was very friendly and led the officers through a spotless house and into a shining kitchen.

"Your timing couldn't be better, actually." Derek said, flicking on the kettle. "Kids in school, Denise out shopping, and the only day I've had off in weeks. So like I said, it was in the yard, chained to the drainpipe."

"Er ... what was?" Ken asked.

"The bike. That is why you're here, isn't it?"

"No Mr Davies. I'm sorry, I should have stated our business straight away." Dan apologised. "We're looking for your brother, Cliff." Derek's face darkened and his jaw set firmly.

"I thought you lot had stopped looking for him here. I haven't seen him for two years and I don't want to either. Whatever he's done, jail him for it." Derek said flatly.

"We're just making a few enquiries." Dan told him. "So you aren't in touch?"

"Not a chance. He's a complete arsehole." Derek said angrily. "I tried with him, I really did. Even after dad threw him out, I still tried. He's a shit and he'll never change."

"So what happened two years ago?" Dan asked.

"He proved, beyond a doubt, that he's a prize, first class, shit bag. He broke in here a week before christmas and nicked the kids' computers, and some jewellery I'd bought for Denise. He nicked his own nephews' christmas presents. The insurance didn't cover it so they got nothing on christmas day. I confronted him and he laughed at me. He told me to get Denise's dad to cough up some cash. He's an arsehole, I'm telling you. Lock the bastard up and throw away the key."

"Do you know where he's living?"

"Two years ago he was in one of those charity subsidised bedsits on Picks Lane. Cheeky bastard thieves and fences and has the nerve to accept charity." Derek said in disgust.

"We'll go and have a chat with him if he's still there." Dan nodded. "Thanks for talking to us, Mr Davies and good luck with the bike." They let themselves out.

"Doesn't have many fans, does he?" Ken said as they got back in the car.

"I'll pull his files at the station. Picks Lane. We're definitely getting a tour of the dregs today, Ken." Dan said moodily. This was starting to frustrate him. They were running around all over the place and it all could be a waste of time. He silently cursed Greg Peters for dying before he'd told him a bit more. Dan's mood wasn't improved by a tatty looking neighbour telling them that Cliff wasn't home. Apparently he'd got himself a job doing odd jobs and DIY at the local Salvation Army hostel.

"Scarlet bloody pimpernel." Ken grumbled, heading for the hostel. The Pimpernel himself was outside the hostel having a smoke. He looked far from happy to see the two officers.

"Can we go somewhere to talk?" Dan stated, rather than asked. Cliff tutted loudly and lead them round the back to a brick tool shed.

"This is a legit job." Cliff snapped nastily. "It's the only one I've ever had so you lot better not sod it up for me."

"We're here about Greg Peters, Cliff." Dan said.

"Not seen him for years." Cliff shrugged his shoulders. "Last I heard he was involved in the drug scene. Idiot. I'm not connected to that shit and I never was."

"When was the last time you spoke to him?"

"Oh God knows." Cliff exhaled loudly. "Five years? Maybe six? What's he done, anyway?"

"He's dead, Cliff. Car accident." Dan saw Cliff's face register surprise.

"Poor old Greg." He said at last. "He went downhill pretty fast with all that drug crap. I don't think he was a major dealer or anything, but he had the habit. Poor old sod."

"You were quite close at one time. That right?" Dan asked.

"Mates? Yes I suppose so. Like I said, I haven't seen him for years." Cliff repeated.

"Does the name Andy Storey mean anything to you?" Dan watched Cliff closely for a reaction, but didn't get one.

"No. Should it?"

"I don't know." Dan frowned. "Just before he died, Greg confessed to killing him and named you as an accomplice."

"What?!" Cliff yelled. "Killing someone? Look, you have that all wrong mate. I've done some shitty things in my time, and I do mean shitty, but I've never killed anyone."

"Why would he say that?"

"Because he's a vindictive old bastard. I gave evidence against him for a robbery. You know? Like a deal with the Prosecution lot. That's why I haven't seen him for six

years. I've done break ins and I've sold knock off. I've thieved but that's as bad as it gets."

"The 'poor old Greg' bit was short lived. See you around Cliff." Dan left the tool shed, Ken with him. "I don't like, or trust that one."

"I bet the villains don't either. They don't like a grass. Where to now?"

"You're quite enjoying this, aren't you?" Dan smiled.

"It's something I've never had the chance to do. I'd never have made CID and now I'm past it. It's not my fault you're short staffed up there." Ken shrugged.

"Just as long as Inspector Frazer doesn't get stuck into me for nabbing his uniforms."

"I think Sergeant Frost talked him round." Kem smirked. "Back to the Batcave?"

"Good thinking Robin. Drive on."

Ken vanished to attend to his routine stuff, leaving Dan to find Cliff Davies' file by himself. It was quite similar to that of Greg Peters. Theft, robbery, burglary, but nothing violent. Dan drummed his fingers on the desk. Something was bothering him about this whole thing, but he didn't know what. Maybe Greg Peters was just being a vindictive old bastard, but why pick that case? Yes it was a big one, but it was also ten years old and 'resolved'. Why involve himself? He could have said that Davies had confessed in a fit of depression or even to gloat. That did happen occasionally, usually between cell mates. Dan chewed his lip and opened Davies' file. He'd had a conviction for burglary. He pushed image of Superintendent Stone blowing rage steam from his nose and dialled the prison number. Hopefully the letters C I D would be impressive enough on their own.

"I'm reviewing an old case." Dan explained, after a very swift self introduction. "Would it be possible to find out who shared a cell with Clifford Davies? Yes I'll hold." The next voice he heard was that of the prison governor, Billy Carver.

"I can't discuss it over the phone, but I can help you if you come down here in person."

"Of course. I was verifying whether you could help before I made the journey. So a face to face meeting is in order?"

"As long as you bring your ID. I'll organise the meeting with him." Billy said and Dan blinked in surprise. He had meant a face to face with the Governor, but this was even better. He thanked Mr. Carver and wondered how the hell he'd got away with that. One thing was certain, he couldn't take Ken or Tessa in on this one. The Super

would have a fit if he got wind of this.

# Chapter 3

Dan had never been to the prison and he was grateful for it. It was big, grey and depressing. Just looking at it made Dan feel gloomy. He was shown to a room that housed one table, two chairs and a very large warden. Cliff Davies' cell mate had been armed robber, Martin Benson who was up for parole in two weeks. As soon as he entered the room, Benson oozed dislike for Dan. Dan realised that this was going to be a mental 'pissing contest' and Benson wanted to be on top. He watched the prisoner take a seat, then Dan continued to look silently at him, lips pursed slightly. It worked. Benson spoke first.

"So what's the story?" He lounged back in his chair.

"Cliff Davies." Dan replied. That threw Benson off his guard a bit. "Your former cell mate?"

"I know who he is. Bugger all to me, pal. He was in my cell for eight months, that's it. That's a piss in the ocean when you've been here for seven years." Benson shrugged his shoulders.

"He must have been quite a novice compared to you lot." Dan said and Benson nodded in agreement. "You're there with your tales of gun wielding bank jobs and he's there with his of screaming at old ladies down the garage."

"Still got sent down for it." Benson stated.

"So he never mentioned anything else to keep up with the big boys?"

"Can't remember. I don't listen to everyone's shit all the time." Benson said shortly.

"Oh well. Shame about the memory, Benson. I hope you won't need to recall anything for your parole hearing." Dan went to stand up.

"Hey! Hang on! You're on the parole board?" Benson sat forward.

"No of course not, but I am CID." Dan said ambiguously.

"OK but I'm not saying any of it's true. OK? Davies spent half his time crying, and the other half thinking he was Superman. He was a pain in the arse with his blubbing. Everyone knows that your cred in here goes way up if the cons think you've nailed a copper, including Davies. He was so full of shite that no one believed

him. I certainly didn't." Benson said.

"So Davies said he'd killed a copper?" Dan clarified.

"Said he strangled one with his bare hands. He said it was easy because the pig was on the floor where he belonged. The stupid bastard thought it was hilarious because the copper had boxer shorts on with pink pigs on them. Moron. I don't think he was all there to be honest with you." Benson said in contempt.

"Doesn't sound like he was. Thanks for talking to me, Mr. Benson, I appreciate it. Good luck with your parole."

Dan sat in his deserted office and theorised. To strangle someone bare handed suggested strength, something he'd thought of earlier. How many women strangled men?

"Tessa?" He said down the phone. "Can I borrow you for half an hour?"

"Office Three." Tessa said. Dan made his way downstairs.

"I hope I'm not going to get in trouble for hijacking Frazer's staff." Dan said as he sat down.

"Oh he's not that bad." Tessa smiled. "So what can I do you for?"

"I was just curious to know how a jury was convinced that a teenage girl could physically strangle a fit, adult man." Dan frowned.

"Which teenage girl? Which adult man, come to think of it?"

"Andy Storey. I presume he was fit and healthy ..."

"Hang on. He wasn't strangled. Where did that come from?" Tessa asked in confusion.

"He wasn't?" Dan felt his stomach sink. Benson had fed him a line? The reason Dan presumed he hadn't was because Benson himself hadn't believed Davies' tales.

"Hell no. The poor bugger was beaten to death. That's how they got the conviction. Katherine Harrington was covered in his blood from the head wound. Poor sod. Apparently he wasn't even supposed to be home. He'd swapped a shift or something, as I recall. What a time to do a swap eh? The same time as your girlfriend goes apeshit."

"So why did she go apeshit?" Dan asked.

"No idea. I told you I was just a plod at the time. Want my opinion?" Tessa leant forward. "Peters, and the rest of them, are taking the piss. I know you and Ken have been haring around like Starsky and Hutch. They're winding you up."

