

THE
GIRL
ON THE
TUBE

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ALSO BY GRANT FINNEGAN

The Seventh List

Flight 19 Part One

Flight 19 Part Two

The Luxury Orphanage

The Karma Retreat

For Sharon

This book is dedicated

to

Joanne Finnegan

1966-2022

HUMAN BEINGS.

We are the most intelligent creatures on earth.
Our kindness towards each other knows no boundaries.
Neither does our cruelty.

QUOTE FROM THE LUXURY ORPHANAGE
BY GRANT FINNEGAN © 2020

THE
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ON THE
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MEGEVAND FILES #1

GRANT FINNEGAN



YOU DON'T KNOW me.

By the time this story's over, a whole city will. London—millions of souls pressed together under a sky the colour of old dishwater. Some of them will curse my name. Others will weep for me. And a few unlucky ones will wish they'd never looked me in the eye.

So, where does this start?

Well, with something small. Ordinary. The kind of thing you don't think twice about until it ruins your life.

Sleeping in.

That's where it began. With me hitting snooze one too many times. I forget things when I'm tired, you see. And the Underground—Christ, the bloody Underground—has always been one of those things. I've ridden it since I was little, back when Mum still dragged me everywhere by the ear. She'd haul me from one side of London to the other, hissing at me to keep up. You'd think I'd have learned the maze by now. But the Tube's like a living thing—breathing, twisting, waiting to swallow you whole if you take one wrong turn.

Getting on the train is easy. That part's muscle memory. It's when you change lines that it gets tricky. One platform bleeds into another—stairs, tunnels, escalators that hum like

mechanical serpents. Everything looks the same when you're tired. And I was very tired that morning.

Mum didn't help, of course. She never does. She couldn't organize a piss-up in a brewery, as they say. Probably still in bed with a hangover the size of Wales. If she'd seen me sleeping in, she would've yelled, 'one more day off college and you're on the street.' She'd have meant it, too.

Anyway—things were fine. Or so I thought. I was on the train, heading to college. Then the doors opened at Monument Station, and everything tilted. I'd done that route a hundred times, maybe more. But that day—I blanked. Total wipe. And then *he* was there.

Tall. Calm. Eyes that looked like they'd seen me before. He asked if I was okay. I couldn't place him, but felt familiar, like a face from a half-remembered dream. Maybe it was just exhaustion playing tricks. Or maybe not.

He smiled. Said he'd help me find the right platform. I followed. Why wouldn't I? I was late. Confused. And then the hairs on the back of my neck stood up. That ancient, primal warning bell that says, *Run*. But I didn't. By the time I thought to turn back, it was too late.

What he did to me—well, there aren't words for that kind of thing. Just the sound of your own heart trying to pound its way out of your chest. And then—darkness. Like someone dropped a curtain over the world.

When I came to, my skull felt like it had been cracked with a hammer. My head throbbed. I stumbled out of that corridor, barely able to stand. A few men saw me—four of them. Expensive coats. City types. Good Samaritans, right? That's what I thought.

One said he knew a nurse's room nearby. A nurse's room in a Tube Station—what a joke. But I followed, right back

into the same corridor. Because when you're broken and bleeding, you cling to anything that looks like help. The others nodded, said they'd come too. To make sure I was safe.

We turned a corner, and that's when I heard it.

A whisper.

A snicker.

And then hands—everywhere. Cold, hard, unyielding hands.

I screamed, but one of them crushed his palm over my mouth so tight I could taste my own blood. Their suits didn't make them decent. They made them predators in better clothing.

Now—I don't know where I am. It's dark. I can hear the trains rumbling in the distance, like monsters pacing in their cages.

I'm still down here.

Somewhere beneath your feet.

If you're reading this—if you can hear my cries—help.

Find them.

The four wolves dressed like gentlemen.

Maybe you've seen them.

Maybe you've ridden with one today.

Maybe he's sitting beside you right now.

And maybe, just maybe—he's smiling.



LONDON, 1996

CELEBRATING MY BIRTHDAY is not my thing. I believe it stems from my childhood, as most things do. I know it's not the right attitude to have, especially when your wife thinks differently. She *loves* birthdays. But that's Yukiko. She has a heart of gold. She says they are worth celebrating. I'm trying to. Yukiko's the most caring human being I've ever met.

Petite is the word that best describes her; she possesses a unique intelligence and the ability to make you feel as if you are the most loved person on planet earth. Oh, and she's fierce. Think of a Chihuahua crossed with a Piranha. Cute too. I love her. Six years on, I still thank the lucky stars that she entered my life.

'Happy birthday, Dolly!' one of my old copper mates from the M.E.T. suddenly announced, as he appeared behind me and spun me around to face the small crowd.

It's early Friday afternoon, and I get the feeling a few of the lads here intend to turn my birthday drinks into a drinking session. Who am I to get in their way? Yukiko is standing on the other side of the room, balanced precariously as if in mid-air.

A barmaid we know handed her one of those little footstools to stand on, as if she knew what was coming. The

Boleyn Tavern is our local, and we know all the bar staff on a first-name basis. Yukiko and I meet each other's amused eyes and think the same thing. Who the hell is Dolly? So do most of our friends and my work colleagues, standing in this cosy room at the back of the pub.

'Well, Megevand here,' my friend nudges me, 'now shares his birthday with the world's first cloned sheep. Her name is—' he holds his arms up. 'DOLLY!' the crowd shouts in perfect unison, as if we were down the road at the Boleyn Ground and Dicks had just scored a goal for the Hammers. 'Maybe we can get some of Dolly's wool and stick it on Jock's head. What a great birthday present!' someone shouted from the back.

The crowd erupts in more laughter. Even I had to admit it was kind of funny. You get used to the bald jokes. Yukiko shakes her head and smiles at me before someone next to her helps her back down to the safety of the pub's well-worn floorboards. She told me once in no uncertain terms: don't ever think of getting a toupee.

Fortunately for me, I've got a good-shaped head, as if I was made to be a chrome dome. I also get to save money on shampoo and haircuts. Bonus. Yukiko makes her way through the crowd towards me. She holds her glass of champagne above her head, which is shoulder height for most people here at the pub tonight.

'Hold this for me, won't you?' She hands over her glass and flicks her head in the direction of the corridor. 'She's a keeper,' one of my work colleagues says, nodding in her direction as my wife disappears from view. 'That she is—,' I respond, turning and toasting him. My pager buzzes on my belt just as I am about to say more. As I reach for it, I stifle a

groan. I'm not in for a big afternoon, but the beer is certainly going down like mother's milk.

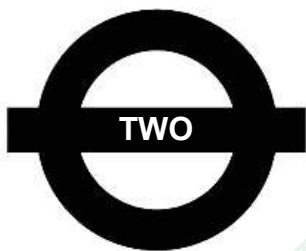
'You too?' he shares an annoyed look as he reaches for his pager. We read the screen at the same time. I'm not sure who rolls their eyes first. 'Fucking hell,' he says, slumping his shoulders with a glance over at the bar, like he can see the beer in the taps calling out for him.

'You never know; we may be back in time for a few,' I say. That was the best I could come up with on the fly. But I know the chances are slim. 'We can pop back in for a few tomorrow, huh?' He seems to brighten at the thought. I nod. We both live within walking distance of the Boleyn, so it's doable.

And who is going to kill this guy's hope right now? Not me. I watch him head towards the bar to return our empty glasses, as a mysterious gust of cold wind passes over me from somewhere. I shiver. I turn to see where it came from, but there are no doors nearby.

I shake off the feeling and take one further glance at my pager. I note the location and memorise the address. But it's the first two words that always give me that uneasy feeling.

'Body found.'



MEGEVAND PAID THE cabbie before giving Thatcher an 'are you happy now?' look. It was his partner's idea to take a taxi into the heart of the city from the pub at Upton Park. Thatcher likened driving in at this time of day to yanking out his wisdom teeth with a pair of seven-inch bull-nosed pliers.

To add to Thatcher's thoughts, parking anywhere near the junction of King William and Gracechurch streets was impossible. Sixty-eight King William Street, to be precise. The House of Fraser department store. Megevand had suggested jumping on a train but his partner balked at the idea. Something about not being in the mood.

But Megevand didn't realise he would end up being the one having to pay for the cab fare. 'Cheeky bastard,' he mumbled under his breath in his partner's direction.

As they rose out of the cab, a small delivery van pulled up directly behind the taxi. The driver proceeded to blast his horn at the stationary cab, letting everyone know of his feelings about the taxi that had stopped in a no standing zone.

'See this?' Thatcher thrust his warrant card in the direction of the van's windscreen. Observing the build of the man holding the badge, and the deathly expression on his face, the van's driver wisely took his hand off the horn and a second later pulled out around the taxi.

‘Alright?’ Thatcher said to Megevand, though he could see the hint of a grin on his partner’s face. ‘First three rounds back at the Boleyn tomorrow are on you, Maggie,’ Megevand responded.

Sergeant James Thatcher was absolutely no relation to the former prime minister, but someone he went to school with had christened him ‘Maggie,’ which was apt enough for the years the Iron Lady was in power. Now, only colleagues that were classed as very close friends were allowed to use the name. Anyone else risked getting a kiss from Thatcher. A Liverpool kiss — that is. And with the size of his head, James Thatcher was not the type of man you wanted to receive that type of affection from.

Megevand knew Thatcher understood his use of the nickname. It was in retaliation for Thatcher not paying the cab fare, even though he’d been the one who wanted to cab it. Fair whack, Thatcher thought. Even Stevens.

James Thatcher was a big unit. The English game of Rugby was created for men like Maggie. Standing barefoot, he’d level out at six foot five. His shoulders were nearly as wide as a standard door. He was a solid, well-built individual. His local tailor loved him. Thatcher kept him in business. His nickname when he played rugby at school was simply ‘Shithouse’ — as in the brick kind. He had a friendly, good-looking face, with steel blue eyes and a huge smile. Thick brown hair, and thankfully for his rugby days, a small nose and equally small ears. Easier to protect.

He always played it down, but those close to him knew. His parents were close friends of the late Earl John Spencer, and by extension, Sergeant James Thatcher had become close friends with the Earl’s children, in particular Charles Spencer being the same age as he, and his sister Diana who was three

years older. The Princess of Wales. He never talked about his relationship with the two siblings in public, nor his attendance at Charles and Diana's wedding in 1981. Only those closest to him knew he was to this very day still in regular touch with the two siblings.

'Ladies first, Albert,' Thatcher said, holding the front door to the department store open for Megevand. His partner entered and ignored the quip. Megevand's name, years ago, had simply been abbreviated to 'Megs.' Partly due to his name but also his auburn eyebrows. When he'd had hair, it was of a matching colour. But outside work, his closest friends had a more slightly affectionate name for the Detective Inspector. Albert. Named, comically, after the Royal Albert Hall. One of the largest *domes* in England.

'Who found him?' Megevand asked the constable standing near the entrance to the change rooms. 'One of the shop assistants,' the young guy said. He looked barely eighteen and bored out of his brains. His uniform hung off him as if he were a malnourished mannequin. 'Mate, are we disturbing your otherwise busy day?' Thatcher took a step closer and the kid snapped to attention.

'Err, sorry guv, no. Not at all,' he said, with the fear of God in his eyes.

'Show me,' Megevand said. He turned to Thatcher. 'You wait here and chat to the floor staff.' Thatcher nodded. Megevand entered the hallway leading to the change rooms. The body was in the end cubicle.

He walked up and stuck his head in the doorway. Megevand thought he was about the same age as the constable standing out the front. The constable, who was wishing Thatcher had come to check the body and not him. Thatcher was intimidating. Megevand noted the clothes the dead guy

was wearing. Not House of Fraser attire, he reflected. Far too casual. Off-white tracksuit pants, a double black strip down the side. A dirty sweatshirt that didn't match the tracksuit pants. A pair of filthy trainers. Megevand couldn't see anything that indicated the cause of death.

The pallor of the young man's skin was enough to tell the detective he was no longer of this world, but out of habit (unless the body in question was decomposing), Megevand leant down and touched the side of the kid's neck. No pulse. Megevand was momentarily distracted by the sound of his partner's voice. He turned to look down the hallway.

When the detective turned back in the direction of the body, the dead kid flicked his eyes open, but only for a second.

'Fuck!' Megevand gasped. He stumbled backwards and collided with the change room door. Megevand blinked, wondering if he'd just imagined it. He looked at the dead kid's face again, but his eyes were closed. Megevand's mind raced. Did that just happen? 'MEGEVAND,' he heard Thatcher shout, 'we've got a runner!'

By the time Megevand came out of the change rooms, Thatcher was already bolting down the escalators. When Megevand reached the escalator, he could see a young woman dressed in black running well ahead of Thatcher. She was in a hurry. Megevand saw what she was wearing and put two and two together. She was a shop assistant who worked in the store.

Megevand reached the bottom of the escalators and spotted his partner. Thatcher had just reached the main doors at the entrance. The big man had almost gotten stuck as he piled through the doorway. He needed to turn sideways to get out.

Once Megevand made it through the doors himself, he

found Thatcher standing out the front. The sergeant's head darted from one side to the other. He was looking for the runaway.

'There,' Megevand shouted, spotting her across the street. The two policemen dodged the busy city traffic. It was chaotic. Cars swerved. Horns blared. A double-decker bus didn't have the luxury. Megevand wondered who would fare better: the bus or Thatcher. Thankfully, it missed him, but only by a couple of inches.

When the girl realised, they'd seen her, she hastily turned and ran down the subway steps into Monument Station. If the men had their time over, they would have realised there was an entrance to the station on the same side of the road as the department store.

Once down the stairs, Thatcher spotted the top of the girl's head before she disappeared into the pedestrian tunnel inside the massive underground complex. 'Got her,' he shouted. When Megevand caught up to Thatcher, the girl had gained a good head start. 'You're fucking shitting me,' Megevand heard Thatcher spit out.

'She's a runner all right,' Megevand said in response. They came to a fork in the tunnel. Frustrated, they both headed down one side. They had no idea if they were heading in the right direction. And then luckily, they spotted her at the end of the tunnel they were in. But their luck was about to change.

It was at this point they heard it. Then, they felt the rush of air. A train was pulling in. Both men knew what this meant. 'Fucker!' Thatcher groaned. His legs ached. He wished he'd not caved to his love of nachos back at the Boleyn. The three pints probably hadn't helped.

'She's going to make the train!' Megevand said, clearly

frustrated. By the time the two policemen arrived on the platform, it was already pulling out. Aside from the two of them, the platform was empty. 'Shit,' Thatcher groaned, stepping over to the wall and leaning against it.

'Damn it!' Megevand responded. He stood nearby with his chest heaving from the run. The two policemen stood in silence, waiting for their composure to return. Megevand felt the ache in his chest subside.

The detective was about to suggest that they head back up when he heard his partner mutter something under his breath. It sounded like, 'What's this then?'

Thatcher was staring at the opposite end of the empty platform. His expression was hard to read. Megevand turned around and saw what had caught Thatcher's attention.

An old man stood there, dead still, staring at the two policemen. This made it all that much weirder. The guy was dressed oddly, too. White overalls, with a matching white t-shirt. His clothing matched his short and bristled shock of white hair.

Megevand's initial thought was that the old man looked like a painter. But the way the old guy was staring at them made the tiny hairs on the back of the detective's neck stand to attention. 'Alright?' Thatcher called out to him. The old man said nothing.

Megevand and Thatcher looked at each other for a moment before taking a step in his direction. At the same time, the old man stepped sideways towards the edge of the platform. His left shoe teetered on the precipice. 'Don't move,' Thatcher said on instinct. The old man either didn't hear him or chose to ignore Thatcher's request. He took another step sideways.

And without any hint of a warning, he stepped off the platform.

‘No!’ Thatcher yelled. He broke into a sprint. Megevand was hot on his tail. They both wondered if the old guy had injured himself when he’d fallen. As they reached the other end of the platform, Megevand considered if they’d flip a coin to see who would jump down onto the tracks.

Suddenly, the old man appeared standing in the gap between the two tracks. His face was eerily calm. Megevand realised there wasn’t a mark on his clothes. For a guy wearing all white, who had seconds ago fallen onto the tracks, how was he as clean as he was when they’d first spotted him?

Even though they’d clearly witnessed the old man falling off the platform, there wasn’t any hint of soot, dirt or dust on him. He was as clean as a proverbial whistle. The two men turned and stared at each other.

Understandably, they shared the same thought.

What.

The.

Fuck?

Megevand turned back to the old guy. The man now pointed into the train tunnel. Megevand found himself leaning over and looking down into the darkness. As if on cue, the detective heard the ubiquitous sound of a London Underground Station. It was coming from the other direction. Two seconds later came the gust of wind.

‘You can’t be serious,’ Megevand said. But it wasn’t about the sound of the train. Or the rush of air. Megevand grabbed Thatcher’s arm.

When his partner leaned down to see what had caught Megevand’s attention, Thatcher gasped, then said, ‘no fucking way!’

Standing about fifty feet down the tunnel was a person Megevand and Thatcher would later describe as a teenage girl. She just stood there like the painter, as motionless as a statue.

It was the eeriest thing Megevand had seen in quite a while. Megevand turned back to the painter. 'Where the hell are you going?' he said to the old man, who was walking towards the girl in the dark tunnel. Now, all they could see was the old man's back. Not a mark on him there, either.

Strangely, he walked with such a carefree gait, it was as if he were taking a stroll down St James' Park on a sunny afternoon. 'Oh, bloody hell,' Thatcher muttered as a realisation came over him. He jerked Megevand away from the edge of the platform.

Seconds away from entering the station was the train they'd heard coming.

Noting its current speed, Megevand realised what Thatcher meant.

It was an express train. It wasn't stopping at Monument Station.



‘HIS NAME IS Richard Head.’

I turn to Thatcher, and when our eyes meet, we both share that “you-can’t-be-serious” look. As you would. Dick — Head? Surely the boss is taking the mickey, my mind tells me. Or Richard Head’s parents bloody hated their son. One of the two.

‘Bollocks,’ Thatcher announces, ‘—his name is Richard Houdini. It has to be.’

We’re both sitting at our desks back at our offices in Camden, wondering if someone had spiked our beers at the pub earlier. What we witnessed at Monument Station had us seriously wondering. On the other matter, the body of the young guy at the House of Fraser had been removed and taken to the mortuary. He was yet to be identified, and the running girl’s connection to him was still being investigated. Local police were searching for her around her home town of Morden, after the department store gave her personal information to us.

I take my thoughts back to the present.

Thatcher’s desk is next to mine. I would say this can sometimes be a pain, but it really isn’t. Thatcher is a bloody fine partner. Our desks are separated by a three-drawer filing

cabinet surely dating back to the industrial age. You've never seen one with this much rust.

Our boss is leaning up against a colleague's desk just across the way from mine, Maggie's, and the two-hundred-year-old filing cabinet in between. The look on his face is most certainly not the bewildered one still firmly plastered on my own. When I turn to Thatcher, his expression mirrors mine. It was the same look he had when it all went down at the Bank and Monument complex.

By the time the train was halfway through Monument Station, I knew it was pointless trying to flag the driver in the hope that he'd pull the brakes in time. The train was going too fast. Thatcher must have had the same thought, because he didn't move a muscle. All we could do was watch it zoom past and wonder if the driver would spot the old man and teenage girl in the tunnel.

When the train had disappeared into the darkness, we did our very best to take a look, but it was a waste of time. We couldn't see a thing. There was no sign of the old man, nor the teenage girl. We didn't want to risk our own lives by jumping onto the tracks to investigate. The line would need to be temporarily closed, or another train could come along and take us into the next life. I wasn't in the mood to die today. Not on Dolly's birthday.

'Jesus!' Chief Inspector David Windebank said to us both.

'You two need to stop back in at the Boleyn on the way home and order something stronger than a beer. You both look shaken and quite stirred. Actually, have a double vodka Martini like our old mate Bond.' He smiled at his own humour.

We didn't smile back. I was told the day I met David Windebank that when he peed, what came out was

Bruichladdich Scotch, one of the strongest whiskies on earth, if not *the* strongest. As I got to know him, I realised quickly that this ludicrous fact was probably true.

His demeanour made Thatcher look like a girl scout selling brownies on a Sunday. Windebank was one seriously tough bastard. He may have been five foot six, but what he lacked in height, the boss made up with in brawn and grunt.

Like Thatcher, our boss once played rugby. In those days they called Windebank 'the Washer' because, his teammates said, he had a body like a washing machine with a head stuck on top. If I couldn't have Thatcher backing me up in a scrap, Washer would for certain be my second choice.

We often wondered how an unattractive man like Windebank could be married. I know that's a bit harsh, but I'm just stirring. To his credit, the man's been happily married forty years.

He had a round, pudgy face, with grey eyes and a knot of impossibly curly hair stuck on the very top of his virtually bald head. His wife had obviously seen, early on, the tender heart stuck inside the body of a home appliance found in most kitchens, or laundromats. In my opinion, Windebank is one of the most decent human beings I've ever met. And to our good fortune, you couldn't ask for a better boss.

'Alright,' I say, turning to Thatcher before I look back in Windebank's direction. 'The question is—' I straighten up in my chair. 'How do you know this mystery man's name?' Windebank stared at me for a time before glancing over to Thatcher. When he returned his gaze to me, I could see a glint in his eyes.

What always followed that look, as if on cue, appeared a second later. That imperceptible little grin. Yep, *there it is*. Windebank stood up off the edge of the desk. He straightened

his shirt and adjusted his tie. It had to be one of those clip-on ones. There was no way you could get a tie around a neck that bloody thick.

‘Well, my boy, this may not come as too much of a surprise after some of your previous experiences,’ Windebank said. It was late and I was tired. That run down into the station after three pints had taken it out of me. Whatever Windebank was referring to had gone straight over my head. It would only come to me hours later. The *Orphanage* thing.

I stared at him for a moment before I said, ‘Okay, I get it. You know him. How, I don’t know. But that’s it, right? He’s a friend of yours, that wouldn’t surprise me—’ Thatcher roared with laughter. His laugh was as big as he was. Windebank shook his head and stepped a foot closer to me.

‘Richard Head most certainly is a painter and decorator. He has painted half the stations, if not all of them on the Circle Line. He’s quite well known to most of the staff. Especially at Bank and Monument.’

‘Interesting stuff, boss,’ I yawn. Not meaning to offend the guv, but sometimes you can’t fight the urge.

‘So, do any of the staff at these stations know where we can find him? Thatcher and I will pay him a visit and find out how he pulled off his disappearing act,’ I said.

Windebank stood there and stared at the two of us. Eventually, he shook his head.

‘Richard Head was hit by a train, minutes after finishing work one day,’ he whispered.

I felt the blood drain from my face. The boss leant over and patted me on the shoulder.

‘Three days before the announcement, Megevand,’ he said. He emphasised the words ‘*the announcement*’ as if they’d mean something to me. They didn’t.

I looked up and met his eyes. 'What announcement?'

Windebank stood there staring at us. I was about to tell him to get on with it. When he eventually answered, I felt my blood turn to ice. 'England declared war on Germany. Third of September,' he turned and looked over towards Thatcher. '—1939.'



‘DONE,’ THATCHER DUMPS the two pints on the table. The froth, lapping the rim of both glasses, spills over the edge. I know immediately what he is referring to. This is our third round and he is reminding me that his debt is now paid.

We are back at the Boleyn and it’s a quiet Saturday afternoon for a change. Not that I mind. Fighting your way through a pack of fellow West Ham supporters to get another beer is not my idea of a leisurely afternoon. The empty pub gives us the opportunity to sit in our favourite booth. There is plenty of room to spread out.

Raised voices attract my attention but I don’t turn around. A couple in the corner are having a heated and let’s say *personal* conversation, and judging by the empty glasses nearby, it’s fuelled by alcohol. I have seen it a thousand times: overindulgence reducing inhibitions and filters.

I take a sip of my beer and can’t help but smirk when the woman tells the fella he’ll have to do something about getting his dick up next time they hit the sack. Thatcher grins. He heard it too, and steals a quick glance at the boozed-up pair. He mumbles something inaudible but I’m now a thousand miles away.