"But why? Remember, it was Johnny Kennedy that Peters asked for, not me. Why would Peters want to piss off Johnny Kennedy and not be here to see it?" Dan pondered.

"How old are you?" Tessa asked suddenly. "Thirty-ish?"

"Thirty two. Why?"

"In Johnny's day, if a villain could take the piss, he would, and Johnny's aggrevated plenty of villains in his time."

"That's my point, Tessa. Johnny wasn't here to wind up and Peters knew that. Is winding me up on par with that? I wouldn't think so. I've never heard of Peters in my life, nor him me." Dan reasoned.

"I still think he was yanking your chain. So which clown told you Andy was strangled? You'd have looked a total idiot if you'd gone ahead with that one. You're a copper. Villains like to see us fall flat on our arses." Tessa told him.

"This shouldn't be as complicated as it is being." Dan drummed his fingers on the desk. "If there were strangulation marks on the body, as well as a head wound, then I was informed correctly. I'm assuming the cause of death was announced as the head wound?"

"Either that or the beating. I'm not totally sure. It certainly wasn't strangulation. Katherine Harrington is only around five feet tall for a start. He'd have ... ah right, your original point." Tessa nodded. "So what are you going to do? The Super?"

"Well I'll need old case files and he's the only one up on high right now. What are my chances?" Dan grimaced.

"Oh you smooth devil." Tessa smirked.

"I meant with the Super ... getting the Super ... OK nevermind." Dan laughed with Tessa then began the long walk to Superintendent Stone's lofty office.

Dan had only seen the Super a handful of times. He was a huge, imposing man and would have looked at home on a military base.

"Come in!" Stone boomed when Dan knocked on the door. Dan did so and the Super

looked blankly at him.

"I have a problem, sir." Dan began. "As you'll know, DI Price is away just now and DS Scott is working a case along with two DCs. I'm on my own up there, sir."

"Aw! You poor thing! Do you want to move in here with me?" Stone glared at Dan. "Who are you, again?"

"DS Daniel Buckley, sir. Er ... no, I won't need to move in here, sir, but I love what you've done with the place." Dan smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He was vastly relieved when the Super barked a laugh. He managed to start at the beginning and finish with his conversation with Tessa, without mentioning Tessa at all, just as a precaution.

"That was cleared up years ago Butler." Stone scowled.

"I know sir but now I have Peters' confession, implicating Davies. I also have Benson's account of Davies' confession."

"It's a bit thin, isn't it?" Stone was far from convinced.

"Maybe, sir, but I can't see why Peters would confess to it, then Benson back it up independently. If I could dismiss the strangulation claim, then I can put it all down to a wind up." Dan explained. Stone looked at him for eons.

"You don't have enough to re-open the case, Lockley." The Super stated.

"I didn't think so, no. I'd just like to satisfy myself that I'm not being jerked around. It's Buckley, sir." Dan tried to smile.

"I'd say you were. Satisfy yourself quickly, Battley. I'll issue you a temporary clearance pass." The Super nodded curtly and Dan restrained himself from whooping.

Ten years ago meant no computers to speak of. Dan had to go to the bowels of the earth and dig about among rows and rows of dusty boxes and folders. He'd been told that anything going out of the vaults needed signed for item at a time so he found himself a desk and a lamp and wiped away layers of dust with his sleeve. Dan ignored the yellow papers and went straight for the pathology and autopsy reports. He didn't have to be a pathologist to see the jagged, square, hole in Andy Story's skull. Even holding the gory photographs under the lamp, didn't give a clear enough view of the neck region. He'd definitely need a magnifier. Dan concentrated on the written reports instead. It said the wound was massive. Oh you don't say? Because of the wound, bloodloss, and general lividity, the head wound was given as the cause of death. Right at the bottom, in a section titled 'Post Script Notes' Dan read something

that made his heart hammer in his chest. There were faint bruises around the throat that could easily have been caused during a struggle. The hyoid bone had not been broken. These two observations combined lead to the conclusion that this was of a lesser importance to the gaping wound in the man's head. Dan ran to the bottom of the stairs and grabbed the phone.

"Sergeant Nelson."

"Sergeant, can you see if Superintendent Stone is still in the building please? It's urgent." He heard several clicks while the lines were connected.

"Ah Becket. Be quick. I was just leaving." Stone said curtly.

"Sir there was evidence of neck bruising on the body of Andy Storey." Dan said quickly.

"There was also evidence of a bloody great trench in his head too." Stone said flatly.

"Yes sir, that's the most glaringly obvious wound. The neck trauma was relegated to secondary struggle injuries." Dan explained.

"Go on."

"If these injuries were passed off as secondary, they wouldn't have even been mentioned in any official capacity, sir. Martin Benson mentioned it. He didn't say Davies told him he'd battered his head in, he told him he'd strangled him with his bare hands. How would he know such a thing?" Dan elaborated.

"I don't like this." Stone said darkly. "If strangulation was the cause of death, then that's what it would say."

"Maybe not with all the other evidence being so prominent and plentiful, sir. Can I at least ask Dr. Simons to have a look at these reports?" Dan almost begged. The Super didn't answer. "I'm not disbelieving the original pathologist sir. All I'm saying is that it could look different to someone who didn't see the actual blood and brains strewn all over the place."

"Ugh. Yes OK, I get your drift, Butcher. So you just want this neck trauma business sorted out, yes?" Stone said irritably.

"Yes sir."

"Make sure you sign for everything otherwise Sergeant Nixon gets hysterical." Stone stated. Dan thanked him and hung up quickly just incase Stone imposed any stipulations. Even if the blow to the head had killed Andy, the neck trauma was still

suspicious. How had Benson known to mention it? How had the trauma occurred to begin with? The report said due to a struggle. Back to physical strength. Andy just couldn't get round that at all.

"I'll come back for the rest!" Dan dashed past Sergeant Nelson with two boxes full of files.

Dan's first port of call was the labs. He peered round the door to make sure Hugh Simons wasn't up to his elbows in god knows what. Dan and Hugh were good friends outside of work too. Dan had introduced Hugh to Amanda, a university friend, to whom Hugh was now engaged. Dan deposited the pathology reports on the desk and told Hugh he needed a fresh pair of eyes to look over them.

"Ten years ago? I hope this isn't going to lead to any dig-ups." Hugh pulled a face.

"I doubt that. Don't read the conclusions page, Hugh. I'd like your own conclusions." Dan told him. Hugh looked at the folder.

"DS? He was a DS? Here?"

"Yes he was. I've just had a few related bumps thrown at me Hugh. I need them ironed out. Just whenever you can, there's no rush."

"Well it's waited ten years already." Hugh put the folder in his drawer.

"How's Amanda?" Dan changed the subject.

"Blooming and flourishing." Hugh smiled.

"Good to ... Blooming?"

"Blooming."

"My mother used that word to describe all four of my sisters when they were pregnant. Oh yes?" Dan laughed and Hugh beamed broadly. "Congratulations! Don't forget to give her my love."

"Cheers Dan. I won't forget." Hugh let Dan out of the labs.

The first thing Dan pulled out of the box was a photograph of Andy Storey. He was a fine looking young man, and judging by the door frame behind him, he was around the six foot mark.

"So what about you, Miss Harrington?" He unearthed a picture of Katherine Harrington. Tessa had been right, the woman was tiny. Her details showed her to be

5'1 and very slightly built. She was also very pretty, in an elven type of way. She had very dark hair that was cut short, and huge brown eyes. Sergeant Nelson interrupted Dan's reading.

"I was checking the stuff you took out and this was on the shelf." Nelson put a blue folder on the table. "I've signed for it so don't worry about that." He ambled out of the office. Dan recognised the folder and was rather surprised it was in the vaults. It was a prison folder and would contain details of release dates. The prison were obliged to give the police this information because Katherine had served time for a violent crime. He pushed away the thought that he maybe wasn't supposed to have this misplaced file, and began reading.

Katherine had served eight years of her fifteen year sentence. She'd been a model prisoner, popular with both the staff and the other inmates. What he read next, didn't exactly make him happy. There had been some sort of official review of Katherine's case, unknown to her. There was an air of admittance that her sentence may have been a bit harsh when compared with modern day judicial processes. Comparisons were also drawn, albeit quite vaguely, between policing and technical methods of the two times. Dan re-read it a few times, then found three other reports offering the same, or similar sentiments. He sat for a while and deciphered the overblown legal jargon, and evasive, long wided sentences until he was left with the bare bones. He didn't know whether to be astonished, outraged, or just plain angry. Basically, Katherine had been released before she decided, or was advised, to appeal. Due to the comparatively crude forensic methods of ten years ago, they'd actually struggle to get a conviction today. He delved into the box and found scene of crime photographs. Going by the blood drenched pair of jeans and white top, Katherine had been covered in the stuff and it was all Andy's. She'd been found with the body and two feet from the murder weapon which had her fingerprints all over it. It seemed that Katherine and Andy weren't getting along at all at that time, and were going through a split. This split also included the sale of the house that they both owned, something that Katherine was very much against. It had also been pointed out that the death of one of the mortgage payers would mean a reduction in the amount paid by the surviving partner. Katherine Harrington had been jailed when she was nineteen years old.

"There was either a blindingly magnificent prosecution, or your defence was utter shit, Katherine Harrington." Dan sighed wearily. Murder? Not even manslaughter, but full out murder? "Time to visit the ex-con herself, I thnk." Dan grabbed his jacket.

Katherine's home address was in quite an affluent area and on a tidy, tree lined avenue. The house was a white painted semi with a sprawling rose garden, surrounded by a low red brick wall. None of these properties were for rental so Dan was very surprised indeed. Katherine herself answered the door and Dan immediately noticed how little she'd changed in ten years. She had the same pixie hair and eyes.

"Miss Harrington? I'm DS Dan Buckley." Dan showed her his badge and she just

glanced at it.

"I told you what happened. He ran into the road." Katherine said irritably. "CID for a failed bag snatch?"

"That's not why I'm here Miss Harrington. I'm here regarding Andy Storey's death." Dan said. Katherine visibly recoiled. "I'm not here to pester you ..."

"Go away." Katherine said shakily. "Go on! Sod off!"

"Miss Harrington I have new information that can only benefit you. It won't harm ..."

Dan turned round when he heard the garden gate squeak open. A middle aged lady in a nurse's uniform edged by him towards the door.

"Go through Pam. Help yourself to the kettle first if you like." Katherine welcomed the visitor.

"Is everything OK?" Dan asked automatically.

"I don't want you here." Katherine stated flatly.

"I just want to talk, Miss Harrington. As I said, these new findings could benefit you." Dan pressed.

"Oh? So I'll get time taken off the time I've already done? Don't you dare mention the word benefit to me, DS Buckley." She snarled. "It's gone and it's done with. Do you understand? I don't want it all dragged up again."

"I can understand that." Dan persisted. "I'm ..."

"Can you hell. Leave me alone." Katherine went to close the door.

"I don't think you killed him." Dan said quickly and Katherine paused, then turned round. Everything I've seen makes the suggestion a bit absurd, in my opinion. What they did have was circumstantial."

"Circumstantial or not, I still spent eight years in prison." Katherine said. "Just leave me alone, DS Buckley."

"I don't know who you're protecting but are they worth it?" Dan nodded towards the door of the house. "Are they worth you being branded a killer?"

"No you don't know who I'm protecting. You know nothing about me. I've been trying to move on from this for two years. Please let me do so in peace." Katherine sighed and rubbed her eyes.

"For the last ten years there's been a cold blooded killer out here thinking how wonderful he or she is for getting away with this. Andy Storey was your fiance, Miss Harrington, and someone killed him. I'll struggle on with this myself but it would be easier with you onside." Dan said factually.

"I miss him." Katherine said quietly. "Stay there. I'll be back out." She disappeared into the house and closed the door. Two minutes later she reappeared at the side of the house and sat on the wall that seperated the garden from the street. Dan walked over and joined her.

"If I've upset you then I really am sorry. If it wasn't so important, I'd never have bothered you." Dan apologised.

"As much as I mistrust the police force, I believe you." Katherine smiled at Dan. "So why do you suddenly believe me now?"

"I was given fresh information very recently regarding Andy's death. I knew nothing at all about the original case so I had to start from scratch. I didn't attach much weight to my new information to begin with but I was obliged to follow it up. It gathered weight the more I looked into it. I hate things that don't fit, and not much of this does." Dan explained.

"I don't think I can handle it all again." Katherine squinted at the sun through the trees. "The police gave me a hammering from hell ten years ago because Andy was one of their own." Dan winced slightly. That had to be horrendous for her. "I don't care what your reports say, DS Buckley. I loved him."

"But you were selling the house. Right?"

"Sadly, yes. I really liked that house but it was a huge, Georgian monstrosity. Basically, it was far too big and the mortgage was far too much. It had five bedrooms and there was only the two of us. We'd bought it the year before in a fit of passionate madness and simply couldn't afford it." Katherine looked at Dan. "I know what was in your reports. One dead, payments reduced. That arsehole in the courtroom pushed that point. It was a house, DS Buckley, bricks and cement. Andy was my fiance. Andy wins hands down. I'd have built another house with my bare hands if he'd asked me to."

"I really can understand you not wanting to be dragged back ten years." Dan smiled. "I thought it only right to tell you I was looking into it." He felt a wave of pity for Katherine Harrington. Trying to picture this tiny girl, sitting on a wall dressed in leggings and a t-shirt, wielding a weapon and bludgeoning a man to death, just wasn't working. Trying to picture her physically strangling a man was just ridiculous. He was more and more convinced that they'd jailed the wrong person for Andy Storey's

murder. It was a very awkward feeling to suspect that the officers on the case had gone for a quick result because Andy was a policeman.

"I suppose I should appreciate that. Thanks." Katherine said hollowly.

"This is a lovely house. My aunt lives in one a few streets away. How did you end up here?" Dan changed the subject.

"Scandalous, isn't it? Nasty little peasant like me on Fallows Avenue!" Katherine rolled her eyes and stood up.

"I didn't mean that. My aunt lives just over there. Forgive me, I didn't mean to sound insulting." Dan apologised.

"Ah it's fine. I have a rather large chip on my shoulder. Don't give yourself a nosebleed, DS Buckley. I don't live here alone and no, I'm not going to discuss my domestic arrangements with you."

"Fair enough." Dan smiled. "I'll let you get back indoors. You obviously have things to do." He nodded to a side window where the nurse was rummaging through her coat pockets.

"I do yes. Don't pull me back into all this, DS Buckley. Take care, I like you." Katherine went back indoors and Dan sat for a while and watched after her.

# Chapter 4

Dan was surprised to see another box of files had appeared on his desk along with a note from Sergeant Nelson saying he'd 'found them'. One folder contained a list of people who'd been through Andy and Katherine's house, and any followups necessary. The list was quite lengthy seeing as the place was up for sale but at least the viewings had been professionally organised. Dan looked at the list in despair then answered the ringing phone.

"Tessa here. I saw Nelson wandering up there with boxes. He told me to butt out when I asked. You haven't reopened it have you?" Tessa asked in surprise.

"No, not really." Dan exhaled loudly. "Tessa were you honestly convinced by the evidence? I don't mean how it was presented in court, I mean the actual evidence we found."

"I didn't see it. I was a first rung constable. I got more information from the papers than I did from the station." Tessa said and Dan nodded. So had everyone else, it seemed.

"OK so how did the press and whatnot explain how a tiny, teenage girl was physically strong enough to beat an adult man's brains out? She is tiny, Tessa, as you said. I've seen her today. I've also seen pictures of Andy Storey's head wound and it's like a bloody pothole!" Dan exclaimed then realising he was ranting on at poor Tessa, even though she'd told him repeatedly that she knew nothing about the case. "Why am I squawking on at you eh? I'm sorry. I'm just a bit frustrated with it all."

"No worries. What about this strangulation stuff?" Tessa asked.

"I don't know yet. The reports are in the labs. In my opinion, that sounds even more improbable. You have to physically overpower someone to strangle them. I've seen pictures of Andy and I think I'd struggle to overpower him, nevermind Katherine." Dan said. "Speaking of Katherine, did she mention any sick relatives when she was in about the bag?"

"No. Why would she?"

"Just something I saw. She lives on Fallows Avenue. It's a bit posh round there, isn't it?"

"I doubt she owns the house. I've heard that some people rent out spare rooms over there." Tessa said.

"I thought that too. Still a bit pricey though. I got the impression that she was more than just a lodger." Dan said thoughtfully. "Oh well. If it's important, I'll get to it. Thanks for putting up with me, Tessa."

"I'm here to help. Don't work all night." Tessa ordered.

Dan got through as many of the Estate Agent's list as he could before his brain started to lag and his eyelids started to droop. That was his cue to call it a night. Dan's flat was as tidy as it ever was, seeing there was only him in it. He used to share it with his girlfriend, Carol, until four years ago. Carol had decided that police officers made terrible partners, and she was probably right. She left and Dan found a note telling him to go and marry DI Price. What a thought. He was just about to turn off the lights and go to bed when he heard a gentle tap on the door. He looked at his watch and saw it was after eleven at night and presumed it was work related. He opened the door with a weary sigh.

"Tell me if I'm being a nuisance and I'll go." Katherine Harrington said and Dan just blinked at her like an idiot. "Ah, OK. I'm sorry." She turned to leave.

"No! No it's fine." Dan said quickly. "Are you OK?"

"Well I'm all stressed to hell, but physically I'm fine." Katherine nodded and smiled weakly.

"Come in." Dan let Katherine into the house and lead her through into the sitting room. "Can I get you anything?"

"Can I have a cup of tea please? I've been sitting in my car for two hours." Katherine sat on the sofa.

"Why have you been sitting in your car for two hours?" Dan went into his small kitchen which was just a partitioned area of the same room.

"Waiting for you to come out of the station. I followed you, then sat for another half hour wondering what the hell I was doing. I thought you'd send me home." Katherine explained, accepting her tea. "Thanks for both."

"If you'd asked for me at the station I'd have gladly seen you." Dan told her.

"I know. I didn't really want the station to see me though. I shouldn't be here. I'm sorry." Katherine apologised.

"It's not a problem." Dan lied. It certainly would be if Superintendent Stone got wind of it. "So what's wrong? Apart from me doing your head in this afternoon."

"That's just what's wrong. Can you tell me what you've found to dig it all back up again?"

"Katherine, I'm sorry. I can't." Dan said sincerely. "It seems unfair, I know. I stress you out by bringing it all back up but I don't tell you why I'm doing it. I really am sorry."

"I understand." Katherine nodded.

"I hope you do. I'm not in the habit of upsetting people, then leaving them bewildered." Dan sighed heavily.

"You don't have to explain. I understand the confidentiality stuff. I'm not stupid. I trust you, for some reason. Maybe with you not being involved in my case. Shit knows I have enough in my arsenal to never trust a copper ever again." Katherine frowned at the floor. "You said you didn't think I killed Andy. I believe you."

"But you want me to leave it at that. Right? You made it pretty clear you wanted nothing to do with it again." Dan could hardly blame her for that.

"I don't think I could cope with re-living it. The whole investigation was a living nightmare for me and I don't know how I survived it. I don't think I'd be able to handle it again." Katherine said sadly.