My mind is on what I saw playing out in the tunnel. The teenage girl standing there, her eyes locked with mine;

Richard Head staring at us, pointing at her and walking in her direction. And then that rush of air heralding the arrival of a train. My chest tightens at the vision of the locomotive coming at high speed. It takes my mind away from the big oaf sitting directly across from me, jabbering away in between gulps of beer.

‘Hey, Albert,’ Thatcher leans forward before clicking his fingers in my face.

‘Did you hear anything I just said?’

Piss pot in the corner ups the ante, thumping the bar with his fist, his words giving the woman a taste of her own medicine. ‘Well, if you actually did something to give me a hard on maybe I’d have a better chance!’ Thatcher and I grin at each other and this time I turn around. The woman retaliates, throwing the remainder of her wine in her boyfriend’s (or husband, fiancé) face. She grabs her bag, and stumbles towards the door.

‘Sod off small cock!’ she yells, oblivious to the amused patrons in the room. The bloke’s face reddens as he stares into his half empty glass. Thatcher smirks and turns back to me.

‘Now, while I was bullshitting my way through Saturday afternoon, do you mind telling me where you just were?’ I stare at him for a time without a response.

‘Oh, I get it,’ he says. ‘—You’re thinking about her, right?’ Thatcher adds.

I nod. He’s just hit the nail firmly on the head. He stares at the mid-afternoon traffic on Barking Road for a moment. Eventually, he turns his gaze back towards me. ‘I can’t get her out of my mind either,’ he whispers. We sit for a time, drinking our beers in silence.

She appears in my vision again. She’s just standing there. Thick shoulder length black hair. She’s got one of those, I’ve

heard the term before, Angelic faces. Big eyes. From the distance I couldn't make out that much more, other than knowing she had a pretty face. If I had to guess, she would be around five foot six. Thin build.

She wore a fashionable chequered black and green skirt which sat just above her knees. A dark green top, tight fitting, short sleeves. Knee high boots. A real looker. But what had unnerved me since yesterday, was how still she stood there, in the train tunnel. Staring at me. As if I was meant to know her.

She didn't look happy, but she didn't look sad either. Something in between. Even now I can feel a coldness pass over my neck as I picture her standing there.

'Who is she?' Thatcher asked.

I take another swig of my beer and slowly meet his eyes. We told the boss all about her. Every detail. Windebank didn't have much to say. He told us people of all shapes and sizes were often seen walking through train tunnels. Illegal? Hell yes. Dangerous? Definitely.

He wasn't dismissive. But he wasn't that interested either. He has a shit-tonne to deal with on a daily basis. I get it. It's London, after all. Another random head spotted down a train tunnel was not a priority, to him anyway. Fair enough. But he hadn't seen her — with his own eyes. Staring at him. He hadn't felt every nerve in his body quiver when it happened.

But I had. I know the last time I felt this. I don't even want to think back to it.

'Fuck it,' Thatcher said, wiping his mouth with his hand.

My vision of the angelic girl evaporates. I don't mind. I find it hard to breathe when she is standing there. Staring at me.

'—You want to keep on drinking,' Thatcher starts pushing himself sideways and out of the booth. When he stands

up, he rolls his head around his shoulders and straightens his shirt.

‘—or do you want to go for a train ride?’

Thatcher hates trains. Hates them with a passion. The mere mention of the man mountain wanting to step into one has me intrigued. Truth be told, I may have been up for another couple of pints, but I’m now curious.

‘Where to?’ I ask. But, by that look on his face, I know where.

‘We can’t do this on the clock, so we may as well do it now,’ Thatcher said.

‘You mean where I think you mean, old chap? I say in my best toffee-nosed voice. He ignores it much to my chagrin. Thatcher leans in, ‘come on then before I change my mind. Bank and Monument.’



MEGEVAND HAD KNOWN for a long time why Thatcher wasn't a big fan of the Underground. More so the trains. For a bloke, who, if dressed in red, could be mistaken for a telephone box, it was quite ironic. It is rated the third most common phobia in England. It's a bit of a mouthful. Claustrophobia. It's another one of those secrets only those closest to Thatcher know.

Megevand recalled Thatcher telling him last night about his phobia, but he didn't want to chance fate. As Megevand watched his partner walk onto the train at Upton Park Underground Station the detective couldn't help but smile. Thatcher had been forced to duck to enter the carriage.

Megevand felt somewhat relieved when he saw that the train was only a quarter full.

At least he wouldn't have to watch Thatcher stand there hunched over, for the whole trip, if all the seats were taken. The two policemen rode in silence for the twenty-minute train ride into town. Megevand left him to his own devices, and smiled to himself when he saw that Thatcher was easily taking up two seats.

Sargeant Thatcher sat staring ahead, as if in a trance. He may have been dozing. Even Megevand was feeling quite sleepy after three pints. The train swayed from side to side,

pushing the two men's shoulders together from time to time. A couple of young lads at the other end of the carriage looked in the two policemen's directions, only once.



The train pulled into Monument Station. Megevand could feel the muscles tighten in his abdomen. There was her face again. As if she were standing right there in front of him. As the train slowed to a stop, Megevand did his best to shake off the awkward feeling coursing through his body.

Thatcher stood and then slowly moved his bulk to the doors.

As they opened, still only half way, he hurled himself into the gap and awkwardly exited the carriage. Over his phobia? My arse, Megevand thought. The two men walked to the end of the platform where the pedestrian tunnel commenced.

Thatcher stood to one side and waited until the other passengers walked past. No one paid the policemen any heed. Only the two boys who were on their carriage gave them a sideways glance, before picking up their pace and disappearing from view. They probably assumed correctly as to Megevand and Thatcher's line of work.

Thatcher stepped back onto the empty platform. Megevand knew this was not the same platform they'd spotted the teenage girl. He quickly realised what his partner was looking for.

Closed Circuit Television Cameras.

He was checking out how many were on this platform. By the time they had walked the length of the platform, Thatcher had found two. It was a start. 'Maybe we might see something from any of the cameras down here. You never know, Megs,' he said.

By the time Megevand and Thatcher had tracked their way back up to the main entrance of the station, they had both spotted another six cameras. He could feel his excitement build. It was a long shot, he knew that. But sometimes the long shots bring home the bacon, he thought. The two policemen then walked down to the platform where it had all gone down yesterday.

The platform for the Northern Line. It was surreal to be back here, Megevand felt.

It was as if they hadn't left. Everything was the same. The platform was empty, but they heard a train coming. Oddly, Megevand welcomed it. Noise. Wind. People. Anything to suck the eeriness out of the air. Richard "the Head" (as Thatcher had nicknamed him) was nowhere to be seen.

When the brakes on the incoming train let out their high-pitched squeal, Megevand felt the sound permeate the molars in the back of his jaw. Thatcher was pointing at one end of the curved platform. It was the opposite end to where the mystery figure first appeared on the platform yesterday.

He held up one finger to Megevand to indicate that there was only one camera. In the end, this would be the only one on this platform. Kind of disappointing to both men. It was quite some distance to the other end, where the weird shit had gone down yesterday.

The train that had just pulled up, slowly moved forward, picking up speed before it disappeared. There was no sign of Mr Head or his mysterious female friend.

'We should go for a wander then,' the big man said.

Megevand decided they had nothing to lose.



Megevand followed Thatcher down the pedestrian tunnel. He was happy for him to take the lead. This place was a maze. Megevand recalled an article he read in the Sunday Times about this very place, the Bank and Monument Underground Complex.

More often than not, the place found itself in the news for all the wrong reasons. For those new to London, the reporter, who penned the article, was happy to give it his Sunday best to explain in nothing less than painful detail;

“Monument is joined to Bank Station via a series of what is known as “Subways,” which is not to be confused with what Americans normally call their own Underground Rail Network. Pedestrian tunnels may be a better term in this instance. Between these subways add in the platforms for the Northern line, as the most direct route between the two original stations.

Throw in the recent addition of the Docklands Light Railway Extension Station, and don’t forget the Central plus the Waterloo and City Lines at the Bank End. Oh, and the Northern, District and Circle Line at the Monument End. The result? “This joint is a fucking labyrinth!” (Alright, these are Megevand’s words, not the reporter’s). Back to the article as the detective recalled it:

“Ten Platforms. Five Lines. Twelve, yes twelve different points of exit on Bank side of the complex alone. The Bank and Monument Complex is to some — an engineering marvel. Those some, are probably engineers themselves. But to most Londoners, the Bank and Monument Complex is something a little less flattering. A pain in the buttocks.”

Thatcher walks on. Megevand wonders how anyone couldn't get lost down here. He studies the people around him walking past. No one seems to be happy being here. Everyone has a steady pace, and most have their heads down. It's probably the only way to avoid getting lost down here, unless you have been here dozens of times, Megevand surmised.

'Fucking hell,' Thatcher says after another ten minutes of exploring, 'is this place for real?'

By now Megevand believes they have arrived at the Bank end. Rounding the corner, Megevand is first to spot the uniformed policeman and makes a beeline for him. 'Cameras?' he said, fishing out his warrant card from his back pocket with such fluidity that even before he has time to show it, the sergeant already knows the three of them are one and the same.

'There's a few of them down here, now.'

'Where do they lead back to?' Thatcher asked.

The sergeant nodded in the direction behind them. 'Quite a walk, but there's a control room that way. All cameras in this complex go back there.' Megevand acknowledged their appreciation and patted the man on his shoulder, 'you transport boys do a good job down here.'

The sergeant welcomed the compliment with a big smile, and a firm handshake.

'Sergeant John Bristow, Guv,' he said.

Megevand had to admit that he felt a slight stab of envy as the British Transport Policeman let go of his hand. He was in good shape. No middle-aged paunch just above the belt line. A friendly face with clear, bright blue eyes. A good head of light brown hair, though receding slightly, was what Megevand envied the most.

The detective instinctively ran his hand over his bald

head. He reminded himself that he never had to use a brush or shampoo. Suddenly, the three policemen overheard an almighty commotion in the distance, down one of the pedestrian tunnels. Megevand could see the instant change in Sergeant Bristow's face. The BTP officer shook his head before a grin appears.

'Never a dull moment down here. Tag along if you want.'

Megevand and Thatcher exchange glances, thinking why not. They struggle to keep up with the BTP Sergeant who, clearly, has not spent a lazy Saturday afternoon drinking at a pub.

Bristow moves at a steady pace, and the detective can see by the signs on the wall that they are heading for the platform for the Circle Line. As the men draw closer down the pedestrian tunnel it's at this point a woman's terrified scream fills the air. Megevand barely gets a couple more strides further before he realizes there are actually two women screaming, not one.

Megevand keeps up with Sergeant Bristow and Thatcher, heading in the direction of all the goings on, but suddenly, has the most unusual feeling of dread. It's as if a shroud of sadness has just fallen over him like a big, wet blanket. The detective later finds out Thatcher had the same feeling at the exact moment.

Later that night, Megevand learns that this is a common occurrence in the pedestrian tunnels around the Circle Line platform at Bank Station. No wonder people hate the place, he thought. It's cursed. When Sergeant Bristow arrives on the platform, he spots two elderly women huddled together on a bench seat. They look scared out of their wits.

'What's the matter?' he asks them.

'She was here!' one of the women muttered between sobs.

Sergeant Bristow stepped closer. 'It's okay,' he whispers.

As if on cue, a train arrives. The two women stumble to their feet. Bristow ushers them towards the train's doors.

'Okay?' he asks them, as they hobble onto the carriage and find their way to the nearest seats. 'Thank you,' one of them manages to say, just as the doors close.

As the train pulls away, he turns to Megevand and Thatcher and shakes his head.

'She's a regular down here,' he says, before taking a moment to regain his composure.

Thatcher is about to ask who he's referring to but Sergeant Bristow is already on it.

'The Black Nun, is what she's known as, down here.' Megevand sees a shadow cross over Thatcher's face.

'—Sarah Whitehead, is, or was, her name,' Bristow checks his surroundings before he continues, 'her brother was apparently hanged nearby back in 1811.

He worked at the old bank the station was named after. He was busted for doing something wrong. Up near the original entrance to the station before this glorious place was built. Whitehead was not at all happy about her brother being 'murdered,' as she claimed. Says he did nothing wrong. She's been down here since she died. Well, her spirit, if you know what I mean.'

'Shit,' Megevand muttered under his breath. This place was already making his skin crawl.

The detective spotted the expression on Thatcher's ashen face. He knows his partner is wondering how long it will take to sprint up to the street level and get out of this place.

Megevand's eyes wandered to the other end of the platform. He's trying to distract himself from his thoughts. The two women's screams still ringing in his ears and that feeling

of dread that descended on him in the pedestrian tunnel. It's not a positive combination. It's at this point that he spots her. *The* teenage girl from yesterday.

But today, she is standing facing the opposite direction. She then begins to walk into the pedestrian subway at the other end of the platform.

'It's her!' Megevand shouts at Thatcher.

For a split-second Thatcher has no idea what Megevand is talking about.

But Megevand's legs are already in motion.



‘WAIT!’ I SHOUT. I can feel my heart starting to race. I’m already cursing the nachos I shared with Thatcher back at the Boleyn. They’re swirling around my stomach with the three pints. I can feel a stitch coming. I try to ignore it.

‘Stop, Police!’ I shout.

I take a quick look behind to see if Thatcher is keeping up. He is, but I note Sergeant Bristow has disappeared. He knows this place better than we do. He’s possibly run off in another direction in the hope to cut her off.

When I reach the end of the platform, I spot her ever so briefly before she vanishes around the corner. ‘I said stop for fuck’s sake!’ I hear my words echo through the tunnel, to no avail. I steal a glimpse behind to see Thatcher round the corner. I can see determination written all over his face.

The sound of an inbound train punctuates the silence in the pedestrian tunnel. Which platform it’s arriving on, I have no idea. Its arrival is followed by the ubiquitous announcement confirming it. My heart is beating hard in my chest. Christ, I’m unfit. The smell of urine in the tunnel attacks my nose but as quickly as it is there, it’s gone.

I reach the end of the tunnel I’ve been running down and the realisation hits me. We are at another platform. For the love of God, this place is ridiculous, and I am utterly lost. I

stop running. My chest is heaving. The stitch in my stomach is aching.

Thatcher arrives at my side.

'Why are we stopping?' he mutters through laboured breaths.

I turn and give him a less-than favourable look and realise he is staring down the other end of the platform. When I turn to see what he is looking at, I gasp.

The teenage girl is standing there. Three quarters of the way down the platform.

She has the exact expression on her face as yesterday. This unnerves me more than anything else.

Thatcher stands silently next to me. All I can hear is his breathing. He's as speechless as I am.

What the hell is this girl up to? I wonder. A second before I'm about to burst into action and run after her, the expression on her face morphs.

Something between angry and scared, and as unnerving as hell. She raises her left hand and holds it out in our direction.

'HELP ME!' she screams.

'Jesus Christ,' I hear Thatcher mutter under his breath.

I don't think I've ever heard such an agonising scream. Without a moment's hesitation she drops her arm, spins around, and breaks into a sprint, straight into a dimly lit pedestrian tunnel. I stand there dazed, literally unable to speak. Thatcher is similarly affected, but there is a certain comfort in the fact that we both saw it. We meet each other's gaze. We know what we are both about to do.

Run.

Like.

Hell!

Shouting after her, is pointless. For whatever reason, this

has become a game of cat and mouse. For a second I hear the boss's voice in my head from last night. *'It's not our job to deal with random people running willy nilly around the tunnels. If it were anyone's job, not that they have the time for it either, leave it to the BTP.'*

'How can we help you if you keep running!' Thatcher's voice booms. I have to admit I'm impressed. Then again, my partner possesses lungs the size of clothes dryers. No wonder he sounds as if he's swallowed a megaphone. She ignores him. She reaches the corner of another pedestrian tunnel, though we are gaining ground.

I reach the end of the platform and skid around the corner. Thatcher is right on my tail but he collides with the corner of the wall and grunts in dissatisfaction. Up ahead I see another bend but am confident she can't have gained much distance. Seconds before we get to the next corner I hear her voice. It catches me by surprise as how clear it is.

'HELP ME!'

I reach the corner and almost collide head on with an old man. On instinct he flings his cane high into the air to block me.

'Police, sorry!' I mutter as I sidestep him and his wildly flinging walking stick.

'Easy Da!' Thatcher says as he manoeuvres his huge body mass around the old codger, narrowly missing the cane smacking against his head by less than half an inch. I get about six feet further on.

I come to a stop. This is not happening, I tell myself.

At the end of the tunnel, which has no other exits, is a familiar person standing there, staring back at us. Our recently acquainted new friend.

Sergeant John Bristow of the British Transport Police.



'I SAW HER round that corner,' Megevand says between laboured breaths.

Thatcher nods to indicate he saw her as well.

'There are no other exits from this tunnel,' Bristow said.

The sergeant does a full three sixty, double-checking before the three of them shuffle to one side of the tunnel to let a dozen train passengers walk past.

'How long had you been standing at this end before we came around the corner?' Megevand points back in the opposite direction, adding, 'before old mate took a swipe of us with his cane?'

'Only a few seconds,' Bristow responds.

'So she just disappears into thin air?' Thatcher asks the obvious.

'Gentlemen step over here,' Bristow nods to us and we follow him over to an area safely away from the main thoroughfare.

He frowns, '—you think the Black Nun is the only ghost down here?' he asks.

Megevand and Thatcher look at each other. They see his point though are not entirely sure they agree.

'She's no ghost,' Megevand whispers.

Bristow nods. His quick grin is slight, but Megevand can

tell, he doesn't want to come across as condescending. It's clear he has other ideas on the matter.

'A friend of mine works over at Mansion House Station,' Bristow said, lowering his voice as more passengers walk past the policemen.

'—One night, at peak hour. The station was packed with people heading home. A young woman slipped on something right on the edge of the platform. The train had no way of stopping. She died instantly.' Bristow looks down at the floor before meeting Megevand and Thatcher's gaze.

'One week later. Same platform. Same time. Peak hour. The same woman is standing at the exact spot before she fell. She was crying. When a person walked up to her and asked if she was okay, she screams to the high heavens. This person swears, black and white, this young woman was of flesh and blood.'

Megevand listens intently, feeling that all too familiar coldness on the back of his neck, as Bristow continues;

'—And just to ensure this bystander never sets foot in Mansion House Station again, the young lady, stepped directly in front of this person before walking right through her.'

Thatcher swallows hard, the colour draining from his face.

'You've got to be shitting me,' he whispers.

The sergeant nods.

'That was five years ago,' he says looking around the pedestrian walkway before turning back to the detective, 'and like the Black Nun, she has done this to dozens upon dozens of people since.'

'I swear on my mother's Sunday roast lamb,' Megevand

responds in earnest, 'that girl is as real as you and me standing here.'

Bristow smiles faintly before adjusting his belt and eventually nodding. It's obvious he likes Megevand and Thatcher, or else he would have told them to bugger off by now. And besides, this is his turf. Megevand and Thatcher are not British Transport Police Officers. Truth be told, about now, he could tell the two of them to go back home to their own patch.

'Look, I don't know what else to tell you,' Bristow speaks carefully, 'you two seem like stand-up Policemen. I've seen my fair share of men in our profession who've made me wonder how on god's earth they made it through. Blokes with big egos,' — a grin flashes — 'and most certainly small dicks.'

Thatcher and Megevand both laugh. Megevand is happy they have not at least been tarred with that brush. After their laughter dies down, Bristow's expression grows serious.

'The Tube is riddled with stuff like this,' he says. He shrugs before checking his watch.

Megevand realises Bristow is close to the end of his shift.

'I could spend hours telling you stories that would have both of you big lads pulling that duvet high over your head the next time you get into bed,' the BTP Officer adds.

Something is gnawing deep inside Megevand. Six years ago, he lived through an experience most police officers never would. And to this day most of his colleagues didn't know what had happened back then. Megevand was happy to keep it that way. Because most of them would never believe it.

Megevand's mind returns to the BTP Sergeant standing in front of him — who checks his watch a second time.

'We need to let you go,' Megevand said.

Bristow nods, 'the best thing to do from here is to check out the footage from the cameras.'

He looks the detective over one more time before smiling at Thatcher. Bristow shuffles his feet, getting ready to head back, but stops and speaks quietly:

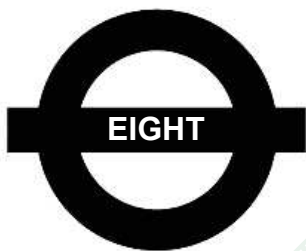
'Look, I believe that you believe she is of flesh and blood. I'm back here tomorrow first thing. It's going to be quiet. I tell you what—' he checks to his left and to his right.

'—if you are this confident that she is alive, maybe she's hiding out down here somewhere. Come back tomorrow and we will do another search. I know this is not your patch, but if you are this sure she's real it may be the only way to put your mind to rest.

It's up to you two, I guess. Your call.'

The idea of coming back here on a Sunday, one of the only two days a week Megevand normally has off, doesn't seem an attractive idea. But when he turns and looks in Thatcher's direction, Megevand can see something firing deep in his eyes. It surprises him.

The big man loves his Sundays at home, besides Megevand is not sure how Windebank will feel if he knows he and Thatcher are pissing in BTP Territory, so to speak. After only a few moments of thought, something ignites deep within — a burning desire. A second later, his mind is flooded with the vision of her. 'I need to find her,' the silent voice inside him says.



YUKIKO SHAKES HER head in mild amusement, as I stumble out of bed.

‘You really are doing this,’ she says.

I stand on my side of the bed staring at her. The woman I’ve loved for many years is lying underneath the duvet with a sheepish grin on her face. It’s early Sunday morning. The next to no noise outside confirms it’s the day of the sabbath, as they say around these parts.

Yukiko’s Japanese heritage is evident in her small and attractive face. She has a smile that melts my hardened heart, especially after a day dealing with death and, all too often, the lowest forms of scum walking the earth.

Her jet black-hair matches the colour of her sparkling eyes. I don’t think I’ve ever felt anything as silky as her long, straight hair that is almost always seen in a ponytail. I would also say, without any bias, that she is one of the most intelligent human beings I’ve ever met.

Yukiko is still one of the most revered forensic investigators in London and works for a famous Private Investigative Agency. She was in the same job when I met her. Looks can be deceiving. After five years of Taekwondo, Yukiko is one tough little unit and she can certainly take care of herself.

‘It’s killing me Keek,’ I say with a serious look on my

face. Although she loves it whenever I call her by my own private nickname for her, I can see the smile fade from her face.

‘The Sergeant at Bank and Monument thinks this girl is not of this world, right?’ she asks.

I nod. This is Yukiko’s polite way of inferring that sergeant Bristow believes the mysterious girl may be a ghost.

‘I’m pretty sure I know the difference between the two,’ I respond.

Yukiko sits up and pats the bed, indicating for me to sit. Once there, she reaches over and places her hand on mine.

‘Ian Megevand, the love of my life,’ she always says this before a lecture is forthcoming.

‘—You’ve lived through experiences few people have. You’ve seen things most people believe can never be true.’

She stares off into the distance before turning back to me.

‘Are you sure it’s not clouding your judgement?’ she asks me.

There it is. I knew it was coming. Of course, I considered the same thing on my way home last night. I probably hadn’t mentioned the thought to her, obviously.

‘She’s real,’ I say confidently, adding, ‘just elusive.’

Yukiko does that thing with her mouth. Twists it in a funny way. I know what that means in an instant. She doesn’t share my confidence.

‘—The first night you spot her, she is standing in a train tunnel seconds before a train barrels through. Yesterday, you see her again but somehow, she vanishes into thin air in a pedestrian walkway; one which has a policeman standing at the other end?’ her voice is a little more forthcoming now.

Damn it.

My wife has a way of making a statement that is

sometimes all but impossible to argue with. My mind flashes back to Ravenstone House. Six years ago. It's annoying that your mind can do this so easily. When I first laid eyes on him, my mind told me the bloke standing in front of me was as real as I am. A living, breathing, human being.

His name was Finley. Finley Sproule.

I think about him a lot. If I ever admitted it to Yukiko, she would readily admit that she does, too.

It's at this point I get my first feeling of doubt. Picturing Finley standing there that fateful day, I know now that my eyes yesterday, and the day before, may have been playing tricks on me.

They are good at doing that sometimes. But I know I have got out of bed on this cold Sunday morning for a reason. To find her. And that's what I need to do. Get on with it.

I lean over and give Yukiko a kiss.

'Shower time,' I say, turning and heading for the bathroom.

'No singing that well-worn Def Leppard song in the shower Mister. I'm staying in bed,' she says, before lying back down and snuggling under the duvet.

'*Pour some sugar on me,*' I sing as I venture off down the hallway towards the bathroom.



'Sleep?'

'A bit. You?'

'Nah, you know.'

'Do I what?'

'What's the missus reckon?'

Thatcher shrugs his massive shoulders. But it's that look that confirms it.

'Yours?'

'The same,' I said.

So, our respective partners are on the same page.

'I don't give two hoots, Megs,' Thatcher turns to me, 'you think she is real? I think she is real. No offense to our better halves, decent women they are.'

We are heading back to Bank and Monument on the train. Driving in would be a pain, and besides, my partner is starting to come across as a seasoned train traveller now. I'm quietly impressed. Thatcher is definitely getting better with dealing with the confines of the train. He looks relaxed, but I can tell he's a bit tired. We both are.

'The sooner we get there and do this, the quicker we can get home and enjoy our day of rest,' Thatcher says to me without looking in my direction. The train is pretty much empty. It's only 8.00am in the morning after all. I close my eyes for a moment. The train is swaying and I can feel myself slipping into eventual sleep.

In that moment I picture Finley. He is standing there in front of me. I've never met anyone so young but with an air of so much self-assurance and calmness. I can see why all those children looked up to him. I feel a gush of pride come over me. In a flash of the movement of the train carriage, where I feel my shoulders bump Thatcher's, Finley is replaced in my vision with someone else.

The teenage girl from Bank and Monument.

Staring at me with that lifeless expression.



SERGEANT BRISTOW GREETs Megevand and Thatcher with a big smile. If his two guests weren't a little tired, they would have experienced a sense of *deja vu*. Bristow is standing in almost the exact spot he was yesterday, when the three men first met.

'Mornin' gentlemen,' he stretches out his right hand and shakes Megevand and then Thatcher's with a strong grip.

'—You two ready to venture into the depths of this wonderful creation known as the Bank and Monument Complex?' he asks the two policemen. His enthusiasm on a Sunday morning was annoying, Megevand thought lightly.

'You always this energetic on a Sunday morning?' Thatcher asks him, as if reading his partner's thoughts. He follows the question with a Thatcher-sized dose of laughter. Big, and loud.

'Well, yes. I've already done my Sunday run. Five miles, give or take,' Bristow grins.

Thatcher looks at the bloke dumbfounded, before he turns to Megevand. The two men are thinking the same thing once again. *You've got to be bloody kidding, mate. A five-mile run? Already?*

Sergeant Bristow suddenly roars with laughter himself. Thatcher realizes the bloke is having a lend of him, and pats him firmly on the shoulder.

'You got us there Sergeant!' he adds.

As the laughter dies away, Bristow composes himself and is now ready for business.

‘Alright. We need to get moving. We have a bit of ground to cover as you two would expect,’ he said. He checks his surroundings before turning his attention back to his two guests.

‘—I’m going to take you to the control room that has a comprehensive map of the complex. From there you two should consider that the three of us split up.’

He waits for a reaction, but none comes. It’s too early and Megevand and Thatcher are yet to fire up. It is Sunday morning after all. Bristow presses on.

‘If we stick together this could take all day. Actually, more than a day. At the office there are some serious torches that we down here swear by. The real deal. Night into day, you know what I mean. Plus, detailed maps. You will take one each, of course. I’ll give you both a radio, which will keep us all plugged into each other’s whereabouts,’ he studies the two men’s faces for a moment. ‘How does that sound?’

Megevand and Thatcher give Bristow nods of approval.

‘Sounds like a plan,’ Megevand says, wondering if a mug of coffee could be found in the office before they head off. Bristow is already moving before Megevand and Thatcher even realise. They break into a trot to catch up with him.



Megevand is standing alongside Thatcher. Bristow is leaning against a desk, close by. He’d seen the same reaction dozens of times before when people first lay eyes on this wall. Megevand and Thatcher stare at the map in awe. This was more than a map; it was more of a blueprint, and the most detailed Megevand had ever seen. To think this was all completely underground, Megevand was lost for words.

‘This place is bloody enormous!’ he eventually mutters.

‘As I mentioned a few moments ago, there’s an extensive area to cover,’ Bristow responded, walking over to the map, every square inch of it etched in his brain. ‘You are also going to gain access to areas off-limits to the public.’

He turns his gaze away from the wall and back to his two guests.

‘—But be warned. People frequently break into these no-go zones. Some for fun. Some, who love to take photographs as one annoying hobby. Others, who get a kick out of being in the bowels of any Underground Station, especially the hidden areas. A tale to tell their friends.’ Bristow takes a deep breath and continues;

‘Sadly,’ he shakes his head and looks at the floor for a second, ‘—on the odd occasion a homeless person will find an unlocked or unsecured door. Or get desperate and somehow break a lock.

Most of the time they are just looking for somewhere to sleep,’ he makes eye contact with the two men. ‘Let me tell you, most are not happy to be found. Especially if you are interrupting their beauty sleep with a torch as powerful as the sun itself!’ He stares at Megevand and then Thatcher.

‘If I’ve ever seen two men who can take care of themselves,’ he grins longer at Thatcher, ‘it’s most certainly you two fine men. But keep your wits about you,’ Bristow’s expression hardens.

‘This place has shadows. Lots and lots of shadows. And that’s before the darkness.’

Bristow pauses, gauging their reaction. He turns back to the enormous blueprint on the wall and continues; ‘—you have not experienced true darkness until you are at the

deepest parts of this vast complex. It's like nothing you two men would have ever had the chance to experience before.'

Megevand stares at the back of Bristow's head as he takes in the sergeant's chilling words.

But this is where the sergeant is wrong. Megevand has seen the 'real' darkness. But darkness intertwined with something else.

Evil.

In its purest form.



Being a Sunday, the pedestrian tunnels heading off in every direction were uncomfortably quiet. Megevand, now on his own, held onto the Maglite torch and wondered how damn heavy the thing actually was. But Sergeant Bristow assured him that when it came time, the beast would be their best friend. As he ventured further down into the earth, the detective could feel the coolness of the tunnels creep across the back of his neck. He didn't like it.

A strange feeling came over him, it felt as if he was being watched by dozens of eyes. When he heard voices approaching, Megevand instinctively gripped the big torch even tighter until his knuckles turned white. Spotting two men walking towards him, he felt a little relieved that it was simply two passengers going about their Sunday morning. Nothing to see here.

Megevand felt the torch balancing its weight on either side of his hand. He knew the object could be more than just a torch if the situation was ever called upon; unless he was confronted by a man the size of Thatcher. Then you just aim for the knee and hope for the best. The radio squelched, taking his mind back to the task at hand.

‘Thatcher, Megs?’

Megevand made eye contact with the two men who finally passed him. They were heading to one of the exits. The detective noted that both men had looked intently at the big torch in his left hand, along with the radio in the right. They would have surely put two-and-two together and figured out Megevand’s purpose of being there.

‘Megevand. Thatcher, miss me already?’ the detective grinned as he spoke into the radio. A stench of urine hitting him from nowhere wiped the grin off his face in an instant.

‘You shitting your pants yet Albert?’ Thatcher mocked.

‘Not yet Maggie. Was that the reason for you calling?’ Megevand said, wiping his nose with his bare hand in the hope to remove the smell firmly wedged in his nostrils.

‘All bullshit aside. This place is making my skin crawl. You feel like you are being watched?’ Thatcher asked his partner. Megevand turned and looked back up the pedestrian tunnel. A part of him wanting to at least lay eyes on the two men who had just walked past him. It would make him feel less weird.

It would quash that gnawing feeling hovering over him that his partner, evidently, was feeling too. Eyes. Lots of eyes. Staring from the darkness.

‘Feeling the same,’ Megevand said. He pressed on, gripping the Maglite tighter. A train in a tunnel nearby arriving at a platform filled the air with noise followed by a gust of wind.

‘—Whose idea was this to come back here?’ Thatcher did his best to lighten the mood. Megevand could not help but smile.

‘I could have come back on my own you know,’ Megevand said sheepishly.

The train whirled as it left the nearby platform. The

detective waited for the second gust of wind that always followed. Moving shadows appeared at the other end of the pedestrian tunnel. People were coming his way. He didn't mind. He'd welcome any company right at this moment.

When the gust of air from the train eventually came, it brought an unusual smell with it. Normally, Megevand would have shrugged it off, as just another odour, like that previously of urine that seemed ubiquitous in the Tube.

But it was the sheer intensity of this new fragrance which he could not ignore. Like on a scale of one to ten, it was a thirteen. The detective was by no means an expert in women's cologne. But the smell was so powerful he knew it couldn't be anything else. It was as if someone had sprayed it straight in his face.

It reminded him of something his old Granny may have dabbed on her jowls before heading off to the bowls club on a Saturday night. Megevand ventured further down the tunnel, now curious. For a moment, he wondered what was worse. Urine, or this overpowering waft.

And then, there was something else. Either he was getting nervous, or the temperature in the tunnel was dropping rapidly.

'Megevand. Thatcher. Getting colder in your neck of the woods?'

'Thatcher. Megevand. Can't say it is mate, pretty much the same,' Thatcher did nothing to dispel the growing feeling of unease weighing heavier on Megevand's mind with every step.

'Megevand. Thatcher. Okay sure, just getting a bit—' Megevand's last word caught in his throat. The smell of Granny's perfume had been instantly replaced by yet another intense odour. Something absolutely awful.

‘You alright there old mate?’ Thatcher asked.

‘Bristow, Thatcher and Megevand. Everything in order gentlemen? Nothing to report here,’ Sergeant Bristow chimed in.

‘Megevand. Bristow. Getting some really weird vibes where I am gents,’ Megevand said, his words clipped, ‘—weird smells, weird feelings. All of it,’ he added.

‘Bristow. Megevand. I hear you. Work here long enough and you become accustomed to it. You have to.’

‘Megevand. Bristow. Copy that,’ Megevand’s pace slowed but he ventured on. A thought came to him.

‘Silly question Bristow, but I’ll ask anyway. Have you ever experienced the smell of, you know—’ Sergeant Bristow knew what Megevand was asking, though he didn’t want to come straight out and say it. He knew the detective was talking about the smell of death. A deceased person.

‘Bristow. Megevand. A smell you’d rather forget. It’s as if your nostrils will never let you.’

‘Thatcher. Bristow and Megevand. Couldn’t have said it better myself,’ Thatcher chimed in.

Megevand had arrived on a platform which was completely devoid of any signs of life. He put his radio to his mouth and spoke to the other two men;

‘Megevand. Bristow and Thatcher. A second ago, it was this overpowering smell of cheap perfume.’

As he spoke, he looked around the platform, before spotting something at the other end of the platform. An access door. But this one was ajar.

‘—and now, Jesus Christ,’ Megevand held his hand up to his mouth and nose, ‘it’s as if I’ve just uncovered a mass grave.’ Bristow heard Megevand’s words and stopped dead in

his tracks. He stared at the radio in his hand as if he could see Megevand through the speaker.

Being a long term BTP officer, working in the Underground for more years than he cared to remember, Bristow had heard his fair share of stories about strange goings on down here in the Tube. Some, he believed. Others, he wasn't so sure about. People loved ghost stories. Some policemen loved telling them. Often those policemen didn't mind mixing these stories with a few pints and equal amounts hyperbole.

Especially, about the spooky stories which originated from the bowels of London's Underground. But Bristow knew, even though they may have often been blown out of proportion. They were often *born* from the truth. The sergeant generally kept that to himself. Fear of ridicule, mainly. He had mates in BTP who did the same.

'Bristow. Megevand, just checking. You are on the Northern line?'

The detective was so caught up in the nauseating smell he wasn't sure. He turned his attention to the nearby wall and saw that he was.

'Megevand. Bristow. Yes. I am,' he said, turning his attention back to the access door. He could feel something invisible pulling him towards it.

'*Fuck*,' Bristow had slipped the word out, but said it so quietly Megevand and Thatcher barely heard it.

'Thatcher. Bristow. You say something?' Thatcher said.

Bristow was alone in the area he was searching. He was in one of the pedestrian access tunnels of the Waterloo and City Line section of the complex. There wasn't another soul around for miles. It made that creepy feeling worse. Hearing what Megevand had said, his skin had turned to ice.

Years ago, Bristow had heard about this particular story. Dozens upon dozens of British Transport Police had all experienced it themselves. First hand. A sudden and completely overpowering smell of death, coming from nowhere. No warning. This disturbing phenomenon, occurring in different locations in the Tube, at all times of the day and night.

Apparently, the rumours of this occurrence went as far back as post-World War Two. Returned servicemen, who later become London policemen, soldiers who at the height of the war had stumbled upon mass graves spread all over occupied Europe. The indelible smell, of the hundreds, sometimes thousands of rotting corpses, haunting them for the rest of their lives.

And now, thinking this terrible experience was behind them, these returned servicemen, now as policemen, found that the smell of death that came without warning in the Tube was on par with their memories from the war and what they encountered there.

Over time, plenty of British Transport Policemen passed the stories off as nothing more than a fable. A ghost story, borne from bored people, after too many pints at the pub. But Sergeant John Bristow knew what he knew. He had experienced it himself. And not just once.

One of his fellow officers had once given Bristow his own theory. He knew Bristow well enough to know he would keep it to himself. The sergeant took it with a grain of salt and left it at that. He wasn't sure if it had any credence. But it sure as hell would make a good bedtime ghost story with the grandkids on a wintry night.

That's if he wanted to scare the shit out of them. His friend claimed the smell of overpowering death came from the burial pits dotted around London, dating back to the black plague. In

some cases, thousands of bodies were buried in the one pit. The same pits, that on more than one occasion, had been tunnelled through to make an underground train line.

The last time Bristow had experienced this; he was standing on the same platform Megevand was currently standing on. He swallowed and felt his throat go dry.

‘Thatcher. Bristow. You, okay?’ Thatcher asked.

‘Bristow— Thatcher. Sorry about that,’ the BTP Sergeant regained his composure as the memory of that sickening smell struggled to leave his memories.

‘—It’s just that’ Bristow went to add.

‘—Mother Fucker!’ Megevand hadn’t intended to say those two words.

Right before his eyes — the access door shot open and banged violently against the wall. Chunks of concrete fell on to the platform. Dust flew up covering the doorway in a smoky haze. Suffice to say, it gave Megevand an almighty fright, to put it mildly.

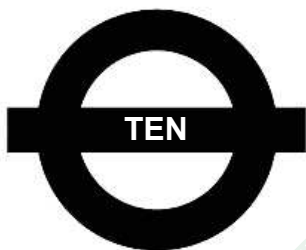
‘Thatcher. Megevand what’s going on?’ Thatcher shouted into his radio.

Megevand was about to answer, but as brutally as it had flown open, it swung shut with the same force. BANG!

The sound reverberated through Megevand’s bones, shaking him to his core. Bristow and Thatcher heard the sound even from hundreds of feet away in other areas of the complex.

Megevand felt his teeth chattering. Even the toughest of men are prone to getting the fright of their lives.

His heart thumped hard in his chest. When Megevand took a deep breath of subterranean air, things went from bad to worse. Every available light on the platform and surrounding pedestrian tunnels went out.



‘FUCK!’ MEGEVAND MUTTERED before scrambling for the Maglite’s on switch.

It wasn’t the shock of being in complete darkness that had him gasping for air, it was the speed, and ferocity of the door exploding open, then banging shut. And how quickly all the lights went out a second later.

‘Megevand—Bristow!’ Megevand muttered into his mike, his fingers fumbling with the radio as he finally managed to turn on the torch.

‘—We have a power failure on the Northern Line, all lights here are out!’

‘Hang tight Detective.’ Bristow was on it. ‘I will get in touch with the control room and find out what is going on,’ he said calmly.

Megevand stood dead still. His chest was heaving, but his composure was slowly returning. Only just. The access door was still closed tight. Megevand wasn’t sure if he wanted to get any closer.

It felt as if it was radiating the type of energy that made him want to run in the opposite direction. But that gnawing feeling in his body reappeared. He had to investigate.

The detective took another step towards the door.

It was decades old, and looked heavy. It had been

graffitied so many times all the ink had merged into a vomit of paint and muck.

'Thatcher. Megevand! I'm on my way!' Thatcher said, although Megevand was so transfixed by the door he didn't reply.

The detective glanced to his left, and to his right. He ventured a quick glance behind him. It was pointless. In the pitch black he couldn't see a thing unless he pointed the torch in that direction. He stepped closer to the door.

What he would give to have Thatcher by his side, he thought. That would make him feel a whole lot better. Another three steps. Megevand winced. He nearly dropped the radio. The torch in his hand started to shake with what he was seeing unfold before his own eyes in real time.

The door's handle began to turn. What made it all the more frightening was how slow. Megevand swallowed.

It was freezing cold, but Megevand felt a bead of sweat trickling down his forehead. He wiped it away before taking a shallow, anxious breath. The door handle stopped turning. Megevand wondered if his heart would stop beating.

Then, as he stood there wishing he were still in bed with Yukiko, the door began to open of its own accord. But contrary to the last time it opened, this time, it opened agonisingly slow. Megevand could do nothing but stand in the middle of the platform and hope Thatcher's legs were in prime condition. There was no sign nor sound of him yet.

As the door opened all the way, Megevand wondered if his heart could take any more spooky shenanigans today. His thought betrayed him.

The Maglite torch in his hand went dead.



‘Mother of God,’ Megevand whispered to himself, the realisation of him being where he was, alone, giving him a level of panic he’d not felt in years.

There were no sounds. There was no movement. Just Megevand and the infinite universe found in true darkness.

‘—I’m one of the good blokes!’ he had no idea why he’d just said the words out loud.

Before he could take another breath, there was that intense smell of cheap perfume again.

For some reason Megevand found himself closing his eyes. Maybe he thought it would feel less frightening than standing in pitch blackness with no ability to see a thing. The detective gently opened his eyes and realised his torch was — slowly coming back to life.

Megevand had no idea what was going on, but didn’t care. Light was light.

Eventually, returning to full power, and that feeling came along with the light. Being watched. He lifted his gaze from the pool of light on the platform to the door. It sat open.

She stood just inside the door. Megevand met her eyes. She stared at him as if it were the first time she’d ever laid eyes on him. Her face was a picture of calmness, which made Megevand all the more frightened. Without saying a word, she slowly turned around and walked off into the hallway beyond the door.

She made no attempt to run. Megevand’s legs stiffened, as he watched the girl disappear into the darkness. From behind him he heard footsteps approaching.

‘Thatcher, Megevand?’ Thatcher’s voice was unmistakable, but sounded miles off.

Megevand put the radio to his mouth.

‘—I think I’ve found her,’ was all he said.

‘Don’t move an inch, I’ll be there before you know it,’ Thatcher responded.

Megevand could tell by his laboured breaths the big bloke was doing all he could to get there as soon as his legs and lungs would allow. It made him feel good knowing his partner had his back.

‘I’m not going anywhere mate,’ Megevand responded.



It had taken the two policemen another few minutes before they found her.

‘This is one of those times I wish we were wrong,’ Thatcher whispered. Megevand could feel the hurt in his partner’s words.

‘It’s going to take some time to actually believe it,’ Megevand responded.

Megevand could not believe how far the pedestrian tunnels stretched out, down here in the bowels of the complex. It appeared to be an access tunnel to somewhere that, at some point years earlier, had been blocked off a few hundred feet in.

She wore the exact clothing they had seen her wearing. Her long black hair fell across her face. With her eyes closed, Megevand wished, but knew, the chances of her simply being asleep was too good to be true. Her skin was the ashen colour, which normally meant only one thing. Reluctantly, he leant down and checked the pulse point on her neck. He didn’t want it to be true.

Bristow arrived a moment later, and instead of telling the

two policemen 'I told you so,' he just stood there, not saying a word. Eventually, he took a deep breath and sighed.

'What a beautiful girl she was,' the sergeant said, and before Thatcher or Megevand could respond he added, '—as a parent of two teenage girls, nothing can prepare you for this.'

Thatcher turned and rested his hand on the sergeant's shoulder.

'It will take some time to process this,' Thatcher said to him, 'and I will go to my grave believing she was alive when we first saw her,' he added.

The three men stood over the teenage girl's body for a few more moments. All three of them lost in their own thoughts. Megevand knew the best thing for her was for them not to touch a thing. The men had already checked where they were standing and would note this to the forensics team.

Megevand's gut was telling him the circumstances of this girl's death were nefarious. He could see three separate bruises on the left side of her face for starters.

Her bottom lip was split and blood had dried leaving a red scuff mark which went from her lip to the end of her chin. Her hair was matted as if it had been pulled in all different directions.

Feeling that familiar pang of anguish, Megevand looked closer and noticed more black and purple bruises.

The girl was a complete stranger to the detective, yet he felt a deep-seated anger as to how, why, and who had brought her to a terrible, premature death.



TWO DAYS LATER.

‘Detective Megevand,’ he muttered into his office phone, the enthusiasm in his voice non-existent. His second coffee of the morning had failed to improve his mood.

‘Detective, sorry, John Bristow, from the BTP. Have I caught you at a bad time?’

Megevand glanced over at Thatcher, who looked as flat as Megevand felt. Thatcher was sitting at his desk flipping through reports. Megevand could tell by his partner’s huffing and puffing he was not in the mood for any type of paperwork.

‘Hello John,’ the detective sat up straighter, directing what energy he could muster in sounding upbeat. ‘—it’s good to hear from you,’ Megevand added.

‘Look, I’m not sure if I should be talking to you about this. But I could tell how upset you were the other night when we found her. Um,’ Bristow’s voice became quieter, ‘—tell me, what neck of the woods do you live in?’

Megevand shrugged, ‘Upton Park, why?’ he said.

‘Good. Perfect actually, I’m close. Bethnal Green. Ever heard of the Salmon and Ball?’ Bristow said.

‘Know it well, a local institution,’ Megevand responded.

‘Fancy a pint after work tonight? There’s something I’d

like to talk to you about. Sort of off the record for now if you get my drift. I just don't want to get my arse kicked for crossing jurisdictional lines, you know,' Bristow said.

The hairs on the back of Megevand's neck prickled. Bethnal Green was less than 15 minutes' drive from his house. Yukiko was at a work function tonight so he was home alone. He was about to ask Sergeant Bristow if he could bring Thatcher along, but Megevand remembered the man mountain was busy tonight. Something about a thing with his wife.

Megevand scratched an itch behind his right ear. He was now curious as to what Bristow wanted to talk to him about.

'Sure, what time?' Megevand asked.

'—how's seven, work for you?' Bristow asked.

'See you then,' Megevand hung up, ready to fill in his partner on what had just gone down.



Megevand struggled to find a parking spot at this time of the night. Short on patience at the best of times, he began tapping his fingers rapidly on the steering wheel. After five minutes of driving up and down the street, he eventually saw someone pulling out of a spot on Cambridge Heath Road, right next to the Bethnal Green Gardens.

Perfect. It was across the road and only a few shops down from the Salmon and Ball.

As the detective waited for traffic at the lights at the intersection, along with a handful of other people, a weird, almost disturbing feeling passed through him. *No, not again*, he thought.

He looked to his left, then his right. The lights turned green so he started to walk across the road, but Megevand still couldn't shake the overwhelming feeling deep in his

body. Once he reached the other side he spun around, his eyes darting up and down the street and across to the car park where he'd just come from.

No one was there.

'Need to get a grip, old boy,' he muttered, shaking his head, you're losing your frigging mi—'

And then he realised. The southern entrance to the Bethnal Green Underground Station was situated just behind the corner where the two footpaths of the intersecting streets met. Stifling a gurgling sound deep in his throat, he moved a few paces to the right to get a better view.