"And the other person in the house? I suppose you have to be supportive of them too if they're sick." Dan fished.

"Yes." Katherine answered simply. "The person in the house is of no concern to anyone apart from me. I said I trusted you, so you can trust me on that one."

"I'm sorry. You told me before it was none of my business. I'm a copper! I'm nosey by definition." Dan said and made Katherine smile. "So what do you want me to do, Katherine?"

"I don't know really." Katherine shook her head. "Keep the mob off my back, I suppose. Coppers work in packs and I don't want the aggravation. I don't want them hanging around my home, or me. I just want privacy, Dan. I think I'm entitled to it."

"So do I. As for the cop mob? Well there's only me. My colleagues are all doing other things and my DI is away just now." Dan explained.

"I knew you were a nice man." Katherine smiled. "So Johnny Kennedy's away, is he? Holiday? Hopefully he'll stay on holiday."

"Oh no. Katherine, Kennedy isn't my DI. He's dead Katherine. He'd actually retired not long after your trial." Dan said tactfully.

"Poor old Johnny." Katherine sighed wearily. "God knows why I feel sympathy for the bastard, but I do. What about Stone? Please say they've pensioned him off."

"Harry Stone?" Dan laughed. "He's the Superintendent."

"Oh you jest!" Katherine pulled a face. "Bloody Tick and Tock, those two. They did more fighting between themselves than they did fighting the villains. Yes, I can well imagine Stone getting to the top and stabbing everyone in the back to get there, Kennedy included."

"I take it you've had a few dealings with them." Dan commented.

"None of them nice. Kennedy used to tell me that every second man on the street was a copper, and they were all out for me. Shit, I was terrified. They even hauled in a sixty year old librarian called Doug Harrington because they mistakenly thought he was related to me. What's that all about? Poor old sod. Kennedy wiggled out big style when he found out I'd no relatives." Katherine smiled at Dan's disgusted face. "You'd never have made a copper ten years ago, DS Buckley."

"I'm beginning to agree with you. I know you're trying to make light of it, but I can see it still haunts you." Dan said unhappily.

"When most people lose a loved one they get counselling. I got banged up for eight years with every prison officer in the place trying to get me beat up. I couldn't go to his funeral and I couldn't even grieve. I lost everything, including my liberty. Yes it haunts me." Katherine said miserably and hung her head.

"It should never have happened." Dan said gently and put his hands on Katherine's arms. "Katherine, you should never have been convicted and I'm completely convinced of that. I have to try and rectify that, can't you see? I'm not talking about my job as a police officer. Someone out there took Andy from you and from the police force and I don't want him out there any longer. It's time it was put right, Katherine." Dan said and a big tear splashed onto Katherine's boots. "Don't cry. I'll get you more tea."

"I'm sorry. Hell I'm such a bloody big drip. I didn't come here to cry and blubber all over the place. Believe it or not, I'm not the blubbery type." Katherine snivelled.

"Blubber all you like. I don't mind." Dan knelt in front of Katherine and handed her a tissue.

"Thanks." She gave him a watery smile. "Can you look into it all without involving

me?"

"The last thing I want is to persecute you. I'd never do that." Dan replied and they looked at each other for a fraction longer than was necessary.

"I ... I better go." Katherine recovered first. Dan grimaced and stood up, Katherine doing likewise.

"Katherine? Well ... you're OK." Dan said awkwardly.

"You're not too bad yourself." Katherine laughed and let herself out. Dan closed the door, let out a long sigh, and turned off the light.

The next morning found Dan feeling agitated. He hadn't slept much and Katherine's surprise visit had thrown him off balance. Added to that was the blasted case that seemed to be everywhere and nowhere. He picked up a message in his office to call Hugh Simons. Dan needed to know an absolute cause of death and he sincerely hoped that he could compile enough sense on paper to have this case reopened properly. It would cause a lot of upset and painful memories for Katherine, but despite that, it could clear her name completely. Surely all wrongly convicted people would want that? So why was Katherine so reluctant? It was pretty obvious really. She was protecting the sick person she shared a home with. He decided to go and see Hugh in person and found him tidying away his medical equipment. These items always looked disturbingly barbaric to Dan. Hugh stopped and gave Dan a long, hard look that set Dan's stomach off in knots.

"You can certainly pick them Dan." Hugh said at last.

"Don't I know it." Dan agreed. "What have you got for me?"

"That massive injury to his head didn't splinter too deeply into his brain." Hugh pointed to the wound on a photograph. "Oh it could have killed him, that's quite possible, but he wouldn't have just dropped dead immediately."

"Could he have bled to death because of it? God knows there was enough of the stuff."

"Yes. Even if he didn't lose consciousness with the bash on the head, he could have bled out, lost consciousness, then died." Hugh nodded. "Maybe."

"Maybe?" Don tried not to squeal.

"See this?" Hugh showed Dan a magnification of the neck area that Dan had tried to see in the vaults. "It says in the footnotes that those contusions were the result of a struggle. Possible I suppose but not really likely. The marks are on both sides. See?"

They're almost symmetrical. You don't get symmetry in a struggle."

"So what are you saying?" Dan asked cautiously.

"I'm saying that it's possible that someone had hold of him around the neck." Hugh shrugged.

"Enough to strangle him?"

"Possible but the hyoid bone was intact. That's in the report too."

"Hugh, is that bone always broken during strangulation? Come on, you know what I'm getting at." Dan said impatiently.

"It's usually broken but not always. I'm not here to tell you what you want to hear, Dan."

"So he *could* have been strangled. Yes? He could have been clubbed on the head, went down, then strangled." Dan nodded.

"I've no way of knowing the order of things. If I'd done the original reports, I definitely wouldn't have relegated those throat injuries." Hugh skirted.

"So you wouldn't have ruled out strangulation as the cause of death?" Dan stressed.

"Not absolutely, no."

"Shit." Dan sat down on Hugh's desk.

"Now you're sitting down, I'll tell you the rest." Hugh pulled out a sheet of paper. "It was quite easy to get DNA from Storey and Harrington. Storey's blood was everywhere and Harrington gave samples when asked. That got me thinking. I'm not sure why they'd want a sample from Harrington. Storey had obligingly just taken a shower before he was killed, and Harrington was at work. A clean slate completely. The only reason they'd need Harrington's sample was to check it against DNA found on his body that wasn't his so I checked it out. Harrington had Storey's blood, his DNA, all over her but there was none of hers on him, as written in the final report." Hugh frowned at the papers.

"So they wanted Katherine's to compare to ... what, exactly?" Dan tried to keep up.

"Probably to the small patch of dried saliva found by Andy's left ear, as mentioned in the original report. It never was identified and seems to have been shuffled to the bottom of the stack." Hugh shook his head.

"What?" Dan exclaimed in shock. "Are you serious? They disregarded a whole sample just because it wasn't Katherine's?"

"You have to remember the technology back then Dan. In those days you needed quite a large sample for an effective test. These days we only need a microscopic one. Andy Storey had bled his sample, all over his girlfriend Katherine Harrington."

"Is that saliva sample still here?" Dan asked hopefully.

"What's left of it, yes. I know where you're going with this Dan, and I can't without authorisation from god upstairs." Hugh pointed to the ceiling, indicating the Superintendent.

"I can't see that he has a choice." Dan said flatly. "You'd have to be blind not to see all this, Hugh. It's looking alot like Katherine Harrington's done eight years for someone else's crime. We got the wrong person."

"And Super Stone is going to be delighted about that one." Hugh said grimly. "You get the authorisation and I'll try and test what's left of that sample. I'll tell you now though, it's ten years old and it's already been subjected to crude testing."

"I understand. As long as it's not Katherine's or Andy's would be a plus. An identification would be better." Dan stood up and rubbed his eyes. "I'm not looking forward to Stone."

"I wouldn't be either. Good luck on that one."

Superintendent Stone's face was like a granite slab. To say he wasn't happy would have been the understatement of the year.

"You do realise we can't bring Cliff Davies in for this. He'll tie us in knots himself, let alone his solicitor. Circumstantial, Huxley, and that's not enough."

"Reopening the case would be a start sir and I think I have enough for that. It's Buckley, sir."

"You reopen it quietly. Do you understand? You have notions and theories, nothing more. If this goes public and it goes titsup there'll be all hell to pay and I'll put you right in the firing line. You'll also report to me with any progress made. Is that clear?" The Superintendent leant forward.

"Yes sir. Thank you." Dan hurried out of the office incase the Super changed his mind. If he didn't come up with something soon, the whole thing would be buried again. Quietly, he'd said. Dan took that to mean not involving any other officers to minimise any damage if it all went to hell. Re opening old cases was always an

awkward one, more so if the case had previously reached a conclusion. This one had been concluded with a jail sentence.

Dan collected the list of prospective house buyers of ten years ago, then as an afterthought, included pictures of Cliff Davies and Greg Peters.

Price and King Estate Agents had been there as long as Dan could remember, and a good while longer. Tracy Keen was the Agent who's conducted the viewings for Andy and Katherine's house and that's who Dan asked for, after introducing himself.

"Sorry sir, I don't know anyone of that name." The young man at the desk told him.

"It was ten years ago. Is there anyone here who could help me?"

"Ten years." The man said slowly. "I was only twelve."

"Excuse me? Can I help you?" A smartly dressed lady was standing by an open door.

"DS Dan Buckley. I'm looking for someone who worked here ten years ago." Dan spoke to the redhead.

"Yes I heard. What name did you say?" She asked.

"Tracy Keen."

"Come through to the office please. Robin, call through when Mr and Mrs Fellows get here please." She said and the young man nodded.

"I hope I'm not interrupting you too much." Dan said, taking a seat in a comfortable chair.

"I'm free until my next clients get here. Tracy Keen?"

"Yes. She worked here ten years ago and dealt with a house on ..."

"Redtree Road." She exhaled loudly. "Who could forget that? I'm Tracy Keen, or at least I was ten years ago." She tapped a name plate on her desk. Mrs Tracy Hall Manager. "It has to be to do with that. I can't think of any other reason the police would be asking for me at work, again."

"We were given a list of all the prospective buyers who'd visited the house prior to the incident that took place there." Dan put the list on the table.

"For what use it was. It was the girlfriend, wasn't it? I could hardly believe that! I'd spoken to her dozens of times, him too." Tracy shook her head.

"Does the name Clifford Davies mean anything to you?" Dan asked.

"Not a thing. Is he on the list? I can't remember, not after ten years." Tracy looked at the list.

"No he isn't. What about Gregory Peters?"

"Never heard of him." Tracy said.

"These two?" Dan put the photographs on the desk and Tracy took a sharp intake of breath. "You recognise these two?" Dan said in surprise.

"Not that one, no." She pushed away Cliff's picture.

"So you recognise this man here?" Dan pointed to the picture of Greg Peters.

"This is difficult." Tracy sighed wearily. "But it was ten years ago, I suppose. That's Robert Taylor. He's on that list somewhere, or at least he should be." Dan traced down the list and found Taylor, Robert, just as Tracy had said.

"You seem pretty sure, Mrs Hall. It was ten years ago, as you said." Dan said carefully.

"I'm sure because ... because ... we had a special interest in each other." Tracy said, then grimaced. "He came to view the house and we just seemed to click. I went out with him a few times. Oh it was nothing serious, or long lasting. He told me he was moving away to work, but it didn't matter. It was just a few dates and a bit of fun."

"Did you tell the police this at the time?" Dan collected the photographs and the list.

"No and I realise now how stupid that was. Seeing Robert was pretty stupid too, in retrospect. I was a twenty year old saleswoman and it was my first viewing. I'd have lost my job if I'd spoke up." Tracy said heavily and looked at the desk.

"Well it probably didn't seem relevant at the time." Dan reassured her.

"I was never asked so I didn't volunteer. I was asked to draw up the list and that was it. Has Robert done something wrong?" Tracy asked.

"He may have, yes. His real name was Greg Peters for a start, not Robert Taylor. I mentioned him before I showed you the pictures." Dan explained.

"What?" Tracy exclaimed. "Why would he lie like that?"

"He needed to be in your good books, Mrs Hall. He needed to know he could have viewings of the house on demand. It's my guess he's on a few other lists too, possibly under different names." Dan was quite astonished at the way this latest twist was heading. "Mrs Hall, I think he was casing the house prior to a burglary."

"Oh my God!" Tracy said in shock. "And I helped him? Was I an accomplice or something? Oh God!"

"You weren't anything of the sort, Mrs Hall. You were doing your job. He took you in and he was very, very good at it." Dan said grimly. "Thanks for helping me. Put it out of your mind and don't let it worry you."

"I'll do my best." Tracy said shakily. "You keep referring to him in the past tense. Is he dead?"

"Yes. He was hit by a car."

"Oh Lord. Look, I'm here until six every evening except Sundays." Tracy gave Dan a business card. "Call me here if I can help you in any way." Dan thanked her and left the building.

# Chapter 5

Dan now had Greg Peters at the crime scene just before the murder. He needed him there at the time of it, Cliff Davies there with him. These two had worked together for many years, and obviously were ten years ago. Peters used false names to get on viewing lists to check out properties and size them up, then Peters and Davies returned later to burgle them. Andy wasn't supposed to be there. He'd swapped shifts. What if he'd surprised Peters and Davies? He cursed Greg Peters again for dying, then realised where his wanderings had taken him. He'd taken the outskirts roads to avoid the traffic and was now driving along Fallows Avenue. As he drove past the home of Katherine Harrington he saw her and the nurse escorting a very frail and sick looking woman into a car. The woman was late middle aged and dressed in pink pyjamas and dressing gown. Dan slowed down without really thinking and even noticed a green tubed oxygen mask in the sick woman's hand. When he looked away from the woman, he saw Katherine and she was glaring daggers at him. She pointed at him as a warning not to speed off, then finished helping the nurse with the invalid. Dan watched the nurse's car drive off and Katherine planted her hands on her hips and glowered at him until he got out of the car.

"When I said privacy, that included you." She snapped.

"I was on my way to the station, not to bother you." Dan explained.

"Bollocks. You couldn't have drove past at a more interesting time either, could you?" Katherine indicated the now gone nurse's car.

"How could I have possibly planned that? I've been in town and now I'm going to the station. It's not the first time I've used this route." Dan sighed heavily. "You've obviously got your work cut out just now. I'll be going."

"You're a pain in the bloody arse." Katherine snapped and sat on the wall.

"I've been called worse." Dan shrugged his shoulders.

"I thought you were snooping. You saw how sick she was. Any more stress will kill her." Katherine said sadly.

"I'm sorry. Yes she did look sick."

"I don't want her upset in any way. I want her away from just about everything, even a nice man like you." Katherine smiled her apology.

"My mother cared for my father for three years after he suffered a stroke. She found it really difficult and she had me and four daughters to muck in." Dan told her.

"I'm sorry to hear that. Is he still here?"

"No he died eight years ago. Don't take on too much, Katherine. Let people help you. I don't mean doctors and nurses, I mean friends."

"Friends? What are those?" Katherine rolled her eyes. "I better get a move on. I've a few things to do before visiting time."

"Take care." Dan watched her go up the path and into the house, before returning to his car.

Dan got straight on the phone to Hugh when he got to the station.

"Anything on that sample?"

"I did warn you that it was degraded. I only have a partial profile. It isn't Andy's and it isn't Katherine's. It would be pretty hopeless trawling the computers because it's only a partial profile." Hugh told him.

"Greg Peters and Cliff Davies have both been banged up. Peters was into drugs later on in his life so hopefully there'll be a DNA profile for him. Davies, I'm not too sure about. Could you run it against those two?" Dan asked.

"I'll see what I can do." Hugh said. "Are you getting anywhere with it?"

"Yes but I don't know where. Cheers Hugh." Dan hung up and turned round to see the Super standing in the doorway looking straight at him.

"DNA profiling? We're a local cop shop, Henley, not bloody CSI Miami."

"We really do need this cleared up sir. It proves that someone else was there between Andy getting out of the bath and his death." Dan stated the obvious.

"Look lad, this sample was a saliva sample found by Storey's left earlobe. Storey and Harrington were going through a split and Storey was found dressed only in his boxer shorts. Given the location, and the fact that saliva comes from the mouth, it's not hard to work out that another lover was on the scene." Stone explained patiently.

"Another lover? I saw nothing of that in the reports." Dan could hardly believe his ears.

"It fell flat. Bear in mind the limited technology. We did manage to find a woman

who Storey 'socialised' with on a very regular basis after a lot of legwork and sifting through his associates. As it happened, the woman had an unshakable alibi. She was at work with twenty other people to verify it." Stone shrugged his huge shoulders. "Added to that, she denied everything quite forcefully. Married woman and all, you know?"

"Could we get a sample from her now? We have the means to test it even against a partial profile." Dan was, again, astonished. Every revelation regarding this case astonished him.

"Not possible. I knew you'd ask so I took it upon myself to discover her whereabouts. She's been in Canada for six years. If Andy Storey had showered, rather than bathed, that sample wouldn't have been there at all. It was a remnant of a meeting with his married girlfriend, Bolton." Stone stated. Dan resisted the urge to scream 'Bollocks!' in the Super's face.

"So are you telling me not to run this sample against Peters and Davies?" He succeeded in keeping his temper in check.

"I can't really see either of those two characters slobbering over Storey in such a fashion. Can you?" Stone said shortly.

"Sir I have a witness who puts Peters at the murder scene! I have to check that sample against those two." Dan said desperately.

"Why are you hell bent on resurrecting all this?" Stone said darkly. "It's done with. Charged, convicted, *and* released. I'll tell you something for nothing, it would be a very bad move to cause all this upheaval to discredit me."

"W ... what?" Dan stammered in disbelief. "Discredit you?"

"I worked on the damned case and you know I did!" Stone barked. "Johnny Kennedy and myself had enough evidence to put the Harrington girl away five times over."

"With respect sir, the science we have now would dispute that. It's even in her files that she should be released from prison with a good behaviour stamp before a half decent solicitor told her to appeal against the conviction." Dan said angrily. It was clear that the Super was warning him off and even threatening him. Dan didn't like being threatened one little bit. "Sir I'm not trying to discredit anyone. That's just ridiculous. I'm a detective with up to date facilities at my disposal, something you didn't have. I have good reasons to believe that Andy Storey's killer has been out there free for ten years."

"Coppers like myself and Kennedy don't get it wrong, son." Stone said ominously.

"Greg Peters thought differently, sir and he wanted to tell DI Kennedy just that." Dan argued.

"And that's the level of what you've got. One villain trying to get another villain in the shit." Stone looked evenly at Dan. "Davies gave evidence against Peters on a burglary charge and I don't think Peters was best pleased. You with me? It didn't matter a buggler that he dropped himself in it too, he was dying. All that mattered was that he fingered Davies for a big crime and you don't get much bigger than that one was. Cop killer cases are always juicy. What else do you have? Oh yes, the character assassination of Davies by his successful brother. That means jack shit and you know it. He nicked the kids' christmas presents for shit's sake! Of course he's going to call him a bastard! Speaking of characters, next we have Irene Peters and isn't she a gem? She'd say just about anything to trash Peters and not herself. She was involved in some way, with many of his earlier scams but he always took the can for it. Lovely Irene gladly let him. These are bitter people slagging off thieves and arseholes, not slagging off murderers."