About six steps down the southern entrance, she stood, her eyes boring right through him.

'That you detective?'

'Holy fuck!'

The voice from a few feet away startled Megevand, and he almost jumped ten feet in the air.

He turned around, locking eyes with Sergeant Bristow but just as quick, he shifted his gaze back to the girl. A second later, she turned and walked down the stairs into the station.

'Everything all right?' Sergeant Bristow arrived at Megevand's side.

'Yep, I just think I —,' the detective stopped himself. If he told the sergeant who he thought he'd just seen, Bristow would think he was losing his marbles.

'You look like you could do with a pint,' Bristow nodded towards the pub, 'come on then, first rounds on me.'



IT TOOK MEGEVAND a couple of mouthfuls of his Carling Black Label to get his senses back in order. She looked exactly the same as the last time he'd seen her when she was standing in the entrance to the access tunnel back at the Bank and Monument Station Complex.

He wondered, momentarily, if he should tell Bristow about it but his gut urged him to keep it under wraps. For now. The last thing Megevand needed was a sergeant from the BTP thinking he was losing his shit because of what he'd just seen across the street. Here. In Bethnal Green.

The BTP officer led the detective from the bar over to an empty table. What the pub lacked in size, it made up for in atmosphere. It was busy for a weeknight with a throng of people enjoying a night out.

'Bristow!' someone shouted from the other side of the room.

'Shaggars!' Bristow responded, raising his pint at the man and secretly hoping he didn't come over. He was one of the locals who kept the pub in business. Bristow knew if Shaggars came over they'd be stuck with him for hours.

'Mate of yours?' Megevand smiled.

Bristow didn't venture a glance back over to the other side of the bar.

'Problem is, I know just about every damn drinker in this place,' the sergeant said, 'comes from living around here most of my life I guess.'

'Cheers to that,' Megevand toasted him, 'there are worse places in London you could live,' he said.

'Right, you are there. Always been a Hammer?' Bristow asked.

'Most of my life yeah,' as a kid growing up the nickname for a West Ham Football Team supporter had always been something Megevand thought was pretty cool. There weren't many people who lived in Upton Park who didn't barrack for West Ham.

'Been in Upton Park so long it's as if you were born to be a hammer,' Megevand said.

With the light-hearted talk now dispensed with, both men knew it was time to get down to business.

'So—,' Bristow took another drink from his beer, '—probably wondering why I wanted to talk to you,' the question was rhetorical so Megevand simply nodded.

'Firstly,' the sergeant looked slightly uneasy but pushed on, 'we will be releasing her name in the morning.'

Megevand nodded and glanced around the room before meeting the sergeant's eyes once more.

'Alexandra Young,' Bristow seemed to struggle to get name out of his mouth, 'seventeen years old.'

He gulped a third of his beer before wiping his mouth. Megevand could tell whatever was on his mind was weighing heavily on him.

'John,' Megevand leant closer, 'if you don't want to talk about it, that's okay. I'm happy to sit here and have a beer with you. We can talk about other stuff if you want.'

Sergeant Bristow stared at his beer for a moment, stealing

a glance across the room. He didn't want anyone to be close enough to hear their conversation.

'No,' Bristow said in a mere whisper, 'there's some things about this case, and her, I think you may want to know.'

The sergeant took a deep breath and waited for Megevand to give him some sort of recognition. Megevand nodded and said 'all right then, John. I'm listening.'

Sergeant John Bristow shuffled in his seat before resting his hands on either side of his pint.

He leant closer towards Megevand and whilst he stared at the top of his beer said, 'Alexandra was met with foul play, Ian. She was sexually assaulted before she died, early reports indicate.'

Megevand replayed every single time he'd seen her standing there staring at him, from the first time, to the last time, which was only a few minutes ago.

He knew that in most, if not all instances, it was her ghost standing there. Of course, it had to be. He went to say something but found it difficult to speak. Bristow watched him closely, before shutting his eyes and shaking his head.

'Your partner, Thatcher, he was on the right track as far as looking for closed circuit television cameras in the complex. I know I shouldn't be talking to you about this. This is not your patch. But there was something about how you and Thatcher were down there. I could see that you really wanted to find her. Like—,' the sergeant stumbled on his next word and his voice broke slightly, 'she was one of your daughters.'

Megevand recalled Bristow mentioning the fact that he had two teenage daughters of his own. This was probably the main driver of what brought him here tonight to talk to him.

'I can't say we've both been the same since we found her, John. I haven't been this affected by a case since—'

‘I know all about you, Detective,’ Bristow said, carefully.

‘—and for the record,’ he smiled faintly, ‘I never doubted for one second that what you witnessed and what happened to you, did happen.’

Megevand nodded. For all the times he was ridiculed, both inside the police force and in public; it was always nice to hear someone say that.

‘I appreciate it,’ Megevand said.

Bristow let the silence between them sit there for a moment. He took another sip of his beer and composed himself, ready for what he wanted to discuss next.

‘The thing is, Ian,’ Bristow said, ‘even in the forty-eight hours since we found her, things have gone a bit, how do I say, off kilter down in the complex.’

Megevand wondered what he meant. ‘You’ve got me John,’ the detective said.

Bristow did another check around the pub to ensure Shaggars or anyone else wasn’t in earshot. All clear.

‘The Black Nun,’ Bristow said, and then added, ‘Richard Head, the painter and decorator.’

‘You mean the ghosts of these people?’ Megevand asked.

‘Yes. The problem being, they are two of many others we know of in the Bank and Monument Complex. The thing is, in the last two days it seems like they have all come out of the woodwork and are causing no end of trouble.’

‘Shit, I don’t know what to say,’ Megevand was honest in his words. Being an Underground Station and part of London’s transport network, it was the British Transport Police’s responsibility to sort out. Megevand was not permitted to get involved and his boss Windebank would not have a bar of it.

‘I know, you can’t—’ Bristow raised his hand in a friendly gesture.

‘—but if you had any ideas, you could give me a call. Between you and me?’

Megevand smiled and nodded. Bristow had been good to him since the moment he met him. The bloke was likable, and Megevand knew another friend in the BTP would not go astray.

‘Sure, I will give it some thought,’ Megevand meant what he said.

Satisfied, Bristow sat back and took a drink of his beer before the detective noticed a frown on the sergeant’s face. It was as if a dark cloud had appeared over him.

‘There’s one other thing,’ Bristow leant closer and this time his words were whispered.

‘I know I am not supposed to discuss this with you, but I feel the need to do so. I can trust you, right Detective?’ Megevand stared at the sergeant for a moment.

‘You can trust me,’ Megevand eventually said.

Bristow nodded before closing his eyes and once again leaning in closer to the detective.

‘We know they will need to be reviewed more thoroughly. But a friend of mine, a bloke I’ve worked with for nearly fifteen years, he was the first to see it.’

Megevand was about to ask what Bristow was talking about, but the sergeant continued.

‘—we got Alexandra on camera, down near the Northern Line platform.’

Megevand could feel a cold breeze pass over his neck. Bristow stared at his beer again.

‘What is it Bristow?’ Megevand whispered.

He sat there, staring at his beer, eventually looking up at

Megevand. The detective could see hints of the pub's lights reflecting in the corners of the sergeant's eyes.

'As I said, we got her on tape, close to the Northern Line platform, near that door—'

The colour drained from Megevand's face. Call it intuition.

'—and it was at that point my friend spotted.'

Bristow closed his eyes and when he opened them, Megevand could see they had glazed over.

'My God Sergeant, you've got me holding my breath here,' Megevand said.

Bristow took a big gulp of his beer, before resting the glass back on the coaster.

'She was being led into the access door by grown men, Detective,' the sergeant finally got the words out.

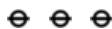
'Men?' Megevand felt his fists instinctively curling into fists.

'—as in more than one?' he hissed.

Bristow closed his eyes and nodded.

'How many?' Megevand whispered.

'Four,' Bristow replied.



Megevand stood outside the Salmon and Ball. The night air was cool. It was filled with the sounds of cars, buses and the overhanging hum of the city of London. The footpaths were dotted with people. The dusk sky was turning into a murky grey.

Bristow stood next to Megevand, both men lost in their own thoughts.

'Which way are you?' Bristow said to Megevand.

The detective pointed across the road.

'Ah, I'm on the other side of the park, same direction, I'll walk with you,' Bristow said.

'Sure,' Megevand responded.

The two men walked over to the traffic lights before Megevand did the honours and pressed the button. Traffic was constant and the policeman stood there waiting for the lights to turn green.

'You know—' Bristow had gone to say to Megevand, but noticed the detective staring across the road, deadly serious.

'No bloody way,' Megevand muttered.

Bristow followed Megevand's gaze. For a second, he wondered what Megevand was looking at, but then he spotted her.

'You can't be serious,' Bristow said.

Standing at the top of the subway entrance, in full view, was Alexandra Young.

Bristow could see her as clear as day.

'My lord. It's her,' he gasped.

The lights turned green a second later. The two men began walking towards her. But then Bristow stopped dead in his tracks, reaching out for Megevand and pulling him to a stop. It was what was going on behind the life-like apparition of the teenage girl that made Bristow's heart feel as if it had turned to stone.

Curiously, dozens upon dozens of people appeared, walking together, tightly packed and heading for the southern entrance of Bethnal Green Underground Station. Alexander Young was still staring at Megevand and Bristow, but it was only when Bristow turned his attention back to the mass of people, did he realise what was odd about them. Their clothing.

He did a double take. Clearly, they were from another era, their attire from another time.

Before he had time to say a word, the tightly packed people all turned their attention up into the night sky. Bristow looked at his watch and then shuddered. It was eight seventeen pm.

Megevand and Bristow exchanged glances before looking into the sky above the park. They would later swear they both heard the sound.

The sound of an air raid siren.

A few seconds later both policemen heard a commotion across the road. The mysterious crowd of people panicked at the high-pitched wailing sound by their frantic movements. They began to push against the people on the stairs leading down into the station.

In the blink of an eye, the scene disappeared as if it were never there. Bristow looked away momentarily, certain he had imagined the whole thing. He gave Megevand a side-long glance.

‘Did you see that—’

Megevand abruptly turned. The sound of ear-splitting screams and movement were coming from behind them. The other two entrances to the Bethnal Green Underground Station were on the same side as the Salmon and Ball.

He shot Bristow a look and they both rushed towards one of the stairwells. People were running out of the entrance in sheer panic, many screaming, others shouting and most bulldozing their way through.

Bristow grabbed a middle-aged man by the arm and pulled him to one side.

‘I’m on off-duty British Transport Officer. What is going on?’ he said.

‘Fucking hell!’ the man said, struggling to catch his breath.

‘—We were just getting off the train when the lights started going on and off. And then we heard the screams, so loud, I think my ears are going to bleed. I just couldn’t believe what I saw!’

With a mix of foreboding and urgency, Bristow cut in. ‘And what exactly did you see?’ he asked.

‘It was mayhem, a lot of panic, we all ran to the southern entrance, and then — and —’

‘And then?’ Bristow asked.

‘We came across a huge pile of people just lying there, blocking the entrance. Piled on top of each other they were, some of them just staring at us, others screaming and begging for help. It’s the scariest thing I’ve ever seen!’

Bristow watched more people run up the stairs, a few losing their footing and stumbling onto the pavement. Shouting and more screaming followed. One bloke tripped on the top step and fell flat on his face. Bristow sprang to action and pulled the old bloke to his feet.

The old man had tears in his eyes. He muttered something to Sergeant Bristow as the policeman helped him to his feet and pulled him away from the entrance where people were streaming out of the station.

‘—please, I plead with you, can you?’

Bristow turned to the old man and said, ‘what do you mean. What do you need me to do?’

The man wiped a tear from his eye, and his body shuddered.

‘—I was five when it happened. I got split up from my mother and three sisters when the air raid sirens went off,’ he

cried to Bristow. 'I just saw them all. They were calling out to me. Please, mister, can you go and try and help them?'

Bristow's throat went dry. He turned to Megevand, who had been watching Bristow with the old man, and had heard everything the old bloke had just said. The shouting, screaming and sheer pandemonium continued for a few more minutes before Megevand took one final glance back across the road to where he had seen Alexandra Young.

She stood there once again, staring at Megevand with a lifeless expression. A moment later she held out her hand as if pleading for help, and then slowly turned around and began walking back down the stairs of the southern entrance.

As the police sirens began to draw closer, Megevand leant against the railing of the staircase on his side of the road, and closed his eyes. A thought came to mind and for a moment and he wondered if it were true.

Tonight — was only the beginning.



THE “*STRANGE EVENTS at the Bethnal Green Tube Station*,” as they were quoted in the media, made front-page news across the United Kingdom. Tiring of the constant bickering and shenanigans in the British Parliament and the Royal Family, the press was quite happy to divert its attention to something else for a day.

I sat at my desk and read The Daily Mail. Thatcher sat at his desk reading The Times.

‘And you were there?’ Thatcher didn’t look up from his paper nor attempt to make eye contact with me.

I put my paper down and recalled the events of the night, still as fresh and vivid in my mind as if it had just happened. I stole a quick glance around the office. Thatcher and I were the only people in. But this could change at any moment. I shuffled over to his desk.

‘Whatever you do, don’t mention to Windebank me being there, right?’ I whispered.

Thatcher met my eyes before he shook his head in disgust.

‘—I will ignore that stupid comment. “Who the bleedin’ ‘ell do you think you are talkin’ to?”’ Thatcher switched to his cockney alter ego which he did to my chagrin, often.

I sat back against his desk before I shook my head. His cockney accent was nothing short of bloody terrible.

‘—And she was there?’ Thankfully, in his normal speech. Thatcher stared at me until I answered him.

‘Sergeant Bristow saw her with his own eyes. He couldn’t believe it. He now understands where you and I were sure she was still alive down in the Bank and Monument Complex.’

‘I’m telling you’ — I shrugged — ‘it was a bloody freaky thing.’

Windebank suddenly appeared from God knows where. How he was able to get this close to us without us even knowing he had entered the office was one of the great mysteries of life along with the Yeti and the Loch Ness Monster.

‘I see you gents are up with the news, huh.’ Windebank patted me on the shoulder, which nearly rattled my rib cage due to his strength.

‘One hundred and seventy-three people died at Bethnal Green that terrible, terrible night. March third, 1943,’ he said with sadness etched in his eyes. ‘A fuck up that should not have happened. None of those men, women and children should have died on that staircase. But I digress.’ Windebank stood there staring at the newspaper on Thatcher’s desk.

‘And now, we have this,’ he added.

I fell silent for a moment. I really didn’t know what to say.

‘Driving in this morning, the news on the radio states that Bethnal Green Tube Station is still completely closed,’ Windebank said. I hadn’t bothered turning on the radio in my car on the trip into work. Wasn’t in the mood.

‘Apparently if you believe what they are saying, they can’t get the power back on, and there is also some other weird shit still going on down there.’ I made eye contact with Thatcher without Windebank knowing. We both shrugged before

Windebank shuffled his feet. We knew this meant he was about to head off.

‘They’re interviewing locals around the station this morning. Most of them are saying the same thing.’

Windebank paused for a moment as if he was waiting for one of us to ask him what these people are saying. I was about to say something but he finally spoke.

‘Most are adamant. They don’t want to go anywhere near the station. Whatever happened last night freaked dozens, make it hundreds of people out of their pants.’

Windebank sighed.

‘As the press do,’ my boss frowned, ‘they’ve managed to locate a couple of people who had family members who lost their lives that terrible night back in World War Two. People who were at the station last night when the Twilight Zone show kicked off.’

Windebank shook his head before wiping something off his arm, ‘—and these people claim to have, in one case, seen, and in another heard, their own family members shouting out to them from the area around the Southern Entrance. Pleading for help.’

The three of us, myself and Windebank still standing, and Thatcher sitting, fell into silence for a moment. What else could be said? But Windebank was a busy man. The moment didn’t last long.

‘Alright. Shall we get back to it, then?’ He said. The question wasn’t really a question.

Thatcher nodded and I followed suit as I headed back to my desk, flinging my copy of the morning paper onto an empty desk nearby. More colleagues filtered in. Once I saw Windebank enter his office and shut his door, I said to

Thatcher as quietly as I could,'—there's something else I need to tell you about her, Maggie.'

Thatcher scanned the room before he stood and came over to my desk.

'Go on,' he said leaning closer to me.

'Bristow claims they have it on tape. There's a strong possibility—' I found myself staring into the man mountain's eyes wondering how he was going to take it.

'—she was assaulted,' Thatcher's shoulders straightened and his jaw set.

I knew I had to come out and say it, so I did.

'—by maybe up to four men.'

Thatcher went silent. His eyes did not waver from mine.

'What?' he hissed.

When I noticed myself looking to his left hand resting on my desk, it had curled into a tight fist.

'If I ever find them,' I hadn't ever seen Thatcher this instantly angry in a long time. His big knuckles were nearly white, and he pressed them into my desk as if he wanted to punch a hole in it, '—they are going to wish they never laid eyes on that poor girl.'



By morning tea, we had got back into the day's work. Ironically, one of the jobs we had to contend with was the mysterious body that had turned up in the changing room of the House of Fraser department store, located near the Bank and Monument Complex. I could tell Thatcher had regained his composure some time ago, but every time I looked over at him, he seemed distracted. He wasn't alone.

I couldn't take my mind off what had taken place at Bethnal Green last night. I went back over my conversation

with Sergeant Bristow at the Salmon and Ball, before we bore witness to the 'strange events at Bethnal Green Tube Station.' Fuck. That was an understatement.

And then there was Alexandra.

I wondered who she was. Where she had lived. Who were her parents? What were they going through right now? Did she have brothers and sisters? Were the family sitting at home trying to figure out how they would ever be able to move on from her tragic death?

There were so many questions running through my mind I couldn't focus on a damn thing.

Thatcher appeared at my desk.

'Time for a coffee. What do you say Albert?'

I looked up at him and smirked.

'It'd better be your shout, Maggie.'

He reached over and patted me on the shoulder.

'Alright, I can do that. And maybe after that,' he looked up to ensure Windebank was in his office.

'—we go back to the House of Fraser Department Store in town and check things out.'

It was the tone in his voice that I knew what he was referring to, but he added just in case I hadn't;

'—and we check in with our new BTP friend afterwards and see if he wants to join us for lunch nearby.'

God, I love Maggie.



MEGEVAND AND THATCHER scribbled a few notes although there wasn't anything new. The staff at the House of Fraser couldn't shed any further light on the movements of the dead teenager when he had originally entered the building. Neither could they provide any details as to why he could mysteriously wind-up dead in the men's changing room on the third floor.

The running staff member, the girl who Megevand and Thatcher had chased down into the bowels of the Bank and Monument Complex, had vanished. Thatcher's follow-up phone call to the local Police Station in Morden, whose officers had gone to the girl's home in search of her a few days earlier, suggested her running was more about her relationship with cocaine than a connection to the body of the young man in the change room.

Having said that, the police at Morden Station told Thatcher they would keep a keen eye out for her. Thatcher told them to call him when she showed up. The two policemen stood out the front of the department store's main door, watching people enter and exit. Some with House of Fraser bags, others without.

'Can't say it's one of my favourite places to shop Albert,'

Thatcher said as the two men stood there watching customers leave the store.

‘How many exes do you have on your clothes labels?’ Megevand asked with a smile.

‘Ten XL,’ Thatcher rolled his head around his tree-trunk neck, as if he were a boxer about to punch on in the ring, ‘anythin’ smaller, guv, it grabs the shoulders too tight, yeh?’

Megevand let out a sigh. He was getting close to placing a limit on how many times in one bloody day James Thatcher was allowed to do his cockney accent. He felt if he did it again today, that would make it three times. Once a month was barely palatable.

‘Well, I don’t blame you,’ Megevand said, ignoring the horrific cockney twang, ‘I think most department stores in the UK wouldn’t cater for a brick shithouse size of a man like you.’

Thatcher grunted.

‘Speaking of food,’ Thatcher said changing the subject in a heartbeat, before Megevand’s eyes went wide as he checked his watch. It was eleven thirty-five am.

‘In most western civilizations, lunch is served at midday,’ the detective could not help the grin that appeared on his face, as Thatcher looked at him, innocently.

‘Well, this magnificent body needs a crap-tonne of fuel,’ he responded.

Thatcher looked to the nearby entrance to Monument Underground Station, before turning back to Megevand.

‘How about we go for a wander down to the control room and see if Bristow is there. We can offer to take him to lunch and by the time we find somewhere,’ he checked his watch, ‘I’m sure it will be lunch time!’

Megevand nodded. He couldn't argue with his partner's logic. It made perfect sense.



'Ah ha,' Sergeant Bristow greeted the two men who were standing outside the Bank and Monument's Control Room door.

'You two may need to transfer to the British Transport Police Division the way you two are going!' he said, shaking both their hands.

'Dropping by to say hello, or?' he added.

'Thatcher and myself were just across the road at the House of Fraser. We thought it would be rude to be so close and not stick our heads in and say hello,' Megevand grinned.

Before Bristow could respond Thatcher jumped in.

'Thought we'd see if you wanted to grab a bite to eat somewhere close. Get out into the sunshine for a bit,' he said with a grin.

Bristow checked his watch and Megevand saw that he was giving it some thought.

'You know what,' the BTP officer smiled, 'I often end up having lunch on my own, out the back of the control room. A bit of fresh air and some company for a change would be good.'

Megevand and Thatcher both nodded.

'Give me a minute,' Bristow said, disappearing through the control room doors. Almost one minute later on the dot, he was back, leading the men with a keen step towards the nearest exit.

'You blokes know where you want to go or do you want me to take you somewhere?' Bristow said.

Megevand and Thatcher looked at each other and in perfect unison shrugged their shoulders.

Megevand said, 'You're the local; if you know a good place, we are fine with that.'

Fifteen minutes later, as Thatcher tucked into his Chicken Escalope, he winked at Bristow and said,

'Cheese & Peppers, what a fine choice. This is amazing!'

Bristow nodded, stealing a glance over to the owner of the Cafe, who was often seen behind the counter. He gave him the thumbs up and in return got a big grin and a hearty nod.

'The owner's Irish, and has a passion for all kinds of cuisine. Once you come here you simply don't bother with anywhere else. How's your Paella, Detective?'

Megevand was in another world. His ears were not working because his taste buds were firing on all cylinders. Eventually, Thatcher nudged him back to the table and the conversation.

'This is seriously good John; you may find us back checking in with you sooner than you think!'

The men talked about trivial things as they all enjoyed their delicious lunches. As their dishes were taken away, Bristow sipped on his black tea, whilst staring off into the distance for a moment.

'My best man at my wedding,' the sergeant didn't look in Thatcher and Megevand's direction, 'also happens to be the detective investigating the death of our girl.'

Megevand and Thatcher exchanged glances. Bristow saw them do this and took another sip of his tea.

'He called me a couple of hours ago. He had just interviewed Alexandra's mother. She lives in Clapham, the Bonney View Estate.'

The BTP officer made eye contact with the two policemen. His face looked strained.

‘My friend’s name is Derek Kitcher. Straight shooter. Tared with the same brush as you two. You’d both like him. He’s quite shocked by this one. And I will tell you — it takes a lot for “Kitch,” as he is known at home to be shocked.’

Bristow took a deep breath and stared at the two men, frowning.

‘—says the mother is the epitome of a middle-aged-alcoholic. Kitch said it was clear she was upset about Alexandra, but it disturbed him how nonchalant she was about it overall. He thought she’d be a screaming heap on the floor, as most parents are when they lose a child.’

The sergeant’s expression hardened.

‘He hadn’t even got to the part about how there was a strong possibility her daughter was brutally assaulted by up to four men, before this woman, Petula,’ Bristow raised his eyebrows at the same time the other two cops did, ‘apparently named after the singer Petula Clark.’

The BTP officer shook his head.

‘—she seemed to be more interested in talking about how she was named after that famous English actress, than talking about what had happened to her daughter. Or the fact that the poor girl was dead.’