"I also have Martin Benson, sir." Dan said and wished he hadn't.

"I'm pleased you brought that up." Stone glared holes through Dan. "Martin Benson, armed robber, up for parole. You offering to put a good word in for him didn't influence him at all I suppose."

"That's not how it went." Dan said defensively.

"I don't care what your interpretation of it is! Benson reckons you and him have a deal. Don't even consider using this information or I'll haul your skinny arse over every hot coal in the cosmos!" Stone shouted.

"The strangulation ..."

"I said don't. I do not need complications with the parole board or with the prison. Don't make me suspend you Baxter." Stone growled.

"The estate agent." Dan changed tack. "She puts Peters at the crime scene."

"At the worst, he conned her to get in the house to case it. As far as we can tell, no follow-up burglary ever happened. You need to wrap this up and return it to the vaults where it belongs. Tie up your loose ends, Butler. Everything you have is useless." Stone left the office and didn't even bother to close the door. Dan was furious. Stone and Kennedy had bulldozed this case to get a quick result. It reeked from here to heaven. He snatched the ringing phone from the hook.

"Yes?"

"Whoa! A tad tectcy?" It was Hugh.

"Sorry Hugh, I was just a bit preoccupied." Dan apologised.

"No worries. Well Peters' DNA profile is on record. The drugs, as you said. Davies' isn't though."

"Bugger. Well at least we have one to work on." Dan swore.

"Tomorrow OK? Some of us do have pregnant fiancées to go home to." Hugh laughed.

"Now you're just gloating. Tomorrow's fine Hugh, thanks. Sorry for biting your head off."

"Oh I'm used to it." Hugh hung up.

Dan decided to take a detour on his way home, and visit Cliff Davies' bedsit. This time he was in it but kept Dan outside on the step.

"What now?" Cliff grumbled.

"The burglary scam you had going with Greg Peters." Dan said.

"I told you, I hadn't seen him for years."

"But when you were seeing him you had quite a system going on, didn't you? Greg cases houses on the market by getting himself on viewing lists then the two of you go back and hit the place. Ring any bells?" Dan said nastily.

"Look, I was never a big part of that." Cliff ran his fingers through his greasy hair. "Greg was always the brains, you know that. I did as I was told and stood where I was told and that was usually outside watching for coppers."

"Lookout? Oh get real Cliff!" Dan heaved.

"It's true! Occasionally I'd drive the van but that was usually Greg too." Cliff objected.

"So you never went into any of the houses? You just left it all to Greg even though it would have been faster with two? Bullshit!" Dan snarled.

"Faster and messier. I was never in that house!" Cliff shouted.

"Which house?" Dan pounced straight away. "I didn't mention one in particular."

Which house, Cliff?"

"Which one do you think?" Cliff was seriously rattled. "You were on about it last time you spoke to me! I wasn't in there. OK?"

"But Cliff was? Did Andy Storey interrupt him?" Dan badgered.

"You're trying to trip me up." Cliff's eyes were darting in all directions. "We never went near the place. Never got chance, did we? Next we heard, the bloke was dead."

"So the microscopic DNA sample that was overlooked the first time but now we're testing will be of no concern to you, will it? Sleep tight." Dan stared Cliff down then marched back to his car.

Dan actually found himself peeping round his curtains looking for convicted pixies in the street. The street remained deserted. He told himself to belt up and get real. She'd been pretty annoyed with him that afternoon. He was in the kitchen, warming up tinned beans, when the phone rang.

"Dan Buckley."

"It's Ken Watson at the station here. I'm sorry to bother you at home."

"It's fine. What can I do you for?" Dan licked a splatter of sauce from his finger.

"It's Katherine Harrington. She's here with Tessa." Ken said and Dan's stomach lurched.

"What's happened? Is she OK?"

"Someone tried to mug her again. She doesn't have much luck with that, does she?"

"Again? When and where?" Dan shook his head. No, she didn't have much luck with that.

"We don't know who but it was in the hospice carpark. Some bloke knocked her flying and tried to get her car keys off her. She dragged the keys down his face then hoofed him in the bollocks. There was a night porter and two nurses saw the whole thing. It was over in a few seconds. One of the nurses called us but he was well away by the time I got there. She really did not want to come back here with me for the paperwork. The first thing she asked was if you were in. I told her you weren't and she said I hadn't to tell you." Ken explained.

"So you did. Good man." Dan smiled.

"I probably wouldn't have if she hadn't made the point. The doctor at the hospice and our duty doctor here says she's unhurt, just shaken. Should I let her go? She's a bit of a sight with the blood." Ken said.

"Blood?" Dan's head began reeling.

"From where she got the bloke with the keys. I've notified hospitals incase he goes anywhere for stitches." Ken informed Dan. The last time Katherine had been covered in blood she'd been jailed because of its forensic value. Forensics. DNA. Dan had just mentioned DNA to Cliff Davies. How spooked had he actually got?

"Ken did she give a description of him?"

"Such that it was. Five nine-ish, dark clothing and the bugger wore a ski mask. She thought his eyes were dark but the carpark's lights are those pissing sodium jobs. Not much use really." Ken conceded.

"OK Ken keep her there and keep her away from other people. I want a sample of the blood she's has on her." Dan instructed.

"You do? For a failed bag snatch?" Ken asked warily.

"I'll handle it, Ken. Don't worry. See you soon." Dan hung up, switched off the stove and ran out of the house. He was going to have to push Hugh's loyalty here. There was no way he'd get an endorsement to test that blood under these circumstances. The Super most definitely wouldn't support a gut feeling.

# Chapter 6

"Oh bloody great!" Katherine shouted when Dan walked into the interview room with Ken. "Which part of 'don't tell him' was confusing you?" She glared at Ken who just shrugged his shoulders. Dan looked at the sizeable bloodstain on the inside sleeve of her denim jacket. "Yes I'm a mess." Katherine snapped.

"Katherine can we keep that jacket?" Dan asked.

"Do you need to?" Katherine asked in surprise.

"It has your attacker's blood on it." Dan pointed out.

"Well yes. Forensics for a failed mugging?" Katherine shrugged out of her jacket. "OK. You're the copper." She handed the jacket to Dan who dropped it into a plastic bag. Katherine's breath caught in her throat and she just stared at the bag and swallowed hard. Dan noticed.

"Any tea in this place Ken?"

"I could do with one too." Ken wandered off.

"Katherine? Are you OK?" Dan asked carefully.

"I remember what happened last time my clothes were put in bags." She looked at Dan.

"I thought that's what was up. I'm sorry. That wasn't very tactful of me." Dan apologised.

"You're going to do me for assault or something, aren't you?" Katherine looked miserable and exhausted.

"Christ no." Dan shook his head. "The whole thing was witnessed by two members of staff. Can you remember anything about him?"

"Not alot, I'm afraid. He had one of those ski masks on. He was wearing a hoodie but that was dark coloured and plain. I think he had jeans on. It's not very well lit in the carpark. I said he was around Watson's height and he told me he was five feet nine. I'm only five feet so everyone looks tall to me." Katherine said wearily. Ken came back with the tea and Dan excused himself. He took the bagged jacket to Hugh's

office and put it in his personal fridge, next to his diet coke. He also left a note for Hugh, emphasising that none of this was endorsed from above and if he wasn't comfortable, to return the jacket to Dan. He asked Hugh to check the blood on the jacket with the partial sample. The door was ajar when he returned to the interview room and Dan stopped and frowned when he heard his name mentioned.

"Oh I didn't mean as a copper!" Tessa tutted. "I meant as a man! What do you think of Dan as a bloke?" Dan blinked in surprise. What was all this about?

"I hadn't noticed." Katherine replied.

"Rubbish. You're smirking." Tessa preached. "I think he likes you, you know. Ken said he was fussing like an old hen on the phone and he did come here at ten at night."

"Dedicated officer." Katherine said.

"And single, and fit." Tessa added and Dan almost collapsed. Time for an entrance before his face got too red to ever recover.

"Right! That's that sorted." He said brightly. "Tessa you look like a denture advert. Go do some filing or something." Tessa snorted a laugh and left the interview room.

"Come on, I'll drive you home. Do you want me to send for your car, or will it be OK in the carpark for the night?"

"It'll be fine where it is. Thanks." Katherine stood up and went for the jacket she didn't have.

"It's a bit nippy out there. Here." Dan gave her his own leather blazer and it came down to her knees and flopped over her hands. Tessa crinkled her nose and smiled soppily as they walked by. Dan pretended he hadn't seen her.

"Well this is a crappy end to a crappy day." Katherine sighed heavily as Dan pulled up outside of her house. "I'm probably not allowed to ask you in, am I?"

"Probably not, no, which is a shame." Dan shrugged.

"You'd have accepted?" Katherine smiled in amusement.

"Under different circumstances, yes. I do enough to piss off the Super without adding to it." Dan smiled. Katherine took off Dan's jacket and reached over to put it on the back seat, thus bringing herself flinchingly close to Dan's face. "I'll let you know if I get anything from this latest stuff." He coughed and moved sideways.

"You'll be sick of the sight of me." Katherine opened the car door.

"Oh I don't think so. Go get some sleep." Dan waited until she'd let herself in through the front door, then drove home.

Dan saw Superintendent Stone through the station window, which wasn't a good sign, so he drove round the block a few times to avoid bumping into him.

"Dan!" Tessa hijacked him as he tried to dart up the stairs. "I've been talking to Stone."

"I'll call him later." Dan said quickly.

"No listen. He was asking me how many times you'd visited Katherine Harrington. He already knew about the incident last night from the book. I think he meant visits in your own time." Tessa explained.

"Oh? What did you tell him?" Dan asked in confusion.

"I told him I didn't know. CID records are nothing to do with us and I'm not your mother. I just thought you should know he was asking." Tessa nodded.

"Well whatever he wants to know, I'm sure I'll find out eventually. Thanks Tessa." Dan went to his office and found a note on his desk. He turned round and walked straight back out again.

"Was this just a shot in the dark?" Hugh asked, pointing to a computer printout that meant very little to Dan.

"I didn't expect it done this quickly. I owe you one Hugh." Dan looked at the printout anyway, then shrugged his shoulders.

"Amanda has morning sickness at night. She fell asleep at five and I was wide awake." Hugh grumbled. "Anyway, I do have something for you but I'm not sure how much real use it will be. There's no way I can say your sample matches my sample so there's no way I can say if they're from the same person."

"But?" Dan asked eagerly.

"Around fifty per cent match and that's being generous." Hugh said and Dan didn't know if to be astonished or delighted. "That still leaves the other fifty per cent, Dan. I very much doubt it's conclusive enough for the CPS."

"Conclusive enough for now." Dan stated.

"So who's is it? Cliff Davies'?"

"I'd say so, yes. Obviously my sample can't have come from Greg Peters and he was the only other one in the frame for your sample from Andy's earlobe."

"Dan be careful." Hugh said. "Fifty percent is bugger all in reality." Dan thanked him and left the labs.

Dan's impulse was to go and lift Cliff Davies and question him for a few hours in the interview room with the dodgy radiator that didn't switch off. Common sense kicked in, however. If Davies wriggled free then Dan would have a hard time hauling him in again. He decided to go at the case files and rubbish every single word in them.

Katherine had been to work that day, but Andy had the day off due to the last minute shift swap. According to the statements, she left Andy sleeping at eight in the morning. It had been confirmed by co-workers that Katherine did attend work that day. Katherine said that on her way home from work, she stopped at a garage convenience store for milk, and this had also been confirmed. She arrived home at six and found Andy's body. Her automatic reaction had been to run to him and hold him. Dan wondered, for the millionth time, how they'd got a conviction out of this. Even Katherine's fingerprints on the murder weapon were nothing abnormal. It was a meat tenderiser and it was her own kitchen. The emergency call had been made at six minutes past six. She'd have to have been driving at a hell of a speed to get home sooner from the garage but it was possible. Kennedy had tested it himself and stated that Katherine arrived home at around quarter to six. He'd gone on to say that it was easily possible to batter someone's skull to bits in fifteen minutes. Katherine had actually mentioned a witness who saw her getting home at six, but that had been passed off as a desperation plea on her part seeing as no one had ever been traced. Dan stopped to digest this. At that time of year it would just be starting to get dark and the house was a semi on quite a busy street. It would have been light enough to see any activity yet there were no statements from neighbours at all, even to say they'd seen nothing. He really needed to see Katherine about this but Dan knew she'd react badly to his intrusion. The phone rang loudly and Dan jumped a foot in the air.

"Dan it's Hugh. Stone's on the warpath."

"Oh shit. Are you in trouble? I'll ..."

"No I'm fine. I can bullshit with honours. He sounded like he was going to tell you to drop it, Dan. Just go and hide for shit's sake."

"Thanks for the heads up. I owe you again." Dan hung up, shoved the files back in the box, and ran for the fire escape by the DI's office.

Katherine was just leaving the house when Dan jumped out of the car.

"Katherine! Katherine I have to talk ..."

"Not now Dan, it'll have to wait." Katherine was hurrying down the path.

"It can't wait. On the night Andy died, did anyone see you arrive home?" Dan asked quickly. Katherine stopped dead and looked at him. "I'm sorry. I know I said I wasn't going to bother you."

"So why are you? I have to go." She tried to sidestep him.

"Did anyone see you? Neighbour? Passerby? Anyone at all? Katherine!" Dan said desperately.

"Yes!" Katherine yelled. "A bloke asked me for a light. I smoked back then. They never did find him. Surprise, surprise. Get out of my way."

"Can you describe him? Which way was he going? Was it a neighbour?" Dan kept on.

"No! Just ... piss off Dan. Just leave it the hell alone for christ sake." She pushed Dan out of the way.

"They're going to order me to drop it, Katherine." Dan said and Katherine turned round. "Stone, when he catches up with me. Whoever killed Andy will still be out there and you'll still have a murder conviction."

"Dan I'm sorry." Katherine said desperately. "I can't help you Dan, I'm sorry. I have to look out for what I have now." She set off quickly down the street towards the bus stop.

Dan sat in the office and waited for the explosion.

"What's this shit?" Stone flung the lab report at him from the door. "Who the hell are you to order lab work for a failed bag snatch?"

"That's not why I asked for it, sir. It partially matches the sample found on Andy. Unless this mysterious lover flew over and mugged Katherine last night, it isn't from her." Dan said weakly.

"Partial!" Stone bellowed. "Fifty per cent! It means absolutely dick all! Now you listen to me." He snarled in Dan's face. "I rubbished what you had and you've got nothing since. You tried to connect a mugging with a ten year old murder! Are you insane? Not only that, you had absolutely no basis at all for doing so!" Stone was now purple.

"Sir there was a witness who saw Katherine arriving home that night." Dan was really pushing his luck here.

"Harrington is the only one who mentioned that and no one was found. She made it up, you fool!" Stone roared.

"Sir just a few more days ..."

"God you're a persistent little bastard. You will drop it and you will drop it right now! Think yourself lucky ..." Stone spun round when there was a tap on the door. It was Ken Watson.

"Sorry to interrupt sir. Miss Harrington is downstairs and she says it's urgent." There was an age long silence and Dan willed the Super not to dismiss this.

"I'll sit in, if you don't mind, Foxton. Actually I couldn't give a rat's arse if you mind or not. I'm staying. I'll decide what's urgent and what's not." Stone marched out of the office and Dan deflated in relief and followed him.

It was obvious that Katherine was extremely upset and her eyes were red from crying. She stood up when Dan and the Super walked into the room, then took a tiny step backwards when she recognised Stone.

"Katherine this is Superintendent Stone. He'd like to hear what you have to say too." Dan said quickly, before the Super could open his mouth.

"I'd rather he wasn't here." Katherine's voice trembled.

"I'm sure you would." Stone sat down. "I've given DS Bentley the benefit of the doubt here. Make it worth his while."

"Mary Storey died thirty minutes ago at the hospice." Katherine's lip quivered.

"I'm sorry Katherine." Dan sat on the edge of the desk. "Storey?"

"Andy's mother." Katherine said and Dan and Stone just looked at each other in shock. "She knew I didn't kill Andy. She knew we couldn't afford the house and that we were selling up. She was the only one who ever stuck by me and she was never questioned, and never listened to. She suffered a breakdown and she was diagnosed with cancer a month after I got convicted. The stress nearly killed her and I couldn't do a single thing to help her. She had to fight that on her own and she did. She went into remission after two years but it came back. She was told three years ago that it was inoperable yet she was still there for me a year later when I got out. I had no one except her and she was dying. All I had was what she gave me. She was everything to me after Andy died and now she's gone too." Katherine's tears streamed down her

face. "Nothing can harm her now. Digging up Andy's death would have killed her sooner, and torturously. That doesn't apply now. The man who saw me in the street that evening was quite average looking except for his tattoo."

"You got a good look at this tattoo?" Dan's heart was thumping in his chest.

"I lit his cigarette for him and it was on his wrist. I commented on how much it must have hurt. It was a spider's web with a heart in the middle of it." Katherine hung her head. Dan wrote on a scrap of paper 'Prison tattoo. Davies has one' and slid it over the desk for the Super to see.

"Katherine that's fantastic. I know it's been a long time but can you remember anything about his appearance? Long hair, short hair, fat, thin?"

"He looked like a skinny version of that American wrestler. Him with the nose. Mary used to love the wrestling, she'd have known." Katherine tried a watery smile.

"I'm none the wiser but I'm sure someone will know. Could you pick him out of a line up?"

"I'm not sure. It was ten years ago. You know who it is? After ten years?" Katherine asked in shock.

"That's what the line up is for. With the Super's permission, I can sort the shots out on the computer." Dan looked at Stone's expressionless face.

"A word please Barker." Stone stood up and left the room, Dan following. "OK set this out very clearly for me. Anything that even whiffs of guesswork and that's your lot."

"Davies was the lookout in the setup with Peters. This will not only corroborate Katherine's arrival time, it'll also put Davies right outside the house at the time of Andy's death. If he was the lookout then Peters was still inside, or had just left. I know the partial sample isn't much sir, but it is when it's put in with the rest of it, especially if Davies also has a fresh facial wound from the mugging." Dan explained.

"We have to have him inside the house for that sample, not outside of it." Stone reminded him.

"And I'm pretty sure he was. Aren't you? Also, Davies doesn't know how much Peters told me." Dan said and watched the Super think about this.

"Once we lift him, we can't hold him forever. See what he has to say for himself." Stone nodded then strode off up the corridor.

"Right you bastard." Dan growled. "Tessa!" He spied her at the end of the corridor. "Tessa can I borrow you for a minute? Katherine's in there and I need someone to stay with her. Cheers!" He ran up the stairs to compile his line up.

Katherine looked at the digital line up and Dan could have cried in relief when she picked out Davies, first time, and with no hesitation at all.

"Are you sure?" Dan was obliged to ask.

"Yes I'm sure. Obviously he's older on there but it's him. I remembered the wrestler too. Hunter something or other." Katherine rubbed her temples. "Headache."

"I'm not surprised after the day you've had. Is there no one who can come and stay with you? Did Andy have any other family?" Dan asked.

"No. Just Mary. I'll be fine once I've confronted the house. Can I go?" Katherine looked exhausted.