Megevand found himself staring down at the table. It wasn’t the first time he’d heard of a parent who seemed to be so flippant about losing a child. He never understood it. Never will. Some people deal with the loss of a child in their own way.

‘Kitcher managed to get a bit of information from her, but she was already reaching for the bottle and pack of cigarettes before he was halfway through the interview.’

‘Not good John, not good,’ Thatcher said.

Bristow studied Megevand and then the clock on the wall, before making eye contact with Megevand again. The detective got the signal.

‘I know you need to head back John so I just wanted to say this: Thatcher and I know this is not our turf. We know the rules. But if there is anything we can do to help you BTP guys on this one, contact us. Okay?’ Megevand said.

Bristow nodded, and a smile crept across his face.

‘I appreciate it. I will let Derek know. He is a good bloke, hence why he was best man at my wedding. Fate put us together in the BTP about ten years ago.’

‘Any further information on the footage?’ Megevand asked.

Bristow checked that there was no one nearby before he gave a faint nod.

‘We’ve got half decent footage of them. The ones we think, you know. Height, clothing. Either by their own doing, or just bad luck for us, their faces are not that clear on the footage, but at least we have a start.’

Thatcher knew they had only a few moments left. Curiosity was gnawing at him. ‘What do those fuckers look like, John?’ he whispered.

When Bristow met Thatcher’s eyes, the BTP officer could see the other policeman’s face burning with anger. Thatcher would be the last man on earth he’d want to end up on the wrong side of.

‘Two with overcoats, suits underneath. You’d think they looked like bankers, finance, that sort of thing. Middle aged.’

‘And the others?’ Megevand asked.

‘One was wearing dark pants, a jumper, a tie with a white

shirt. He looked like the millions of other people you see on the trains. Pedestrian. Everyday look.'

Bristow finished what was left of his tea and wiped his mouth with the serviette.

'The last bloke was very averagely dressed: runners, jeans, a cheap, ill-fitting jacket,' he said.

Megevand and Thatcher stared at Bristow, knowing they would be getting up and saying their goodbyes any moment. Bristow slowly rose to his feet, but when he stood, he didn't move.

Megevand and Thatcher stood with him, and waited for a moment.

Bristow looked at the two men and frowned.

'Kitcher checked other footage. He hasn't confirmed it yet, but when he called me earlier, he said he had a theory, and if confirmed, it would make him shudder.'

Megevand and Thatcher stared at the BTP Sergeant. Bristow glanced first at Thatcher and then Megevand.

'The four men, he believes, didn't know each other.'



MEGEVAND SAT IN front of the Television. Yukiko was close to arriving home so he decided to wait until she arrived before helping her get dinner underway. The death of Alexandra Young was reported on the news. Megevand could feel butterflies in his stomach as they showed a recent photo of her. She was a gorgeous girl whose face in the photo spoke of someone who was excited about life and the future.

It made his chest ache. He pictured her when he last saw her standing across the road at Bethnal Green. He could not stop seeing her face. Staring at him, as if they were acquaintances. Old friends. The news cut to images of the platform at Monument Station.

Nothing was mentioned of the four men Bristow and Kitcher, his detective friend, suspected were involved, but Megevand knew when the BTP were ready to confirm this, it would make the news. It would be the only way they could begin the difficult process of trying to track these four men down in a city of nearly seven million people.

Fucking Monsters.

The hope would be that someone knew them. Megevand also hoped that when the day came, he and Thatcher could be in that room. When the ads came on, Megevand stood

and stretched his arms. Today had been a long day. He could feel it in his bones. He was looking forward to a—

The sound came from the front door.

It was as if someone had walked up to the door and attempted to walk through it. Not a bang, but a push. Yukiko had a key. Even if she had misplaced it, she would simply knock. This was no knock. Megevand could feel something cold pass over the exposed parts of his skin.

He stood there for a moment, and a split second later heard the sound again.

‘Yukiko?’ Megevand asked. Silence.

He took a few steps towards the front door. When he walked into the hallway, his feeling of unease heightened. He swore he saw a shadow of someone in the crack of the door at the bottom. It moved away as if whoever it was, was floating.

Just as Megevand took one step closer to the front door, the high-pitched scream sounded as if it were right on the other side. Adrenaline pumped ferociously through his veins. Fight or flight. Megevand was never the sort of man to take flight in a sticky situation.

Fight.

He lunged for the front door. The sooner he could understand what the hell was going on, the better. He pulled on the door handle and a second later was standing in the open doorway. With the darkness settling in over Upton Park, the short pathway from the street to his front door was poorly lit.

There was no one there. He took the few steps from his front door towards the footpath at the street. Someone had to be there. When he reached the footpath, he turned to his right. He peered down the street all the way to the main road.

The footpath and road were devoid of any signs of life.

‘Right then, my mind has taken a leave of absence. Get

it together Megevand, you are losing your shit,' he said out loud.

He shrugged to himself as relief began to settle his throbbing heart. He took a step back towards his house. An overwhelming feeling of nausea came from nowhere. When he turned to his left, he saw her, and his blood turned cold. Standing twenty feet away was a young girl, staring intently at him.

He knew within seconds that what he was seeing had to be someone long dead. Either that or she was in costume. The young girl wore clothes as if she had come straight from the dressing room in one of the Theatres in the West End.

'Were you just at my front door?' Megevand asked.

The girl just stared. Seconds turned into nearly a minute. Not knowing what to do or what to say, Megevand turned to walk away but stopped and looked back at the girl. He couldn't help himself: 'You look like one of those kids from the musical *Annie*.'

The girl's face lit up, in a creepy way.

'Ann-ee' she muttered.

'Where are you from?' Megevand stepped forward. He wondered if someone was playing a joke on him.

When he got ten feet closer, she said, 'Farrington.'

Without any warning whatsoever, she let out another scream so high pitched, Megevand wondered if it would break the glass of windows nearby. And with that, the mysterious girl did a one hundred and eighty turn and began to walk off towards the station.

Megevand called out, 'hey, wait, where are you going?'

She ignored him. Frustrated, Megevand spun around, ran into his house, grabbed his keys and wallet, and a moment later was sprinting down the street.

By the time he reached the Upton Park Tube Station, he spotted her walking down the steps towards the platform.

‘Wait!’ He shouted, but she ignored him.

The girl was still well ahead of him. When Megevand heard the train approaching he increased his pace to a full sprint. He couldn’t lose her. Not now. Skidding to a halt, most of the passengers had already boarded when at the far end of the platform, he saw her stepping into the first carriage. With seconds to spare, he jumped onto the carriage in front of him. Six carriages down from the first.



He swore at himself for being suckered into this wild-goose-chase. This was ridiculous. Someone was pulling off an elaborate hoax and setting him up. He knew Thatcher wouldn’t ever do it, but other colleagues had no qualms playing well set up jokes on a fellow policeman. All in the name of fun, they’d say. Humiliation more like it, Megevand seethed.

When the train stopped at the next couple of stations, Megevand moved to the next carriage. When he reached the second carriage, he went to the door and peered through the window to the first carriage. He froze.

‘Lord-o-mighty,’ he said. Megevand went stiff.

Sitting at the farthest seat, right up the other end of the first carriage, was ‘Orphan Annie.’ But it was who was sitting next to her that made Megevand’s mouth then fall open.

Alexandra Young. Both Orphan Annie and Alexandra stared directly at him.

‘Next stop, Farringdon Station,’ the female voice announced. As the train pulled in, Megevand moved over to the nearest exit, ready to head straight for the first carriage. But as the train pulled to a stop, with dozens of other people

standing in the three doorways of the carriage, the doors didn't open automatically. They remain steadfastly closed.

'What the hell?' a passenger said.

'Open the bloody doors!' another passenger shouted, hoping the train driver would somehow hear him.

'I need to get out here for fuck's sake!' another passenger lunged at the door, but to no avail.

Megevand saw immediately people were exiting the front carriage. When he looked in the other direction, he could see people leaving the third carriage too. It was only their carriage. Shit.

'Come on!' a woman pushed past Megevand and grabbed one side of the doors with her bare hands.

A man on the other side laughed and said, 'let's do it.'

As the overhead announcement indicated the train was about to pull out, frustrated people in the second carriage wanting to get off shouted abuse and obscenities. The two passengers near Megevand's door managed somehow to get the door open enough for the woman to squeeze out. Megevand saw his opening and stepped forward to the man.

'You next then me, come on!' he said.

The detective felt his body was about to be cut in half as the doors tried in vain to shut with him still halfway out.

But he managed to slip out, and a moment later was standing, exhausted, a couple of feet away from the train which was now heading out of the station — as if nothing unusual had happened.

Megevand bent over to regain his breath.

'Oh my God, it's her!' the woman who had managed to get out of the carriage, cried.

Megevand straightened up and realised that just about

all the people around him were just standing there, staring at something. The woman put her hand to her mouth.

‘It’s her,’ she muttered again.

Megevand turned and realised who everyone was staring at.

Orphan Annie.

But now, she was standing on a dividing wall to the other platform. How she got up there was anyone’s guess. It was too high for her to have been able to do it without a ladder, or a boost.

She stood there, perfectly still, staring at all the people. And she looked pissed off, Megevand thought.

‘I. Hate. Hats!’ Orphan Annie shouted.

The scream that followed her words made Megevand’s ears feel as if they were about to bleed.

What happened next would be talked about for days, if not weeks, at Farringdon Station. A strong gust of wind shot out of nowhere. People panicked and ran towards the exit ramps.

Megevand stood steadfast, staring at Orphan Annie perched on the wall. It took him a few more seconds to realise something else. Directly below Orphan Annie, a teenage girl stood with her back against the wall. Megevand, now the only one left on the platform, took a step towards her.

It was Alexandra.

Their eyes locked for a second and the familiar feeling of dread surged through his body. What on earth am I doing? he thought. I’m a cop, not a fucking ghost whisperer! Nevertheless, there was something about this girl, something urgent, something raw, something that, as a detective, he wasn’t about to let go.

It was now or never. Slowly, he eased his way towards her

hoping she wouldn't move. When he got to within ten feet of her, she nodded, remaining still. Given that he had gotten this far, Megevand chanced another couple of steps, and to his relief, Alexandra remained perfectly calm.

'Alexandra,' Megevand stepped another couple of paces forward.

Orphan Annie's shrill laughter cut through the moment. Megevand held his breath. Not just one ghost to contend with, but two!

'Find them!' the life-like apparition of Alexandra said.

'Who?' He responded, his heart beating overtime.

'The men who stole her life!' the ghost of Orphan Annie yelled, startling him.

Ignoring the interruption, Megevand winced, his eyes still fixed on the teenager's gaze. 'Why me, Alexandra?'

'Because I know you can,' she said, as if it was a stupid question.

He stood there wondering if this day could get any freakier. He looked around the deserted station. There wasn't another human in sight. Just his luck.

'If I can I will. I will do what I—'

Alexandra pointed to the train tracks, not taking her eyes off him for one second.

'One of them,' she said.

'One of them what?' Megevand turned around, trying to look at what she was pointing at, but there was nothing to see.

Again, Orphan Annie began to laugh, and Megevand was about to tell her to shut the fuck up, but she suddenly became extremely agitated. She shook her fists into the air.

'One of them got off at this station!' Orphan Annie shrieked, answering the question that he had asked Alexandra.

Megevand turned around and noticed a man in a suit strolling along the walkway in the direction of the platform. Not a care in the world. Whistling an old tune. Megevand loathed people who whistled. Only later did he recall the whistling man was wearing what looked like a top hat. Old style.

When he turned back, Alexandra Young's apparition had vanished. Megevand drew back. He'd had enough experience of ghosts to know they appear and disappear at will, and had little doubt Alexandra would materialise again.

The detective's attention was drawn back to Orphan Annie, yet this time his entire body was frozen in suspended animation as he observed the unfolding scene. This former impish girl was transforming into a hideous figure of rotting purple flesh, but equally terrifying were her pitch-black eye sockets and a mouth without any lips, open wide into a chilling black hole.

He let out an involuntary gasp, piercing the silence, jolting him back to this sickening reality. Suddenly a roar and a strong gust of smoky mist rushed from the blackened mouth, swirling and heading straight for him.

Megevand turned his head, in both fear and revulsion, in time to see the man clutching his top hat running in the direction of the exit as fast as his legs could carry him.

Suddenly, this decomposing corpse of Orphan Annie, began yelling repeatedly, 'I hate hats!' He had no idea what she was going on about. But out of nowhere, Megevand suddenly gripped his stomach before vomiting all over the platform.

Orphan Annie's chants eventually ceased, only to be replaced by a deafening scream coming from the decaying

body. And just when Megevand wondered if this could get any better, the lights in the station snuffed out.

This was starting to become a habit, Megevand thought, cursing the fact he wished he had a Maglite torch at arm's length. 'Time to find a cab,' he said aloud, doing his best to hastily negotiate his way to the exit ramp in the dark.

He seriously wondered, why the hell he hadn't become a carpenter, instead of a cop.



YUKIKO STARED AT me with “that” look over her steaming mug of brewed coffee. I knew by “that” look, she had information to divulge. I’d just come out of the shower feeling calm yet energised, and in spite of the events of last night, I managed to have a good night’s sleep. But the faces of two other people were still front of mind.

Orphan Annie. Alexandra Young.

Yukiko was not one to watch the telly whilst having breakfast, but the small television we had in the kitchen was on with the volume down a bit. I fetched myself a coffee and tossed a couple of pieces of bread in the toaster. Marmite on toast. Breakfast of champions.

‘I can see by those lovely eyes of yours,’ I took a sip of my coffee and singed the tip of my tongue, ‘—you’ve got something on your mind. Spill.’

‘Okay, nothing too amazing,’ she relented, nodding over to the telly.

‘—I just saw on TV: strange things are already afoot at Farringdon Station. Same as Bethnal Green. They cannot restore the power. And at Farringdon Station, anyone who enters experiences hurricane-strong winds that nearly blow them off their feet! They cannot figure out how it is occurring.’

I studied her face for a second. Is the love of my life

shitting me? Hurricane winds at Farringdon Station? I took another sip of my cooling coffee and looked closer at her face.

‘Seriously?’ I said, as my two pieces of toast popped out of the toaster with a mid-air jump.

When I returned to the table with the toast, butter and Marmite, Yukiko was staring at me with a slightly bemused look.

‘What are you doing to the Underground, Mister Megevand?’ she asked.

I sorted out my toast first before taking a bite. As I chewed, I stared at the telly and then back to Yukiko. I shrugged.

‘Me? It’s not my fault!’ I pleaded.

We gave each other a knowing smile before the news presenter on the screen had my attention.

“At least six stations in the London Underground network are now out of action, or if they are still operating, strange and disturbing things are putting commuters through something you’d see in a ghost or horror movie,” the presenter said, pausing for effect. He pressed on:

“Passenger numbers in these stations are way down. It’s already concerning the operators.”

He went through the list of stations which included Bethnal Green, Farringdon and four more.

He went on to say that the Bank and Monument Complex was still operating as normal, despite reports of people finding certain occurrences in the sprawling labyrinth, too disturbing to deal with and reluctant to return.

“Passengers interviewed exiting the sprawling two station complex said they would find another route to work until all this was over.” The presenter added.

Yukiko stood and turned off the telly. The silence was unusually welcoming.

‘Last night, you said she specifically mentioned you,’ Yukiko said before drinking her coffee. I glanced out of the kitchen window before I returned her gaze.

‘Any chance this—’ Yukiko stopped mid-sentence as she could see by the look in my eyes, I knew precisely what she was going to say. If I had to finish the sentence for her it would have gone like this: ‘—anything to do with what happened six years ago in Lacham?’ Ravenstone House to be more precise. I bit into the other piece of toast. ‘—Your guess is as good as mine,’ I said.

She reached over and rested her hand on mine.

‘Speaking of Lacham, when was the last time we went there? When was the last time we dropped in to see the clan?’

The clan she was referring to was the two couples who had lived in Ravenstone House after developers had converted the old house into flats. They still lived next door to each other in Lacham. We had remained friends with them ever since.

‘Too long,’ I said, ‘probably a year, I think,’ I added.

‘You have a soft spot for them’ Yukiko winked at me. ‘And I know you always come away from seeing them feeling good about yourself. Especially the children. Maybe with all this going on, it wouldn’t be a bad idea. Do you want me to contact Mary and see if we can make a time?’

I finished what was left of my coffee. The two pieces of toast had hit the spot. I was feeling ready to tackle another day. I nodded to Yukiko, ‘sounds good. Let’s do that,’ I said.



MEGEVAND FELT A jolt of some sort of invisible energy when he entered the small memorial garden at Lacham. Not as strong as in the early years, but still there all the same. He didn't mention it to Yukiko. The couple were pleased to see the council had done a good job at keeping the little garden well maintained, six years after it was opened.

The peony shrubs planted as a dedication to the orphans who died here were fully grown. They were chosen because they did not grow more than three feet — like most of the orphans who never left the orphanage and to whom this memorial was dedicated.

As was his custom when they visited, the detective walked over to the wall and looked at all the names found on the one hundred and thirty-five plus plaques. He would always finish by finding one particular plaque, before raising his left hand and placing it on one side of the bronze plate.

Finley Sproule.

'You are still here,' he then raised his right hand and put it on his heart. Yukiko watched him from a distance. She always left him alone when he went to the wall. It brought tears to her eyes every time. Megevand turned to Yukiko, wiping something from his eyes. He studied her for a moment and

decided; the love of his life had heard enough strange stories for one day.

When he'd said those words to Finley's plaque a moment ago, it had within a few seconds become physically warm to the touch.

Just to make sure he wasn't imagining the sensation, Megevand touched the plaque sitting right next to Finley Sproule's. It was no mistake that the plaque of this child sat right alongside Finley's.

Heather McLeod.

Her plaque was as cold to touch as the brick wall.

'You, okay?' Yukiko asked.

'Yes,' Megevand nodded, 'let's get on then, shall we?'



Moose's Cafe was still going strong, six years on from the first time Yukiko and Megevand had entered the popular local cafe in Lacham, South London. The welcoming smell of coffee hit the detective square in the face. He was looking forward to a big cup of the brew.

Yukiko and Megevand made their way through the cafe to the back door that led outside to the rear courtyard. At the end of the courtyard was a little hut popular among the locals for getting together in a more intimate setting than the café itself.

The detective could see the two couples through the window. And to his delight, he spotted Quentin and Mary's children. With Megevand and Yukiko half way across the courtyard, the door to the hut sprung open and standing there was Heather and Finley Brookes.

'Uncle Ian! Auntie Yukiko!' Heather squealed with

delight. She jostled with her little brother to get to the couple before he did.

‘Hey!’ Finley laughed as he fought his way towards them. Heather reached them first.

‘Have a look at you!’ Megevand picked Heather up and gave her a big hug.

‘Finley Brookes!’ Yukiko did the honours with Finley, doing the same.

‘My lord have you two grown!’ Megevand held Heather in one arm and led them into the hut.



‘Hey!’ Megevand said as he stepped into the hut. The two couples rose from their chairs and hugs and kisses were shared between Megevand, Yukiko and the two couples.

David and Christine Banks were ageing with grace, Megevand thought. They looked good.

Although Christine had had a hip replacement a year or so ago, you’d never know. David was still in top physical shape, and to the detective’s amazement still taking Taekwondo classes. Seniors, mostly, but classes all the same.

Megevand went to shake Quentin’s hand, but his friend pushed the detective’s hand out of the way, insisting on a hug. When Megevand reached over and pecked Mary on the cheek, he smiled back at Quentin and gave him a wink.

The architect had kicked the winning goal in the World Cup of finding a stunning woman to marry. Both in looks and smarts.

They chatted for a while about the usual stuff. The six of them recapped on the residents from Ravenstone House — who was still around and who had moved on.

Megevand glanced at each of them with a sense of

gratitude; the ladies, were now catching up in their own little bubble, while the men, he sensed, were itching for news.

‘So,’ Quentin said, ‘I see things are getting a bit strange in some of the Underground Stations.’

‘You wouldn’t by chance be involved?’ David enquired, not a second later.

Megevand stared at the two men for a moment.

‘Off the record?’ he frowned at the two men, ‘and I mean *off*’ he lowered his voice. Quentin and David nodded.

‘—it’s not our jurisdiction, but,’ the detective paused for a moment. ‘My partner and I, Thatcher, well we sort of crossed paths and sort of, er—’ Megevand’s voice trailed off.

David put his hand on Megevand’s shoulder. ‘It’s okay mate,’ he said, ‘we were just curious. You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to. No stress.’

Quentin chimed in, ‘all good Ian, it just sounded like, you know—’

Megevand had been through some serious out-of-this-world shit with these two men. As a trio, the three men had experienced the sort of stuff writers from ‘The Twilight Zone’ would have lapped up in spades.

And six years on, most, if not all of what had happened, had remained between the three of them. Megevand knew, these men could be trusted. He decided to let his guard down a little. It would be good to talk to someone else other than Yukiko or Thatcher about ‘it’ for a change.

Megevand leant forward, whispering, ‘Did you hear about that poor girl they found in one of the access tunnels at the Bank and Monument Complex?’

The two men thought for a moment before they both said, ‘yes,’ David adding, ‘it was all over the news.’ Megevand

took a deep breath. At least these two men wouldn't balk at what he would say next.

'She—' he coughed, before now speaking so faintly the two men now themselves leant in closer, '—well her, er... ghost. I think she's trying to communicate with me. And when she is standing there, she's as real as one of us.'

Megevand took a bite of Yukiko's muffin, letting his last comment hang whilst she slapped his hand for the insurrection of helping himself to her morning tea.

'I guess the question, Ian,' Quentin leant closer, 'is sort of a stupid one but—'

David grinned, '—if Quentin wasn't going to ask it first, I would have, you any idea why she's doing that?'

Megevand stared at his coffee for a few moments before looking back at the two men. 'That's an easy question to answer. She wants me to find the men who did this to her and bring them to justice,' he said. David frowned.

'What do you mean, men?' he whispered.

Megevand froze. Shit. That piece of information had not been made public yet.

'Damn it,' he muttered, '—you can't repeat this. It will be public knowledge soon, but until then,' He stared intently at his two friends. They both nodded without question.

'There's a strong chance up to four men assaulted her sexually before she died. Murdered, most likely.'

David sat back and huffed. Megevand could see the Taekwondo's teacher's shoulders tense.

'You're fucking kidding me. Four men against one young girl?' David hissed.

Megevand nodded.

'Two of them were in suits. They looked like bloody bankers,' he whispered.

He straightened up and took another drink of his coffee. The three men sat in silence for a moment.

‘I know there’s nothing we can do to help,’ David said, ‘but we are here if you need us.’

Quentin added, ‘same goes for me Megevand. Anytime.’

Megevand thanked his two friends for the offer. When he finished his last mouthful of coffee, he let his eyes wander around the small room. He stared out the windows and wondered if he would see the life-like apparition of Alexandra Young again.

When he glanced over at the three women, they were deep in conversation. Yukiko laughed whilst Mary grinned and Christine shook her shoulders at whatever they were chatting about.



MEGEVAND LED YUKIKO down the stairs into Lacham Underground Station.

'Wait for us!' the little girl's happy voice bellowed from a short distance behind. The detective turned back and knew it was Heather calling out. When they were leaving the Cafe, Yukiko told him that Quentin and Mary were taking the children to a fair in town.

'Hurry up, you slow-moving Brooke family,' Megevand mused, holding up his hand to his mouth. '—or you may miss the next train!' Finley and Heather ran ahead of their parents and caught up to the detective and his wife.

'All right then, mind the escalator. Hold our hands, huh,' he said, reaching for Finley's hand, whilst Yukiko did the same for Heather. As the escalator travelled downwards Megevand looked back up at Quentin and Mary. The couple knew their children could not be any safer than with Ian and Yukiko.

The group all stood together on the platform. Quentin and Mary watched their children before they met each other's eyes. They smiled at each other. Finley was still holding on steadfastly to Megevand's hand.

On the other side, Heather was now holding onto Megevand and also Yukiko's hand at the same time. Mary's heart melted. Her daughter looked so happy.