"Look you can always phone me any time you like. I all but live here and here's my private number." Dan wrote it on a card. "I'll ask Tessa to take you home. I can't leave here just now."

"I'm OK to drive. I managed to drive here. Thanks Dan." Katherine went to the door. "When this is all over, can you explain it all to me fully? I really would like to know and now it can't upset Mary."

"You deserve to know." Dan said. Katherine nodded and left the station. Dan watched her through the window as she drove away.

# Chapter 7

Cliff Davies sat in the interview room with the inferno radiator with a solicitor who'd been appointed to him, and Ken Watson. He had a three inch cut down his cheek and an ugly, cobweb and heart tattoo on his wrist. Dan walked in, sat down, then took his time taking his notes out of his folders.

"How did you cut your face Cliff?" He asked while reading Cliff's home address.

"A shelf fell on me." Cliff replied.

"Where were you at nine o'clock last night?"

"At home putting up the shelf."

"So my officers will see this nice new shelf, will they? They're tossing your flat right now." Dan looked at Cliff.

"I know they are! That isn't right, pal! Mr. Fenton here is going to look ..."

"I'm sure he is." Dan interrupted.

"Are you going to get to the point, DI Buckley?" Mr. Fenton looked at his watch.

"Gladly. I think you tried to mug a young woman outside Springford Hospice last night Cliff." Dan said evenly.

"I was at home." Cliff said stubbornly.

"You tried to mug her, she dragged her keys through your ski mask and booted you in the balls." Dan went on.

"I was at home." Cliff repeated loudly.

"So the DNA from your home won't match the DNA from the blood on her jacket? Are you sure? Maybe my men will find the mask, hoodie and jeans you wore too. Come on Cliff." Dan pressed.

"And maybe they won't." Mr. Fenton decided to speak up. "Mr. Davies told you he was at home, and unless you can prove otherwise, I suggest you leave this line of questioning."

"OK." Dan shrugged. "How long have you had the tattoo?"

"Huh?" Cliff automatically looked at his wrist. "This one? I have a few."

"I thought they weren't allowed to put them there. Isn't it dangerous? I bet it hurt like hell."

"Borstal special. They put them where they like and now no one will cover it for me." Cliff explained.

"Is that what you told Katherine Harrington too? She lit your cigarette for you right outside her house, ten years ago. She remembers you, and the tattoo." Dan said quietly and Cliff's eyes and mouth opened in panic.

"I don't know what you're on about." He said quickly. "Ten years ago? Get real." He glanced at his solicitor who looked like he really didn't want to be there.

"She remembers it because it was the night her boyfriend was killed. You were right outside the house, Cliff. You were lookout for Greg Peters." Dan said.

"That was nothing to do with me!" Cliff yelled.

"How long were you in the house, Cliff?"

"I wasn't in the house." Cliff snapped.

"So you just stood outside while Peters battered Andy Storey to death? You didn't go and see what had gone wrong? You both expected the house to be empty. So Peters didn't let you know that it wasn't?" Dan leant forward and looked Cliff in the eyes.

"No! I mean ... I don't know! I was outside. OK?" Cliff ran his fingers through his greasy hair.

"You must have heard something, Cliff. Come on! Andy and Peters must have taken each other by surprise. Where were you standing?" Dan demanded.

"Outside. I just told you. I was outside watching the street." Cliff nodded furiously.

"So outside the front door. Yes?"

"Or just down the path a bit. Greg was in the house, not me." Cliff asserted.

"So you heard, or saw, Greg in the house?"

"He was in there, I'm telling you! I saw him through the window." Cliff told him.

"So what was he doing? Creeping about? Trashing the place? Did you see Andy Storey? I need to know what happened after Andy's unexpected appearance sent the plans to bollocks, Cliff. What happened?" Dan asked calmly.

"Well the bloke did surprise Greg, like you said. Greg was busy robbing the place, you see? He did all that type of stuff." Cliff said and Dan nodded. "Yes. So Greg's unplugging the DVD and that and Storey walked in on him. A fight broke out."

"Hang on, let me catch up." Dan frowned and Cliff nodded eagerly. "So you saw this through the window? Greg was unplugging the DVD player when Andy walked into the lounge. Is that right?"

"It could have been the TV or the Sky Box. I'm not too sure about that one." Cliff said seriously.

"But you saw Andy go for Peters and a fight broke out right there in the lounge. You saw that through the window. Have I got that right?" Dan asked.

"Spot on." Cliff said. "It was so quick! I hadn't even time to get my gloves on, let alone open the door to stop him. He was always a wrong one was Greg. I knew he'd go too far one day." He sighed sadly.

"Andy Storey was killed in the kitchen, Cliff. It isn't visible from the front of the house. I've been there." Dan stated flatly. Cliff's mouth flapped noiselessly for a while and his eyes darted slightly.

"I remember. I did go round the back, yes. I was ..."

"Oh leave it out Cliff." Dan heaved. "You were in that kitchen too. All the lounge crap is just to finger Peters."

"N ... no!" Cliff shook his head.

"The mugging I mentioned earlier, Cliff. The blood sample off the girl's jacket is being tested against a sample that was found on Andy Storey's body. Now I don't think Greg Peters rose from the dead to carry out a mugging. Do you?" Dan looked evenly at Cliff. "It's over, Cliff. You've had a ten year run of it but it's over. What happened?"

"Shit." Cliff held his head in his hands. "It just all went wrong. Really, badly wrong. The place was meant to be empty. Greg went in through a side window and I stood out front, as I said. I heard a commotion and ran round to get in the same side window but Greg had closed the bloody thing. I heard all this racket so I ran round

the back just as Greg was opening the back door. Christ, the bloke was lying on the floor in a pool of blood. I swear I didn't hit him with that thing. He was on the floor in his own blood." Cliff looked desperately at his very shocked solicitor. "Greg did all that, I swear!"

"You may have to." Dan said darkly. "What happened next?"

"I was bloody terrified! I'm a thief, a toerag. I'm a wrong one and I've never denied it, but not ... that!. I told Greg what a stupid bastard he was. I wanted to get the hell out of there. I was just about to leg it and Storey gurgled! He was still alive and he made this funny noise. I told Greg to get an ambulance and he told me not to be such a dick. He'd seen us, right? Both of us would go down for years if we got caught, especially with the violence stuff. The bloke started moaning and he was trying to get up! Shit I was crying and everything! I was shaking like a leaf! Greg's harping on about him describing me to the coppers and how we'd get sent down. I ... I just didn't want him to recognise me. You know?" Cliff looked up at Dan as though he didn't know where he was.

"What did you do, Cliff?" Dan asked quietly.

"Greg ran for it when he heard sirens. Arsehole. He left me on my own with the bloke and all the blood and the smell. I didn't want him to turn me in. Don't you see? The coppers were coming and he'd turn me in! I just put my hands on his neck and leant on him a bit until he stopped gurgling. He was dying anyway because Cliff beat his head in. He'd have died anyway but the coppers ... I ... left him there."

"Ran before the coppers got there." Dan stated.

"Ran? I could hardly bloody walk straight. I saw the cop lights flashing at the end of the road while some kid gave me a light for my cigarette. Funny thing is, they drove straight past. They weren't even going there." Cliff said in a daze.

"Andy's girlfriend, Katherine Harrington, lit your cigarette just before she went in and found her dead boyfriend. She served eight years for it." Dan glowered at Cliff.

"I read about it. I tried to tell Greg and he had me beat up for my troubles. The bloke was dying, I swear he was. Greg bashed his head in with that hammer thing. I didn't do that." Cliff started to cry.

"What was attacking Katherine in the hospice carpark last night supposed to achieve?" Dan asked and Cliff looked genuinely confused.

"Katherine? The girlfriend? That was her?" Cliff showed real shock.

"Are you telling me you didn't know?"

"I swear to god I didn't! Jesus! Carparks of any sort are good for a quick bag snatch. I needed the money, that's all. Honest to god I didn't know it was her." Cliff said desperately.

"I doubt Greg Peters did either when he tried the exact same thing. She kicked him in the nuts too, but he fell in front of a car. That's what set this all off, Cliff and the same petty crime finished it."

Mary Storey was buried with her son and over half the station attended. Harry Stone stood to the back of the mourners with Dan.

"You did a good job Darren." The Super decided to get familiar and still got the name wrong. "The Crown Prosecution Service can't possibly bugger it up either." He watched Katherine throw a handful of dirt into the grave. "She'll nail my arse to the courtroom wall."

"Well I think her sentence being overturned and an official apology is what she's after. It's what she deserves." Dan replied.

"There'll be an inquiry. I'm expecting it." Stone heaved a sigh. "Your reports will be used to discredit me and Johnny Kennedy."

"My reports are written a bit better than that. Your name isn't even in them, nor is DI Kennedy's." Dan said in irritation. This wasn't really about Stone and Kennedy and Dan was still seriously ruffled about Katherine's treatment by the legal system as a whole. "Hopefully what it will come down to is a comparison of scientific technology between then and now. There was nothing you could have done with that saliva sample back then." Dan said and the Super just nodded. "Can I ask you something sir?"

"Can I stop you?" Stone said moodily.

"Did you ever think, even just as a nagging doubt, that she was innocent?"

"I don't get paid to speculate on that, lad, and nor do you." Stone said wearily. "We follow leads and collect evidence. The legal lot present it. If I had to speculate on every conviction, I'd be in an early grave. You'll learn this."

"Dan?" Katherine was on her way over. "Can I ask a favour? Will you sit in the car with me until we get to the tea room, please? I was sick on the way here."

"Yes of course I will." Dan started to walk away with Katherine.

"Don?" He turned round when the Super got his name wrong. "Yes I did. Many, many

times." Dan nodded and followed Katherine.

////////// End