As the incoming train entered the station, Mary felt the usual gust of wind. Her hair fluttered around her face before the train slowed to a complete stop.

‘Come on, troops!’ Megevand led the children to the nearest door, which had just opened.

‘Mind the gap!’ Megevand added, looking down at Finley and then over to Heather. Quentin watched his children do exactly as they were told. As he stepped onto the train he thought of his own mother.

Every time he heard the words ‘mind the gap,’ it brought her back. It was the very thing she said to him as a child every time they stood on a platform as a train pulled up. He felt his chest ache thinking of her. She had died at the Monument Underground Station. Falling onto the tracks seconds before a train arrived. He pushed the circumstances out of his mind. It hurt too much to think about.



The train pulled out of Lacham Station. It swayed and metal on metal scraped momentarily. Sounds so often heard it became white noise to commuters. The Megevand’s chatted to the children, finding out as much as he could garner about the fair. They were quite excited.

‘Next stop, Clapham South,’ the automated announcement said over the speakers. Quentin’s mind took him back to Clapham South Station, six years ago. He swallowed as he recalled what had happened there. The lights on the train suddenly went off, but a second later came on, as if reading his mind.

He took a deep breath and looked forward to getting off the train. Megevand looked over to Quentin first, then Mary, as they were sitting directly across from him. Internal

train lights doing this from time to time was not uncommon on the Underground. The lights then did it again, this time much longer. Passengers all around grunted, groaned and tutted.

‘Daddy?’ Finley said, moving towards Quentin and finding him.

‘It’s okay Fin,’ he whispered, but as the lights came on and off a third time, he felt Mary’s hand grip onto his. Now more passengers were voicing their concerns to each other.

Megevand met eyes with Yukiko, before his vision faded into blackness. The train lights were now completely out. People started moaning as the train abruptly pulled on its brakes. They were nowhere near the station as yet. The train lurched from side to side. Megevand found Yukiko’s hand and realised the little person clutching onto him on the other side was Heather.

‘It’s going to be okay,’ he said to her. She gripped onto him tighter.

‘No it’s not,’ she said in a calm voice.

‘What did you—’

The detective’s words were cut off by a bang, somewhere back along the tunnel, a few carriages down. It scared the daylight out of everyone in Megevand’s cabin. Women became distressed, some hysterical. Children were crying, men muttered profanities.

All of a sudden, the train lurched forward, giving everyone an almighty fright. Megevand swayed to his left, holding onto Heather and feeling Yukiko almost fall on top of him. She regained her balance but held onto his arm for dear life.

The lights shot on and off again, shedding a little light around the carriage, and after being in the dark for a few minutes, passengers simply looked at one another, each

alarmed as the next. Megevand checked the carriage. Seconds before the lights went off again, he found himself looking at the nearest door. He was lost for words.

Standing there, was Alexandra Young, frowning, shaking her head. She pointed to two men at the other end of the carriage. When Megevand swung his head around to look at who she was pointing at, his mind went into free fall. He never forgot the faces of those two men. They were two of the evillest human beings he'd ever laid eyes upon.

It can't have been them. As the train fell into darkness once more, he realised with a mixture of astonishment and agony, where the two men had met their fate. Clapham South Underground Station.

The very station they were about to pull into.



'Clapham South Station,' the voice-over said. Obviously, the lights were out of action, but the announcement service still somehow worked. In complete darkness, people were throwing themselves into an unbridled panic.

'We need to get off this train, now,' Megevand said.

Finley didn't miss a beat. Blackout or not, he was focused on one thing and one thing only.

'But we are going to the fair. We can't get off here, Uncle Ian.'

The lights pulsed on again. Megevand turned to still see Alexandra still standing there. She was pointing upwards. He knew what she meant. He didn't need any convincing. Something deep inside him was telling him as clear as night follows day.

Get off this train and out of the station. Now.

He turned and looked back to where he had seen the

two men. He wondered if it was a simple case of mistaken identity. Maybe his eyes were deceiving him, but one thing was certain.

He had seen the two men staring at him, the look on their faces anything but friendly. When the lights flashed for a moment, he gasped. Now, the seats they occupied — were empty.

He prayed the lights would come back on. A moment later, they came on just enough for Megevand to scan the rest of the carriage, in search of them. Maybe they were near the doors, waiting, ready to get off train.

They weren't. All he saw was a couple of terrified-looking teenagers, their faces drained of colour. Megevand turned to the others.

'I don't know how, but we need to get up to ground level as quickly as possible,' he said.

The train skidded into the station at a gut-wrenching speed. Those passengers that had been standing fell into their seats or held on for dear life, if they were lucky enough to have something nearby to hold onto. The lights in the Underground Station were doing exactly the same thing as the lights on the train. This is turning into an absolute bloody nightmare, Megevand thought.

The train overshot the platform by half the first carriage. As the doors opened, screams erupted from the first carriage whilst chaos spread on the far end of the platform.

Megevand grabbed Yukiko, and still holding Heather, barked 'Out. Now!'

He looked over to Quentin who had Mary and Finley with him. Quentin was about to say something when the two men heard a strange sound.

'Fuck!' Quentin didn't care if he swore in front of his children. He knew that sound.

It had happened on this very platform. In this very station. Six years ago.

Megevand jumped out of the carriage. The shouts and screams from the other end of the platform were now at fever pitch. As the lights flashed on and off again Megevand's mouth fell open in utter disbelief. A wall of water burst from the tunnel behind the train at a frightening speed, hurling people onto the platform by its sheer force.

'Come on!' Megevand shouted, turning to the others and pleading with them to hurry up.

The lights continued to pulse on and off as people scrambled up escalators that were out of action.

Quentin, Mary and Finley were thankfully off the train. Yukiko was in front of Megevand, and Heather too. As they reached the bottom of the escalators and Megevand looked up, realising how far they needed to go. Megevand was ten steps up the immobile escalators when he heard Quentin shout out something, followed with Mary screaming at the top of her lungs.

The wall of water had arrived at the bottom of the escalators. Megevand turned back to Yukiko and Heather.

'Up, up!' he shouted.

When he turned to see what was going with Quentin and Mary, they were in about five feet of water. People in the water were thrashing around, trying to get to the escalators and safety.

The detective ran up more, watching Yukiko and Heather closely to make sure they weren't going to fall.

'No!' Heather screamed. She stopped dead in her tracks

and turned back to Megevand, lunging for him and holding onto him as if her life depended on it.

‘What is it?’ he said.

Her eyes darted back to Megevand as she squealed, ‘It’s him.’

Megevand followed her gaze. He caught his breath. Standing there were the two men he’d seen on the train, their eyes fixed on both him and the girl.

‘Megevand!’ Quentin shouted from below.

The detective swung around and saw Quentin in the water. Mary too. It was up to their shoulders and still moving upwards. It then hit Megevand like a sledgehammer.

Their son was gone.



CHAOTIC WAS THE apt word, but probably understated. Fire trucks and more police cars than at the Met police car depot on a Sunday morning. Half of Lacham Hill Road and all of Nightingale Lane were blocked off with a sea of emergency vehicles.

Mary was in shock. She was being treated in an ambulance. There were at least ten ambulances the last time I counted. All of them were occupied. The cut on Mary's arm would require about fifteen stitches. Quentin had no idea how it happened. Mary didn't give a shit about her arm.

That was Mary. She was, if it were ever possible, tougher in spades than she had been six years ago. And besides, a cut on an arm compared to her son, was clearly understandable. I sat on the ground with my back leaning up against the wall. To my immediate right a few feet away was the main entrance to the Clapham South Underground Train Station.

Sitting alongside me was Quentin. He'd hardly said a word in the last five minutes. The ashen pallor of his skin made him look ten years older than he did one hour ago. He watched Mary in the nearby ambulance and wondered what the hell to do next.

'William West,' Quentin said without turning his head in my direction. He stared straight ahead, lost in thought.

‘Richard,’ he finally said, turning to me with a foreboding look.

‘The Old Bailey,’ he hissed. We stared at each other briefly before I nodded.

‘Those fucking evil bastards—’ Quentin muttered.

‘—you saw them on that train, just as it pulled into the station, right?’

I closed my eyes for a time. When I opened them, Quentin was staring at me.

‘—I saw them, Ian. I saw them with my own fucking eyes,’ he said through gritted teeth.

Quentin bowed his head. I watched his chest heave, but he said nothing. When he eventually looked up, Mary was watching him. The poor woman was shattered but her eyes reflected anger I hadn’t seen before. Quentin saw it too. He cast his defenceless eyes back at me.

‘This is all my goddamned fault, you know,’ he muttered, his eyes misting over.

‘You weren’t to know. How could anyone have known that six years later,’ I said.

Quentin kicked the ground in frustration.

‘Has all this got anything to do with whatever the fuck is going on in the Underground and you, Megevand?’ he hissed.

I took a deep breath. That very thought had gone through my mind when the shit had hit the fan down there. Was it just a coincidence? Alexandra Young was there. No doubt about it. I struggled to speak as a feeling of guilt overwhelmed me.

Quentin rose to his feet before looking down at me, ‘I’ve always held you in high regard,’ he said, ‘—but this better not have anything to do you and your latest ghost shenanigans. We can’t,’ he stumbled on his words as I saw that his

body was tensing, '—have anything to do with you anymore if that's the case.'

I stared at the ground. The shock of his cold words reverberated through me. Yukiko had gone home after my insistence that she couldn't do anything more here. Sadly, Mary gave Yukiko the cold shoulder, not even saying goodbye to her.

I looked up at the sound of men shouting nearby. I realised two more vans were trying to nudge their way through to the entrance of the station through the cordoned off area.

Realizing who they were, I'd hoped they'd been here much sooner. It would make my broken heart feel less broken.

The Police Search and Rescue crew. Divers. The water level down in the station was still as high as halfway up the main escalators. No one had a bloody clue as to how the water had got there. How it was still there, also. It was a complete mystery.

But that was the least of the concerns of all the police, ambulance officers, and firemen standing around feeling so useless. Last count, there was believed to be at least six people still missing.

I pictured his little face back at the Café, deep in concentration. Whatever he was doing in that colouring book was getting his undivided attention. Pain ripped through my heart like a jagged-edge knife and I couldn't hold it back any longer. I cried.

Finley Brookes was one of the six.



I've never been a fan of Mondays. But today, it felt as if one hundred Mondays had arrived all at once, and had rested firmly on my shoulders. The events at Clapham South

Underground Station made front page news in the United Kingdom. The television news outlets had covered it ad nauseam. I had only watched the story once. That was enough. We left the telly off.

To my annoyance, I had been named as one of the people on the train. It didn't take long for the reporters to mention the case of Ravenstone House. I was beyond angry. This was the last thing I needed. It was bad enough back then. It had taken two years for the public to forget who I was.

Now I felt as if it was going to happen all over again. I'd talked to Thatcher on the phone the night before. He was, as he'd always been — unwavering in his support and loyalty.

I sat at my desk and tried to focus on the day ahead. It was impossible. Thatcher had ducked out to get coffee. Windebank strolled into the office like he owned the place. After greeting a handful of co-workers, he made his way over to me and put his hand on my shoulder.

'Alright?' he said with a faint smile on his face.

'You know the answer to that question,' I said.

'Let's talk in my office,' the tone in which he said the words made the hairs on my neck bristle.



WINDEBANK REMOVED HIS jacket and hung it on a coat-rack. He stepped around to his side of the desk and sat down. Thatcher arrived back in the office and noticed I was no longer at my desk. When he saw that I was with Windebank he walked up to the door and stuck his head in. His tray contained three cups of coffee.

‘Gents, these two belong in here,’ he gestured to the tray and Windebank’s face lit up.

‘Thatcher you are worth your weight in gold, son,’ the boss said.

‘Can you give me a few moments with Ian?’ he added.

Thatcher nodded, not before I saw the concerned look in his eyes.

‘—but stay close. I want you to join us when I am ready, okay? Please close the door on the way out,’ Windebank said.

Thatcher closed the door. Windebank watched him walk over to his desk.

‘You couldn’t get a better partner than him,’ he said in passing.

He turned to Megevand, frowning, reaching for his coffee.

‘It seems that you are back in the thick of it, Detective,’ he said, rhetorically.

He peeled the cover off and took a sip. It was a statement, not a question, so Megevand remained silent. After a time, Megevand leant forward and stared intently at his boss. He was good at reading the chief inspector at the best of times, but today was different. Either that, or Megevand's lack of sleep had him off his game.

'I didn't ask for any of this, Detective Chief Inspector,' Megevand said bluntly.

Windebank sat back in his chair. He stared at the detective. When he leant forward and took another drink of his coffee, Megevand wondered if he had overstepped the mark. It was too late regardless.

'Detective Inspector Megevand,' he said, shaking his head, 'not sure if you understand what is going on here, but I am on your side.'

There was a hint of a smile before Windebank's face grew serious. 'I need you to take a breath, drink some of that coffee in front of you and then sit back and listen to what I have to say.'

Megevand was dog tired, and more stressed than he'd been in a long time. But even so, he felt a small sense of relief pass over him. After what happened at Clapham South Underground Station, his guilt was overruling every sensible thought and fibre in his body.

Windebank looked out of his office window to the grey skies of London. Without turning to Megevand he said, 'I can't recall the last time I spoke to him. Before I'd even left my house, I got a call from Robert Freeman.' Megevand sat up straighter. Even the mere mention of that name did the same for most detectives in the MET.

'Commander Freeman,' Windebank corrected himself.

'Seems like his boss, and then the next two above him, met

last night to discuss all these goings on. Apparently another three underground stations overnight have fallen prey to, how would you put it—,' he locked eyes with the detective, "the curse." And not only that, but now we have fatalities, and as of this morning, people are still missing from whatever went down at Clapham South Underground Station.'

Windebank stared at Megevand for a time before his gaze fell to the office windows behind the detective.

'The top brass of the British Transport Police claim this all started at the Bank and Monument Station Complex.' Windebank picked up a piece of paper on his desk and waved it at Megevand.

'Apparently a Sergeant John Bristow from BTP believes it all began with the discovery of the young girl's body.' Windebank studied the page briefly, '—yes, here it is — her name was Alexandra Young.'

'Do you believe this, Detective? I have it on good authority you have had conversations with this sergeant, is that correct?' Megevand's left foot instinctively felt like kicking the nearest leg of his boss's desk. He felt beyond stupid. Windebank had caught him out. Megevand closed his eyes and wondered if this day could get any worse.

'—look, Ian,' Windebank held up his hand, 'let's not worry about that for now. That is the least of the issues here.' Windebank gazed out of the window and saw Thatcher looking back at him. He waved, indicating he wanted him to come in.

Thatcher walked in and closed the door behind him. When he sat down next to Megevand, Windebank had to afford himself a grin. For the giant of a man Thatcher was, he looked as if he were a student who'd just sat down in front of the school Principal.

‘Gentlemen, we have a situation. I am running tight on time this morning, so I will be frank and forthcoming. I know you both well enough to appreciate you want me to cut straight to the chase.’

Thatcher looked over to Megevand, before both men turned back to Windebank and nodded.

‘Our superiors, and now certain members of the government, are gravely concerned with whatever is going on in the Underground at present. As things are tracking, they are worried it’s only going to get worse. We all know how important the Tube is to this city of ours. The city will struggle to function without it.’

Windebank checked his watch before hurriedly taking another slurp of his coffee. He knew a meeting down the corridor was due to start. He had to be there.

‘So, with all that in mind, a special task force is being expedited. As in today. The British Transport Police were not keen on the idea. They said they have the men to do what is needed to get this done. But after what happened last night, they’ve decided that their jurisdictional bullshit can be overlooked for this particular case.’

Megevand shrugged at the same time Thatcher leant forward and said, ‘Spell it out for us, Boss.’

Windebank smiled, though it was short-lived.

‘You two are on the task force as of,’ he checked his watch, ‘eight thirty this morning.’ Which was five minutes ago.

‘Okay?’ the chief inspector said, although it wasn’t a question.

Megevand looked over to Thatcher and the two men just nodded. Windebank rose to his feet.

‘And as far as spelling it out,’ he gathered some folders on his desk before he looked back at Thatcher.

‘—that’s pretty much what happened about one o’clock this morning, on one of the platforms at Monument Station.’

Thatcher stared at his boss, and Megevand felt too tired to wonder what on god’s earth Windebank was talking about. He pulled out a piece of paper and laid it out on the edge of his desk close to Thatcher and Megevand. The two men leaned in.

It was a grainy image of what appeared to be from a closed-circuit television camera. Megevand could see it was of the far wall across from the platform. When he eventually viewed the picture even closer, he felt a strange sensation pass over him. Windebank was staring straight at him.

‘Can you see what it says on the wall, Detective?’ he said.

‘Fuck me,’ Thatcher said.

‘We have live footage of that platform. Low quality, but clear enough to see.’

He waited for Megevand to study the photo a little more before Windebank took a deep breath.

‘Some old bloke in white overalls was captured on film painting those words onto that wall. Once he was done, he walked back into the tunnel and disappeared. Looks like old mate Richard Head to me.’

Thatcher grunted. The letters were in large, block letters. He spelt out each letter in his head before he looked over to Megevand, who had gone pale.

‘That’s your name he painted on the wall,’ Windebank studied the photo and then Megevand.

‘It spans about twenty feet in all,’ he added. Megevand fell back in his chair and let out a sigh.

He didn’t know what to think.

‘I have to be in a meeting five minutes ago,’ Windebank said, as he grabbed his jacket.

‘But before I go, there’s one other thing,’ he added.

Megevand looked at Thatcher before turning back to Windebank.

‘—the old bloke wrote more than just your name on that station wall.’

Windebank shook his head.

‘Below your name, it said, “*This is just the beginning.*”’



FINLEY BROOKES WAS one of two people who were yet to be found in the Clapham South Underground Station. The other four people who were listed as missing had been located. All were deceased. They were all suspected to have drowned in the disaster. The water level had dissipated considerably a few hours after the initial event.

Most of the water now remained in the subterranean World War II Bomb Shelter found directly below the tunnels of the Morden Train line at the station. Authorities weren't sure how long the water would stay there. They were monitoring it on an hourly basis. Divers had scoured the tunnels but with the grates on the few pedestrian tunnels between the Northern (Morden) Line and the bomb shelter securely fastened they knew there was no point searching those areas.

The missing persons couldn't have somehow gotten into that area even if they wanted to. It wasn't physically possible. The six police divers had reported to their superiors that they had all experienced unusual things occurring whilst searching for the missing persons. All six, at one time or the other, had reported being mysteriously tugged from behind, where they felt that someone was trying to pull their oxygen tanks off their backs.

Two of the police divers turned around and stated in

no uncertain terms their refusal to go back into the murky depths. These two men had been searching for the missing people together and swore on their mother's graves they had witnessed a tall and a short man walking along the tracks, as if there was no water down there at all. The men pointed at the divers and appeared to be speaking to them, with muffled shouts being distinguishable through the murky water.



Megevand had called Quentin four times by late afternoon. Each time the receptionist at his work had told the detective that she would pass on the message. She made no mention of the fact that Quentin was not at work today, or probably wouldn't be at all this week. When Megevand had called Yukiko, she told him Mary was not picking up her calls either.

The tragedy was weighing heavily on Megevand. He'd recalled the scene over and over at Clapham South Station and wished he could have been in the water with Finley. The look on Quentin's and Mary's face. The realization, one of their beloved children was somewhere deep in the train station, alone, in a sea of mysterious water.

Megevand had never felt so hopeless. The detective sat at his desk as most of his colleagues pulled up stumps for the night and headed home. Thatcher was out, so was Windebank. Tomorrow, Megevand reflected, would be the first proper get together for the task-force — nicknamed, aptly, Operation GOTT. Girl on the Tube.

The detective closed his eyes and pictured her. She was there on the train when the ghosts of William West and Richard Bailey had appeared. She was pointing at them. Megevand was one hundred percent sure. Those two evil

bastards had something to do with the disappearance of Finley Brookes.

It was Finley's father who had been directly involved in their deaths, after all. Few people knew this. Megevand was one of them.

'Alexandra Young,' he spoke in a whisper as the thought formed in his mind, 'I wonder if—'

The idea hit him like a bullet train. The detective pushed back his chair and rose to his feet.

First stop: home.



'At least find out if Thatcher can accompany you,' Yukiko's face was grave.

Megevand had told her when he arrived home that he wanted to go to the Bank and Monument Complex and attempt to make contact with Alexandra Young's spirit. Tonight. When he told her why, she didn't dispel the idea. Oddly, she told him it may be worth a shot.

'Okay, I will call Maggie, but if he is not available, I'm still going,' he said.

Yukiko reached up and touched the side of his face. She could see the pain etched all over it. He looked as if he hadn't slept in days. The bags under his eyes were something she rarely saw.

'Be careful, okay?' she said.

'Always honey,' Megevand said, stifling a yawn.



An hour later, now fed and feeling a little more energetic, Megevand parked at the Upton Park Tube Station and headed

for the platform. He would have preferred to drive into town although it was much quicker to catch a train.

Thatcher was not able to come with him, much to his disappointment. He knew he'd been putting way too much pressure on his partner of late. He could tell by the tone in Thatcher's voice that he would have been more than happy to tag along. But Megevand knew there was always a tipping point in marriages involving policemen. He knew Thatcher didn't want to come too close to that point in his own marriage.

Megevand knew Thatcher adored his wife and he, more than anyone, wouldn't compromise his friend's marriage. The train trip into Monument Station took about thirty minutes. Megevand used the time carefully planning his thoughts. He hoped this was going to work.

As the train PA announcement told the few passengers in Megevand's carriage that they were about to arrive at Monument Station, it hit him like a tonne of bricks. The other passengers, on opposing sides of the carriage, all looked at each other at the same time Megevand felt as if he was going to gag.

'What the hell is that?' one of the blokes sitting ten feet away from the detective said to no one in particular.

He pulled his windcheater up over his mouth and eventually made eye contact with Megevand. By this time the detective was holding his jacket arm over his mouth doing everything in his power not to breathe in the stench.

'It has to be getting worse,' he mumbled.

By the time the train pulled in at Monument, and the doors opened to the platform, the smell was so overpowering one of the passengers who managed to make it out of the

train took advantage of the 'gap,' as in 'mind the gap,' the space between the train and the platform, and vomited.

'Jesus,' another passenger said to a woman walking with him, 'I can't handle this anymore. I'm done with this bloody place!'

When the Black Nun stepped out from the pedestrian tunnel in front of the couple, the scream that came from the female passenger was so high pitched Megevand wondered if his eardrums would burst.

They turned around and ran. The last the detective heard of them was the distant wailing of the woman up the pedestrian tunnel. Eventually it died out. Megevand struggled to stand on the platform and not throw up himself. He could taste it in his mouth.

It was the stench of death on steroids. He wondered if his clothes would smell the same when he got out of here. He didn't hold much hope. The Black Nun stood there and stared at the detective. It was now just himself, and yet another apparition, from a bygone era.

If there was another Ghostbuster movie, this time filmed in London, he knew he would be front and centre. He was starting to feel like the god-damned ghost whisperer, again. It was a nickname he was familiar with.

When the Black Nun let out a sound akin to an old bag wailing, Megevand was getting so tired of all this bullshit that he rolled his eyes and wondered if it were possible to bitch-slap a fucking ghost. Surely. She was a bitch after all. She'd been terrorizing passengers down here for eons.

'I haven't got time for this—granny,' he barked.

The Black Nun abruptly stopped and gnashed her teeth, her open mouth revealing a set of choppers that made him regret calling her granny.

The guttural groan emerging from her made the detective take a step back, yet, a few seconds later, she stopped abruptly. Her rancid mouth snapped shut. He wondered what on earth was going on.

'I'm sorry, dear,' the Black Nun said.

Megevand stood there confused, but realised the apparition of the old crone was not looking at him. Her words were meant for someone behind him. Megevand spun around and did a double take. So that was who the Black Nun was speaking to.

What. The. Fuck.

He turned back in the direction of the ghost but she was gone. The detective swung his attention back to the person the nun had spoken to. In an instant the putrid, overwhelming stench of death was replaced with the scent of cheap perfume. He wasn't complaining. Alexandra Young stood at the end of the platform.

If Megevand told another person nearby that she was flesh and blood, a living, breathing human being, he knew for certain that the person wouldn't have argued otherwise.

'I came here to speak to you, Alexandra,' Megevand said.

He stood dead still and kept his expression neutral. She stared back at him as if she were in a trance. But with that same expression on her face.

'Can I, speak to you?' Megevand added.

Alexandra did not move an inch. The detective took a step forward.

He decided that he needed to try something. Anything.

'I want to help you,' he said.

He was sure he saw a fleeting smile on her lips, but then it was gone. Megevand took another step forward.

'I am hoping. In return—,' he repeated his movements and took another step towards her.

'—that you may be able to help me with something.'

Alexandra swayed from side to side. It was the first sign of recognition of his words.

The girl nodded.

'Meet me where you found me, Detective Inspector Ian Megevand,' and when Megevand blinked in surprise at her speaking his full name and rank, she was gone. The smell of death returned.

'Fuck,' he said, coughing the stench out of his lungs. He started walking for the nearest pedestrian tunnel but realised he had no bloody idea which direction that was.

'Now I need to find my way to that damn dead-end tunnel,' he muttered.

Megevand wondered if he would ever get to know his way around this underground maze.



OKAY, SO I'M not ashamed to admit it. I got hopelessly lost. How can you not in the Bank and Monument Complex? I made a mental note. I would ask Sergeant Bristow of the BTP how long it took him to memorize his way around. Surely, months. Probably years.

Eventually, after walking through at least four connecting pedestrian tunnels, I found the exact platform I was looking for. The big letters painted on the opposite wall of the platform sent a tingle down my spine. It's not every day you walk onto an Underground train platform and see your surname sprawled on the wall for the whole world to see.

I was surprised the "graffiti" was still there. By tomorrow, it would be covered over.

And there it was. The door at the end of the lifeless platform. My nerves went into overdrive. The stench was worse here than anywhere else. Maybe it meant something. I ignored the thought.

I felt as if I were alone in this entire subterranean world. It was deathly quiet. The silence, the smell, the veil of pitch-black suspended in the entrances of the train tunnels at both ends. The shadows lurking behind every conceivable object, in every single corner. The eeriness only heightened my frayed nerves.

When I arrived at the door to the access tunnel where we'd found her, I reached for the handle and felt my stomach tighten. It was locked. Great. What was I supposed to do now?

Frustration building, I stepped back, turned around, and swore out loud.

Was this the right platform? I asked myself.

'What are you doing young man?'

The voice scared the underpants off me.

My head pivoted to where I thought the voice had originated. My neck ached in retaliation of the move. Down on the tracks, standing right where the darkness of the train tunnel meets the lights of the platform was Richard Head. Clad in his white overalls, his calm face almost creepy.

I had obviously caught him in a good mood. I looked back at the locked door and then at him. He shook his head and let out a faint laugh.

'Aha, you want to go in there. I see,' he said.

Before I could say another word, the ghost of the painter had suddenly appeared at the door. He reached for the handle and turned back to me. His face, now, was anything but friendly; his voice more or less commanding.

'You need to put this to rights.'

He spoke with authority. I swallowed at the disconcerting feeling and mustered a breath from my shallow lungs. Watching me, he turned the door handle. He pulled the door back to reveal the darkness through the opening. He bowed his head and then turned and walked back to the edge of the platform, where a moment later, was back on the tracks where he disappeared into the train tunnel.



The lights in the access tunnel were spread out. Some didn't work at all, making the space all the creepier. The smell of death was beyond the pale in here. I wished I hadn't eaten dinner. Breathing through my mouth offered no respite, it actually made it worse. I walked on.

The sight of Alexandra standing there, her body stiff with her arms by her side was unnerving enough, but it was her eyeballs boring into mine that scared the absolute shit out of me. I broke out in a sweat, not game to take my eyes off her. She suddenly let out a panicked cry.

'I am trapped down here!' she shouted.

Obviously no small talk this time around. She continued with venom in her voice.

'I'm not supposed to be here! I should be in the next life. The after-fucking-life! Do you get that?'

I got it, loud and clear. I knew there was only one response, I'd rehearsed it a dozen times on the way here.

'Tell me how I can help you, Alexandra,' I said calmly.

She turned away from me, staring at the exact spot where we had found her body. She stared at it for some time before turning back.

'I can tell you about them. But don't ask me what their names are. I don't know,' she said.

I looked beyond her and took a deep breath.

'The men who took your life,' I said.

The expression on her face darkened.

'That's not all they did,' she whispered.

I could see the pain in her eyes. It punched me in the gut like a hammer. Her hands then curled into balls, and she began to fidget.

‘—and if that wasn’t enough,’ her voice grew louder, ‘I’m now trapped down here with all the other stupid ghosts!’

When she stomped her left foot, I swore I felt the reverberation pass underneath me.

My other rehearsed question just slipped out of my mouth.

‘And when I find them, what do I do then, Alexandra. What is it you want?’ I took a step closer. ‘What is it you need?’

Trust me, if myself and Thatcher had our way, we wouldn’t hesitate to spend some quality time with these four men. Not that these monsters deserved to see the sun come up ever again. But the both of us knew the cold hard truth; murder is murder. We can’t kill them.

We know it more than anyone. We deal with it every day.

Alexandra studied me, before she shook her head.

‘Yes, I want them all dead, Ian Megevand, but I know that is asking too much of you,’ she said.

She walked closer to me, and a tingling sensation passed through me from head to toe. Alexandra stood two feet away. For the first time I realised, sadly, how beautiful she was. She could have easily been a model if her life had not been brutally stolen from her.

She had a perfect symmetrical face with big, almond shaped eyes. I had yet to see her smile but I knew if I did, she would be even prettier.

‘One day I will try and explain it to you,’ she stared at me, ‘but you have had this experience before. When these men are brought to justice, I will be set free from this awful place.’

‘Sure,’ I remarked, as she took a step closer. Her

demeanour had changed, those wide eyes had narrowed and her words were clipped and straight to the point.

‘My friends and I down here are going to make sure the whole of London knows that nothing will be the same until that day comes,’ she hissed.

I was taken aback by the threat. I wasn’t expecting it. I took a deep breath and decided I would park it for now. It would have to be addressed later.

‘I am now part of a team who are going to stop at nothing to bring these men to justice, Alexandra,’ I said.

I know my words sounded genuine. Because they were. She stared at me and I swore I saw a glint of a smile fleetingly on her lips.

‘Can I ask just one favour of you, Alexandra?’ I knew this question was always coming.

It was the main reason why I was here. She looked at me but didn’t move an inch. I wasn’t sure if she was acknowledging my question or not.

‘You want to know about Finley Brookes, don’t you?’

How did she know that, huh? I was gobsmacked. I made a mental note to ask Yukiko if the spirits of the dead could read your mind. I wanted to put my hands over my head to protect my thoughts. Or go and purchase a motorcycle helmet. Maybe that would do it.

‘Yes,’ I whispered, bracing myself for the answer. She stepped back and closed her eyes.

I opened my mouth to speak but her right arm shot up, her outstretched hand commanding my silence.

About twenty seconds later she opened her eyes and gave me a long, hard look.

‘He’s alive, Detective Inspector Ian Megevand.’

My heart skipped a beat.

'Finley's alive? Where?'

She took her time answering.

'He's trapped deep within the air-raid shelter,' she said. I knew the location. Clapham South Station. The World War II shelter underneath. I was about to tell her that was not possible but decided against it.

'He's stuck in an air-bubble,' Alexandra added.

'My God, do you know how he got there?' I asked.

My mind was racing and the questions were just coming out of their own accord.

'You saw those two men on the train,' she frowned, 'I know you'd crossed paths with them a long time ago, right?'

William West. Richard Bailey.

'But they're—' I went to say.

'Aren't we all,' it was the first time I saw a glint of humour on her face.

'You know what you need to do now, Detective?' She said, her voice grittier and very much to the point.

'Get to him the second you get out of this dead-end tunnel. And when you are finished saving his life, you should then focus on the other job at hand,' she said.

I nodded. I turned on my heels, and headed out.

'No, wait!' The urgency in Alexandra's voice stopped me in my tracks. I swung around.

'There's something you need to know about what happened at that station,' she said.

She walked up to me, and was now mere millimetres away, face to face. I found myself holding my breath.

'They were not after you, the parents, or Finley,' she said.

She stared deep into my eyes.

I was about to ask who, but didn't have to.

'Heather,' she whispered.



MEGEVAND AND THATCHER stood in the cordoned off area at the entrance to Clapham South Underground Station, making small talk. Their nerves were frayed and patience wasn't high on their agenda. Quentin suddenly appeared at the top of the escalator and spotting the two policemen, made a direct beeline for them.

He reached for Thatcher's hand and shook it vigorously before turning to Megevand and, to Megevand's relief, threw his arms around the detective in an awkward show of male-bonding.

With all that going on, Thatcher was the first to spot them. The relief he felt was so powerful it made him feel dizzy. He felt his throat tighten. Mary stepped off the top of the escalator. In her arms, wrapped tightly in a space blanket. Finley Brookes.

Alive.

Thatcher could not stop smiling. He thought the boy looked like a drowned rat, but the little grin on Finley's face was one he would never forget.

The thunderous applause from the police, firemen, paramedics and various other people waiting for this moment around them was electric. Quentin turned away from Megevand and watched Mary thanking all the people who

came over to wish her and Finley well, as tears rolled freely down her face. She spotted her husband and shook her head in amazement at the reaction she and Finley had received, which was still going.

‘I owe you one hell of an apology,’ Quentin said to Megevand. He had to raise his voice over the ruckus of cheers and applause.

‘You have nothing to apologize for,’ Megevand said.

Quentin stood back, ‘and after my apology, I need to thank you. I am in your debt,’ he said.

Megevand nodded to Quentin as Mary waved to him, tears still welling in her eyes. Finley then said something to his mother. She shuffled her way through the throngs of well-wishers and arrived to the spot where Quentin, Megevand and Thatcher were standing.

‘This little man wants to say hello to you,’ Mary said in Megevand’s direction.

‘I’ve never been so happy to see his smiling face, Mary,’ the detective said, his voice breaking. Thatcher could hear the emotion in his partner’s voice. Megevand stifled a sob as Finley threw his arms out of the blanket and reached out for the detective.

‘Uncle Ian!’ Finley said, Mary stepping close enough that Finley was able to put his little arms around Megevand’s head.

Megevand would make sure he personally thanked Alexandra. The rescue crews were at a complete loss to figure out how the boy had ended up trapped in the air-raid shelter below the functioning Underground Train Station of Clapham South. The grates on the access doors were not wide enough for even a child to get through.

And the exact location of where the divers had found Finley simply defied logic. The toilet block in the air-raid

shelter complex. The distance from the entrance of the shelter to where they found Finley was substantial. Later, Yukiko would tell Megevand of the spine-tingling coincidence of this toilet block.

The two divers, who found the air-pocket and a terrified Finley Brookes, would later tell their superiors of the horrendous moment when they spotted two men in the water in the same room as Finley. But a moment after first spotting them, they'd disappeared.

Finley then said something to Megevand that he didn't hear properly. 'What was that Finley?' he said.

Finley took a deep breath and then shouted, 'I knew I would be saved, Uncle Ian!'

Megevand grinned. But Finley's expression changed. It was as if the young boy thought Megevand hadn't understood what he was trying to tell him. Mary was about to take her son to a waiting ambulance but Finley leaned close enough to Megevand that he, this time, heard the boy loud and clear.

'She kept me safe. She told me she was my nan,' Finley said.

Megevand wasn't sure if he'd heard right. Quentin must have overheard his son's words as well. When it dawned on the two men what Quentin's son was talking about, their faces reflected utter shock.

'Mum?' Quentin said without even meaning to say the word out loud.



MEGEVAND KISSED YUKIKO as he raced for the front door of their home. As he made his way down the pavement, about one house down from his own, he realized he was still holding onto his cup of coffee. But there was more: a half-eaten piece of toast was wedged between his teeth.

Megevand arrived at his car, parked halfway down the street. After dispensing with the coffee mug in the foot-well of the passenger side, he turned the key and revved the motor, eager to get on his way. The radio came on and he fumbled with the volume.

The detective didn't need to hear the news. He'd already heard it once and that was enough. Megevand pulled out onto the street and nearly cleaned up a man on his bicycle, who, Megevand thought, deserved to give the detective a mouthful of his thoughts on his driving skills. Megevand hadn't seen the cyclist at all. Megevand pulled alongside the guy and wound down the passenger side window to give him the world's quickest apology.

'Sorry mate! I didn't see you—'

The rider turned to Megevand. 'Where's the police when you need them, huh!' he bellowed.

Megevand grinned. 'I am the police!' he said with a mock salute.

The cyclist stuck out his thumb and cracked a smile as the detective hit the accelerator and slowly pulled away. Catching a glimpse of the cyclist in the rear-view mirror, Megevand swore he'd never wear Lycra as long as his heart was beating in his chest.



When Megevand arrived at the office, the vibe in the room was difficult to read. Thatcher was standing to one side, chatting to Bristow and another man Megevand didn't know. There were a few other strangers in the room also, most of them chatting amongst themselves.

Megevand walked over to Thatcher who abruptly brought the conversation to an end.

'Megs I'd like you to meet Detective Inspector Kitcher. Er, Derek I may add.'

Megevand nodded then shook Detective Kitcher's hand. A strong handshake. Good. Megevand loathed the wet-fish, limp handshaker.

'Good to meet you Kitcher,' he responded.

Kitcher was bean-pole tall. He gave Thatcher a run for his money as far as who obtained the cleanest oxygen found higher up in the atmosphere. A long face, a big smile and even bigger teeth, but like Bristow, Kitcher's brown eyes portrayed a serious side to the man.

Like most men, he had a good head of hair, but kept it short and combed to death. Megevand rarely met brothers of the dome kind but in Yukiko's mind that's what made him all the more special.

Megevand was about to ask them what was the latest, but his intended words were cut off by someone entering the room at sonic speed.

Detective Chief Inspector David Windebank followed by his superior. This was going to be one hell of a pissing contest, Megevand mused.

‘Gentlemen,’ Windebank waved his hand in the air, which had the immediate effect he was looking for. The room fell into silence.

‘—let’s all sit, we’ve got little time as you would expect,’ Windebank announced.

Megevand spotted his boss’s counterpart from the British Transport Police, who had entered the room after Commander Freeman. Megevand was still unsure who had jurisdiction here.

Megevand found it hard to take his eyes off Freeman. Every time he laid eyes on the superintendent, he swore he was looking at British actor Charles Dance. The man was his twin. Tall, broad shoulders, good hair, and serious “don’t fuck with me” eyes. He was intimidating.

Freeman spotted Megevand looking at him. He squinted his eyes before giving him a fleeting nod. Standing next to Freeman was *his* superior. The faces of the three men matched each other.

Grim. Strained. Stressed. Eager to get on with it.

‘If you are in this room and you are not aware of what went down at six thirty this morning,’ Windebank made eye contact with everyone in a flash, ‘I suggest you go back to whatever cave you were hiding in.’

He shuffled his feet uncomfortably, as Superintendent Freeman whispered in his ear.

‘Agree. Agree,’ Windebank muttered.

‘Superintendent Freeman wants four of you right there, right now,’ Windebank said. His eyes fell on Megevand.

‘Detective Inspector Megevand, Sergeant Thatcher,

Sergeant Bristow, and Detective Inspector Kitcher,' Windebank had not taken a breath.

'—what are you four men still doing standing here looking at me?'



'This is next fucking level, right?' Thatcher muttered to Megevand, as the four of them got out of the car in front of the Tube Station. The scene in front of them was nothing less than chaotic. People everywhere, confused. Police in numbers. Fire Engines. Ambulances.

The entrances to the Underground Station were cordoned off. People were still making it known that whatever the hell was going on down in the station, it was still a major bloody inconvenience to their morning commute.

'Buses are just about here,' Megevand heard one of the policemen shouting at a hoard of people still loitering around one of the entrances. Obviously, they had woken up this morning and not heard the news.

'Coming through, coming through!' Thatcher bellowed to the crowd.

As he was the first of them, he cleared the way for his three counterparts. They didn't mind.

Warrant Cards were produced, and a moment later they were on the other side of the police line.

'Mother of God! Bristow's hand flew up to his mouth and nose.

Megevand scanned Thatcher's face for a reaction and saw the big man's watery eyes.

'Fucking forgot about it,' Thatcher swallowed, suppressing the urge to throw up.

'It's getting worse,' Detective Kitcher said to the others.

Megevand made a mental note from this point to dig out one of those bandanas that lived in his bottom drawer of his bedside table. Some Vicks VapoRub as well would help. A dab under each nostril generally did the trick when extreme odours, such as this, were in your face. He would purchase a small jar of the ointment the very next time he laid eyes on a Chemist.

Together, these two items would help him deal with it. *The smell of death*. As was the case at Bank and Monument yesterday, for Megevand, the stench was stronger here. Everyone was struggling to deal with it. Uniformed police were coughing, struggling with the intoxicating odour.

Megevand believed his counterpart BTP Detective Kitcher, was on the money.

Here, at Whitechapel Underground Tube Station, the smell was on a whole new level.

‘Fuck me,’ Thatcher coughed.

At the top of the escalators, more uniformed policemen stood uncomfortably, probably wishing they’d taken their annual holiday at this time of the year. Anything, to avoid being here today. As Megevand and the others arrived at the escalators one of the senior uniformed officers looked them over, shaking his head.

‘You men from the task force I assume?’ He frowned and did his best to speak in between repeated attempts at covering his face. Megevand, Thatcher, Kitcher and Bristow nodded.

‘All of you had your breakfast this morning?’ he asked.

Thatcher looked at Megevand and the detective saw the pallor of his partner’s skin turn light grey. The four of them realised the policeman was not joking.

‘If it makes you feel any better,’ he stood aside to give

them access to the escalator, 'I threw up about half an hour ago.'

Bristow was the last of the four of them to pass the policeman and he asked, 'have you been down there?' The copper nodded.

'You will spend years, trying to forget, what you see today,' he said.



THE TWO MEN sat at the table in the corner of the bustling cafe in Central London. One nursed his black tea. Frustratingly, it was way too hot to drink. The other sipped on his coffee, wishing he was able to add three fingers of whisky.

The one with the black tea stared out the window, watching the world go by. Hurried people scurried down the street. He could see them, but his mind was elsewhere.

He turned his attention back to the man sitting with him. Coffee with Whisky's eyes darted from him to the other patrons in the coffee shop. Black Tea wondered if the other man was actually going to speak. With the awkward silence continuing, Coffee with Whisky decided to say something.

'How's work going?' he muttered.

Black Tea rolled his eyes. For fuck's sake, was this the sum of what their conversation was going to be today? he wondered.

'Fucking terrific!' he said with as much sarcasm as he could manage. Coffee with Whisky's eyes registered the venom in the other man's words, visibly stiffening. He sipped on his lukewarm, milky coffee and wondered if someone had made it this bad, as a way of punishing him.

Coffee with Whisky blinked. His mind went back to

'that' particular morning. Staring at Black Tea, he knew he should not take all the blame. The thought, moronically, made him feel a little at ease.

'You haven't got a lot to say this morning,' he whispered to Black Tea.

Black Tea stared him down with narrow eyes, before muttering something under his breath.

'What?' Coffee with Whisky asked.

'Fucking tiepin,' Black Tea hissed.

The other man stared at him for a moment, before it dawned on him, as to what Black Tea was insinuating.

'You mean—?' Coffee with Whisky asked, his face turning red.

'—lost it, yes,' Black Tea said through gritted teeth.

'Fuck!' the other man barked, his single word shuddering through the bustling coffee shop. People lining up at the counter all turned and stared at him for a moment. Black Tea closed his eyes and imagined throwing his hot beverage in the dickhead's face.

Instead, he silently rose to his feet, adjusted his tie, and moved away from the table, heading for the door. Like a lap dog, Coffee with Whisky followed.



THATCHER REACHED THE bottom of the escalators and threw up. I couldn't blame him. Fortunately, a bin was in, well, spewing distance. The other cops standing around didn't bat an eyelid either. If you didn't throw up down here, something was wrong with you. You weren't human.

Detective Kitcher's face turned a light shade of green. I could tell that Sergeant Bristow was struggling not to throw up either. When someone else is driving the porcelain-bus in earshot and you are already feeling it, it's a double-whammy.

I thanked the man above I was in such a hurry to get out the front door this morning. I only managed one piece of Marmite toast and a cup of coffee. I congratulated myself for not parting company with my breakfast. In my career as a Detective Inspector, who'd investigated all sorts of murders, never in all my time had I smelt anything like this.

Another uniformed policeman stood in the middle of the concourse. He had something tied around his lower face. It was his attempt to try and help him deal with the smell of death multiplied by one thousand. He nodded over to our left. We all took the cue. Thatcher regained his composure, wiping his mouth and nodding at me. I was all out of smart-arsed quips to throw at him. Maybe later.

The four of us walked along the concourse and through

the pedestrian tunnel. As we started down the tunnel towards the platform, I saw flashes from a camera. The police photographers were here. As I walked down and the platform came into full view, my mind struggled for a moment with what I was seeing.

‘No fucking way. Kitcher, you know what that is right?’ I heard Bristow say to the British Transport Police Detective.

‘It’s an old wives’ tale; it can’t be,’ Kitcher said in return.

When the pedestrian tunnel ended where the platform began, the four of us stood there in kind of a shocked awe. If I thought what I saw at Ravenstone House gave me nightmares, this was on a whole new level.

The carriages looked a hundred years old. There was enough of the carriages to stretch from one end of the platform to the other, covered in a layer of dust and soot that was surely two inches thick.

The joins in the metal were so rusted I wondered how the carriages hadn’t fallen apart. The windows of the train were fogged in with dust which made it difficult to see inside. But somehow, half of the doors to the carriages were open. Who opened them?

‘Bristow, what the fuck is this?’ I said, with shock in my voice. Bristow walked over to one of the doorways of the open carriage and peered in. He turned back to me and indicated to come over and take a closer look.

By now, the smell was so intoxicating I could barely breathe. But that was nothing compared to what I could see in the carriage through the open door. It defied logic.

‘This is supposed to be one of the greatest fables of the London Underground,’ Bristow said without taking his eyes away from the open door.

‘—I first heard the story of this when I joined the British Transport Police.’ Kitcher stood next to him.

I walked up to the open doorway of the carriage and held my breath. Not from the smell, but from what the hell I was looking at. The train carriage was filled to capacity. *Chock-a-block* as my old man used to say. I had never seen this many dead bodies in one place before in all my years in the force.

I took a deep breath and shuddered. Most, if not all of them were clothed. If you could call it clothing. More like rags, filled with skeletons. It was clear to me that their bodies had been brought into the carriage and placed together, standing up.

Bristow went to say something to Kitcher, but the detective suddenly turned and went running for the nearest bin. His turn to throw up. Thatcher walked to the next carriage. He shook his head at me when I looked in his direction.

‘This one is as full as that one,’ he nodded to the carriage I was standing in front of.

Damn it. I ran for the bin. I was the last remaining cop who hadn’t thrown up. A few minutes later, Bristow and Kitcher confirmed the incomprehensible fact of what was down here. Ten, old and decrepit carriages from who knows when, packed to the brim.

Shoulder to shoulder.

The dead.



THE NONDESCRIPT MAN stood on the platform waiting for the next train.

His ill-fitting, mustard-coloured trench coat hung from his bony shoulders as if he were a human coat-hanger. He overheard a couple of people nearby talking about how inconvenient it had been that the authorities were continuing to keep Farringdon Underground Station closed.

He seethed with frustration himself. It was the station closest to his home. Having to walk the extra distance to Chancery Lane was nothing short of a pain in the bloody arse. The Tube bosses were keeping tight-lipped about whatever the hell the problem was. All he knew was what he'd heard on the news.

Some weird shit had been going on, and most passengers were happy to give the place a wide berth. People stood close to him on the platform. Personal space didn't exist at this time of the morning. It was at capacity. Sure, this was life travelling on the Tube. It was par for the course.

Suddenly, a smell distracted his thoughts. A woman's perfume. Without making it obvious, he searched for the origin of the lovely scent. He pinned it on a brunette to his left, one person away. The next time she moved her head he received another waft of the lovely smell. The woman's hair

was just below her shoulders in length; it looked spotlessly clean and flawlessly brushed. He liked that.

When she turned and he saw her profile he felt himself swallowing in delight. She was beyond gorgeous. The next train pulled into the station, and as was the case with peak-hour trains, the crowd of passengers on the platform wondered how on god's earth they were all going to squeeze into the already crowded train.

The fact was some of them would miss out. The key was to ensure you weren't some of the ones missing out. As the doors opened and a handful of people did their best to fight their way out of the carriage, the onslaught began.

He'd never been in a mosh pit but wondered if it was the same. And then somehow, a miracle. He'd made it onto the train — but only just. As the doors closed literally half an inch behind him, the man in the ill-fitting trench coat and with dreadful dandruff cursed his form of transport to work.

Other people around him grunted, whilst other passengers hoped whoever was pressing against them, wasn't some creep with something growing in the nether-region. When he realised the woman with the amazing scent, mesmerising hair and dazzling profile was wedged one person away from him, he was almost unable to control himself. He became the creep you wouldn't want pushed up against you.

His hope was that within a couple more stops, he would be standing right behind her.

He closed his eyes. The unabating smell of her scent made him even harder. The last time he'd encountered a scent like this one, he'd stumbled upon an opportunity he couldn't ignore.

He wasn't one to normally share, but when he realised what was going down at the Bank and Monument Complex,

he knew it wouldn't be so bad. It was over before he knew it, but it was thrilling all the same.

As the train rattled on through the tunnel, he knew it was a pain to have recently switched stations to work. But his decision to give Bank and Monument a wide berth for a while was not a bad idea. It was for the best, he mused, as he fantasized about the woman not one foot away. The things I'd like to do to you, he thought.



Kitcher, Megevand, Bristow and Thatcher stood across the room from Commander Freeman and Detective Chief Inspector Windebank.

'Kitcher, talk to us,' Freeman said, citing the odour in the room he could not place.

The four policemen who had just returned from the Whitechapel Underground Station had a whiff about them, he thought. Either that, or it was his breath, blowing back in his face. He dearly hoped not the latter. To Megevand, Kitcher did a stellar job describing exactly what they had all seen at Whitechapel. He'd left nothing out.

Megevand could still taste the bile in his mouth. A stiff drink was on his mind and he didn't give a flying fuck what time it was.

'But how?' It was Windebank who'd asked the question we all wanted to know.

'That's a captain obvious if I've ever heard one,' Thatcher said under his breath.

Windebank shot Thatcher a dirty look.

'You got something to say, Sergeant?' Windebank was the only man alive who had balls big enough to stand up to

him. And he was his boss, after all. He would have stepped into Thatcher's face, albeit he didn't want to get any closer to any of them. The smell. Bloody hell.

'We want to know the same, boss,' Thatcher responded.

'Witnesses claim,' Bristow said, clearing his throat, 'that the train came roaring into the station of its own accord, while the lights around the place flickered on and off.'

Commander Freeman shook his head. He could hardly believe what he was hearing.

'But no one was bloody driving it, right?' he said, clearly annoyed at this serious turn of events. Today's occurrence was going to turn all this into a royal shitshow. He knew that. He wasn't in the mood for the heat that was going to come down from the police hierarchy.

'The train is over one hundred years old. How it actually operated to the point of being able to move along those tracks has all of us completely dumbfounded,' Kitcher stood straighter as he spoke.

'Excuse the language, gents. But we have all been relieved of our breakfast and I can tell by the looks of you both you can pick up the smell of what was down there from our clothes,' he added.

'I guess the other prevalent question is this,' Windebank stared at us.

'—where did the bloody thing come from?' he asked.

The six men fell into silence. Megevand noticed Kitcher and Bristow making eye contact. He had a strong suspicion they had some idea of how to effectively answer Windebank's last question.



‘THE GHOST TRAIN?’ Megevand said.

Kitcher shook his head adamantly.

‘No,’ he said, but without any malice. He turned to Bristow and gave him a nod. *Your turn.*

“‘The Dead Body Train,’ is the name it’s been called since the legend began,’ Bristow managed a faint smile, ‘not that it was a legend in the end. It was real.’

Thatcher took a deep breath. This was heavy shit, but, like everyone else, he was trying to make sense of it.

‘So, it was said to be a figment of everyone’s imagination way back then, right?’ he asked, standing and stretching his arms above his head. ‘And it’s now pulled into Whitechapel Station, probably one hundred years later than it was supposed to. Un-fucking-believable!’

Kitcher rose to his feet. ‘No, this train was never meant to pull in to some station, Sergeant.’

Kitcher stared off into the distance for a moment before he turned back to Thatcher.

‘—the story goes, they sent the train into some disused tunnel, before the entrance to the disused tunnel was to be bricked up and sealed.’

‘Jesus!’ Megevand couldn’t believe it, ‘why the hell didn’t they just bury the poor sods?’ he said.

Bristow leant forward and ran his hands through his hair. He looked tired and worn out with the day, and it wasn't even lunchtime.

'The story I heard was the hospital was overrun with the dead. Days on days of people dying from typhoid and the mortuary didn't know what to do with them. The story goes there was a tunnel from the Hospital, a train tunnel that is, with its own platform. I have no idea where it was supposed to go to.'

He now joined the others and stood to his feet.

'I still can't believe it. People have been searching for it for years. And all the while, the press and the odd historian, making a mockery of anyone who scarcely believed in its possible existence.'

He looked out the window, as if he could see the train carriages from where they all were, '—and now here we are.'

Finally, Megevand joined the others on their feet. It was getting close to lunchtime anyway. He wondered, out of the four of them, who would be hungry after this morning.

'Well, the heat is on, gentleman — and it is now turned up to high,' Megevand said. When the detective stood there staring out the window, a vision came. The wall across from the platform at Monument Station.

The one with his name on it. But it wasn't his name that he was thinking about in that moment. It was what was written below it.

This is just the beginning.



Peter Ford, the current Chairman of London Regional Transport (the holding company which presently ran the

London Underground Network) sat at his desk in a muted daze.

The phone on his desk had been ringing incessantly. He ignored it. He thanked the lord above, the employment contract he'd signed for this job, had included a 'golden handshake' clause.

Whoever had thought up the concept of the golden handshake clause should get a golden handshake themselves, Ford mused. Tied to the clause in his contract was a tidy little sum. Three hundred and fifty thousand quid. If he were sacked before his tenure was up, the three hundred and fifty thousand came with him. Nice. And right now, he pondered all possibilities.

When the first reports came in about the incident at Whitechapel, his first flight of fancy was the naive hope they could contain it. Keep a lid on it. Make it go away. It would be one of the nails in his coffin when he eventually did get the bullet.

But that would have been impossible. At least one hundred people were standing on the platform when the "Dead Body Train" suddenly appeared. And this was before the screeching of the hundred plus year old wheels turned half the people standing there deaf!

A select few of those witnesses unlucky enough to be standing on the platform ended up on the telly. Others in the newspapers and on the radios from here to Timbuktu. Great Britain as a nation was captivated with this latest turn of events in the Tube. It didn't take long for it to make front-page news the world over.

The chairman closed his eyes and wished he could blink and have all this be a dream.

He pictured the faces of the witnesses who were

interviewed on the television. One bloke spoke too clearly and descriptively for the Chairman's liking. Bastard. He wouldn't forget the bloke's name in a hurry. The same as his late father.

Ralf.

'The train came into the station at such a rate, most of us didn't realize what was going on until it came to a sudden halt. The screech of the brakes was deafening. My first thought was, why are none of the lights inside the carriages working? But a second later, I heard a woman scream.

She was standing directly across from the carriage's doors at the edge of the platform. The doors had just opened of their own accord. And then the smell hit me like a tonne of bricks. I still feel sick from even thinking about it. In between the screams and mayhem, people were throwing up in droves.'

The witness had coughed and the reporter had instinctively stepped back. She didn't want her expensive shoes ruined.

'—Just before we all made a run for escalators to get back up to some fresh air, I stole a glance in one of the carriages. I wish I hadn't. I wish I'd just run out of there.'

The reporter, now feeling safe from not being vomited on, stepped closer and asked the question millions of people in England wanted to know.

'Do you mind me asking; what did you see in the carriage?'

The bloke took a deep breath and stared at the reporter. To the joy of the news producer, Ralf found it hard to answer her question. It made for riveting news.

'Dozens. Upon dozens. Could even be hundreds. Bodies. Nothing left of 'em. Skeletons, lots of them clothed. But what I couldn't believe was,' he put his hand to his mouth and stifled

a sob, *'how tightly packed in they were. I can't begin to imagine why.'*

The reporter gave 'Ralf' a moment to regain his composure, but she was not done yet. Not by any means. This was the story of the year.

'Rumours are rife. The train was the legendary dead body train, missing for over one hundred years. Hidden in some secret disused section of a tunnel and covered in. Do you believe that what you saw today was what I just described to you?'

Ralf wasted no time nodding. And it was a nod that could only mean one thing.

Yes.

'They say there were at least ten carriages crammed with what I saw with my own eyes. Packed in like sardines they were. All I can tell you is I hope those poor people were all dead before they were stuffed into that train.'

The reporter murmured in response.

'What do you say to all those people in London who are now terrified of venturing into the Underground after events such as this one? This, in addition to the previous occurrences at other stations such as Bethnal Green, and Clapham South Station. And then of course the Bank and Monument Complex. What do you say to all these people, Ralf?'

Ralf closed his eyes momentarily and let out a long, slow breath.

Peter Ford, sitting at his desk replaying the news report in his head, shuddered as he did the same action. But then he pounded his fist on his desk in anger. He cursed the BBC for not editing out the last bit of the interview. He would be making his feelings known to some friends in the House of Commons.

'You think I'll be catching a train anytime soon?' Ralf laughed awkwardly.

'—I may be a lot of things. But an idiot is not one of them. I'd stay away if I were you,' he said.



ONE WEEK LATER.

And they did.

London's transport network was in deep shit. Neck deep. You didn't need to be a theoretical physicist like Albert Einstein, or to have lived in 'the Swinging City,' your whole life to know it. The signs were everywhere.

A good chunk of the millions of London residents who used the Underground on a daily basis were now staying away in droves. The effect was immediate. The roads all over the city were choking with the influx of too many cars. Gridlock took on a whole new meaning, and cabbies thought it was Christmas.

Not that they could get their paying customers anywhere in a decent amount of time, but they didn't care. It was raining money for them. Buses, the 'Overground' train system and the London Trams didn't know what had hit them, either. People were now cramming into these forms of transport as if trying to replicate a living version of one of the carriages from the Dead Body Train.

Scores of Tube Stations were now closed. *Out of action.* And then the stations that had cut the lines clean in half. Trains were still unable to get through Clapham South Station. The shenanigans which had taken place there had

effectively cut the Morden (Northern) line in half. The same problem was now at play at Whitechapel Station.

The District Line was now in two parts. The Dead Body Train was yet to be moved off the District Line. Attempts to actually move the ten carriages along had proved futile. One engineer wondered if they would have to cut the carriages up, which was ludicrous. The Underground Network couldn't wait that long.

The bodies themselves were being removed one at a time. The poor sods who were chartered with this grisly task would have nightmares about the event for months to come.



Megevand cursed the city he had grown to love. He'd spent the last forty-five minutes walking to his next appointment. With the traffic at a complete gridlock, he'd told the cabbie he was getting out and walking the rest of the way. He didn't need to tell the bloke to pull over.

With the traffic backed up as far as the eye could see and moving at a rate of half a car length every five minutes, the detective simply threw the grumpy old fart a couple of tenners through the open Perspex dividing window before he opened the door and hopped out.

Detective Kitcher was the one who suggested Megevand go out to the Bonney Estate and pay Petula Young a visit. He told him it may help him understand Alexandra better. Or at least get to know more about her.

Who she was before the tragic demise of her short life. Megevand wasn't keen on the idea, but a bit of fresh air would not go astray. Being in the Underground so often of late was starting to make him fray at the edges. After the third knock on the door Megevand wondered if he had the right address.

Or maybe Petula was out. There was no sound coming from the flat. The detective was about to cut his losses. Just as he turned away, the door opened, without any forewarning. Standing in the doorway was Petula Young. Megevand knew within about one and a half seconds it had to be. Kitcher had given him a brief description of what she looked like. There was no doubt it was her.

Middle aged, but she looked much older. A thin, wiry frame with a tired face, which once, long ago, would have been attractive. Megevand could see the distant recognition of the person who'd created Alexandra. Size of the eyes. Hair colour. Near identical chin. But not much more.

The detective had dealt with his fair share of people battling the drink over the years, and sadly, this woman had the semblance of being a bona fide member of the club. A lit cigarette hung out of her left hand. A waft of second-hand smoke seemed to billow out of the hallway behind her as if she was the door-bitch to a nightclub in full swing.

Speaking of nightclubs, the stench of alcohol hit Megevand next. It oozed from the woman as if she'd just bathed in something that included the word 'proof' in its name.

'So waddya *you* want?' Petula said, taking a long drag from her cigarette.

Megevand went to introduce himself, but suddenly, Petula's face lit up like a Christmas tree. Her smile revealed a mouthful of stained, yellowing teeth in desperate need of a dentist.

'You! I know youuu!' She took another long drag of her cigarette and sucked at least half of it down in one breath.

'You're the one who speaks to the, you know, the—'

‘Dead?’ Megevand sighed, and wished he’d thought twice about Kitcher’s idea.

‘Yooou-re the Gosst-busster,’ She could hear the slur in her own words so she straightened up and tried again. ‘Ghost...whisperer. The one from the orphanage.’

Megevand studied the woman closer. Flat, lifeless hair but her attire was the winner, a filthy dressing gown which looked two sizes too big. It appeared to be six months overdue for a wash. Or an incinerator.

‘You here about Lex?’ she muttered.



Thatcher and Bristow walked along the platform at the Elephant and Castle Underground station. Another report of paranormal events at yet another Underground Station.

‘I know the back story to this one,’ Bristow said.

He looked Thatcher over and wondered what a man of his size ate on a daily basis. He must have one hell of a pantry, he thought. It had to be a walk-in for sure. Maybe a warehouse.

‘That I believe, John,’ Thatcher said, adding, ‘anyone who has spent as much time in the Underground probably knows the spooks on a first-name basis.’

Thatcher stopped and smiled at the sergeant.

‘—and you are not one to bullshit around about this stuff,’ he added.

Bristow nodded with a grin. ‘I don’t make things up, especially with a man of your size,’ he said.

The two men broke into a rare moment of laughter. Thatcher welcomed it. Things felt bleak in London. There was so little to laugh about at present.

‘A friend of mine who worked for a few years on the

Northern Line—' Bristow stopped and looked around the place as if searching for his friend.

'—he told me about a girl who always appeared on the train at this station, Elephant and Castle. Witnesses claim even as the train pulled into the station; she was not sitting on the train. And then as soon as the train comes to a stop, there she was.' Bristow shivered at the thought.

'That would be all fine and dandy,' Bristow shook his head as he watched passengers arriving onto the platform ready to wait for the next train.

'—but if you got too close to her, and God forbid try and talk to her, she would go off her nut and start screaming at the top of her lungs.'

Thatcher swallowed awkwardly, hoping he did not bump into this woman anytime soon. Sounded a bit like his wife from time to time, he kept that thought to himself.

'So, she's been making a regular appearance lately then?' He asked.

Bristow nodded. The latest reports were such that the ghost of the attractive woman was now stepping it up. When a train pulled into the Elephant and Castle Station, she was somehow appearing in all carriages simultaneously. And making herself known to all those on each carriage. It was causing chaos with people trying to get out of the carriages when she suddenly appeared, with people being regularly injured in the fracas that ensued.

'You think you can do something to sort her out?' Thatcher said. As he spoke to Bristow, he found himself scanning the crowd. A moment later he felt that familiar chill pass over the back of his neck.

Two men standing in the middle of the crowd caught his attention. He wasn't sure why. When he turned his gaze back

to Bristow and then back to the two men, they were both now staring directly at him. There was something familiar about the two of them. Curiosity ventured into his consciousness.

His ears could hear Bristow's words but he'd zoned out. The platform was now filling up. Thatcher could not help but return the two men's gaze. He could feel the adrenaline trickle down the back of his throat. He knew there was only one thing to do.

Bristow stood alongside him. The BTP Officer stood one foot away from the yellow line at the edge of the platform. They were there to board the next train. The hope was to confront the ghost of the young woman and see what, if anything, they could do.

'Mate,' he interrupted Bristow's ramblings. 'Wait here a minute. I'll be back.' Thatcher hadn't taken his eyes off the two men. They had not taken their eyes off him either.

'Sure,' Bristow said, watching Thatcher move off through the crowd of people. Some huffed as he passed through, whilst others decided a man of his size — can do whatever the hell he wanted.

Thatcher moved towards them.

'Who the fuck are you. Why do I feel like I know you two?' Thatcher muttered to himself.

The familiar rush of air billowed from train's tunnel entrance at the end of the platform. The next train was nearly here. The two men had not moved an inch.

It was as if they wanted Thatcher to come to them. Their dead eyes made the sergeant feel uneasy. The majority of mankind never stared at him like this, unless they were blind drunk (full of Dutch courage) or had a loaded gun within reach. Thatcher bumped into a pram. He wasn't looking

down as he walked. The infant thought nothing of it. The sergeant smiled at the mother.

‘Sorry love. Police business,’ he said.

A smile swiftly replaced the original scowl on the woman’s face a second earlier. Thatcher’s eyes went back to the two men.

‘What the fuck!’ Thatcher said. They had vanished.

He heard the screeches of the brakes of the oncoming train meet the track. The train’s lights pierced the darkness in the tunnel two seconds later. Thatcher had arrived at the spot where the two men were standing. He scanned the crowd. Where had the fuckers gone? He thought.

He wondered if the two men were trying to hide behind other passengers.

‘Bugger me dead,’ he said out loud, ‘where in Christ’s name have you gone?’

The train pulled into the station. Call it intuition, but suddenly, he had a dreadful feeling.

Bristow.

When he spotted his fellow policeman, the big man froze. Bristow was staring at the train, in his own little world. At his end of the station there weren’t many people around him. Thatcher felt the urge to shout at the top of his lungs at him.

The two men who’d been staring at Thatcher, were now standing directly behind Bristow. And the BTP Sergeant didn’t know. Maybe it was the look on their faces. Especially since they were now staring at Thatcher with those dead eyes once more.

‘NO!’ he shouted.

How they’d slipped past Thatcher a moment ago, defied physics, he countered. But what they did next threw physics

right out the door, replacing it with cold-blooded murder. The men stepped forward. They shoved the British Transport Policeman with such force; his feet literally left the tiles of the platform.

Onto the path of the oncoming train.



I'VE SEEN MY fair share of shit holes. Hell, I grew up in one. But this place wasn't so much about being run down. It was more about the fact she lived like a pig. The furniture in the tiny lounge room was not decrepit, old, or falling apart. It was modern, sure, a bit tattered, yes, but not what you would expect.

'Scotch?' Petula asked, before reaching for her packet of cigarettes.

Yukiko would complain when I got home today. The smell of smoke would surely be all over me by the time I left here. At least it wasn't that other smell Yukiko was far from happy about of late. The smell of death.

'On the clock,' I responded with my best attempt at a placating expression.

'Suit yourself,' she said, shrugging.

Petula sat back onto the grey leather sofa. It was grotty. It matched the colour of the London sky. A terrible choice of colour, mind you. Petula reached over to her side table and took a long drink from her glass. It looked like crystal. Heavy, thick glass. Ice blocks chinked and moved in the dark liquid.

'Ah,' she said, as if it were her first drink of the day. It most certainly was not.

'I've already spoken to the other cop,' she looked at her

lounge room window as if it would provide the answer she was looking for, '—Mr Kitchen. That's right!' she laughed a heavy smoker's laugh. Rasping for air, she waved her cigarette in my direction.

'Told him I would be missus lounge room. Or missus bedroom if that suited him better!'

'Jesus aged Christ,' the inner voice in my head sighed. So, Alexandra's mother was not only an alcoholic. But she was a sodding comedian to boot. This was going to be a long day.

'Detective Inspector Derek Kitcher,' I knew it mattered little, but I said it anyway.

Petula sucked on her cigarette as her eyes narrowed on me.

'Like I said,' she tightened her lips so the smoke billowed out of a small crack on the left side, '*K-i-t-c-h-e-n.*'

I'm getting pissed off at a rapid rate. She's a piece of work by the looks of it and this blanket of smoke suspended over me is not helping. Surely, she could at least open the fucking window.

'I'm sorry for your loss, Mrs Young,' I said solemnly. It was time to change the subject. And get things somehow on track.

Alexandra's mother stared at me for a time. When she turned her head in the direction of the mantelpiece above the heater, she'd done it in silence. The woman took another slug of her drink, followed almost immediately by another drag of her cigarette. Only when I followed the angle of her face did I realize she was staring at a photo.

Black and white. It was a small photo, but I knew even at this distance it was of her. Alexandra.

'She was too big for her own boots, you know,' Petula

hissed. When she turned back her face was twisted in utter disdain.

‘—dressing like a tart, n’all. Thought she was some hot-shot up-and-comin’ future hair-fuck’n dresser.’

I can do the poker-face thing with the best of them. I’ve interviewed the lowest form of scum in that familiar interview room you see in Police Stations. I would not be able to tally up the number of times I’ve had to keep a straight face.

But Alexandra’s mother’s words were so completely devoid of compassion, even for her own flesh and blood, my poker face was somewhere else. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing.

‘You didn’t know er’ deet-ective Meg-a-man, or whatever your bleedin’ name is, right?’

The woman was a piece of work. I disliked her, a lot. I fought the urge to rise to my feet and walk out without saying another word.

‘You a dad ghost whisperer?’ she muttered.

‘No, I am not, but I’ve had plenty of—’

‘What!’ she laughed hysterically, ‘—you think spending all that time with the dead orphans makes you fucking a parent?’ she barked.

If Thatcher was here, he would have snatched the drink out of her hand and thrown it at the fireplace. He then would have pulled that bloody dart out of her mouth and done the same. I felt the desire to do those very things but I gritted my teeth and sucked in the foul air in the room.

I decided to give it back to her.

‘You got anything positive to say about that poor girl?’ I spoke with such venom that it had the strangest effect on the woman.

It was as if I’d slapped her in the face, and broken a

thick-trance like state she'd been in. She dropped her glass on the floor in front of her, and the cigarette wobbled dangerously in her hand.

'I told her to be careful,' her words spoken clearer and that surprised me more than her complete change in demeanour. She stifled a sob.

'—especially when she travelled to the hair-dressing academy.'

Before I could respond she exploded into a torrent of tears. She howled, folding thin arms around herself. I sat back and wasn't sure what to do. She continued to cry for what had to be minutes, before it eventually died down to mutters and sniffing.

'I need to piss,' she whispered, and before I could respond she stood up and shuffled past me.

Fuck. This was heavy. I wondered what I was going to get out this meeting. Other than confirming Alexandra had lived with an alcoholic mother who was bat-shit crazy. My heart felt heavy for the young girl as I looked around the place. She had to deal with this every day. And then she had to die in the most horrible of circumstances.

A stab of resolution pierced my heart. I took a deep breath to pull myself together. I heard the woman coming up behind me, she was muttering words to herself as she drew closer.

'I want to show you something,' she said when she arrived by my side.

'Come sit over here with me,' she added.

Petula was carrying a photo album. This was going to be a long, long day. I did as she asked. I sat down on the sofa. She shuffled closer to me and started to take me through the album.

I did my best to keep up with her commentary, and the pages of photos. I could tell, at some point in her life, Petula appeared to have genuinely loved her daughter. Maybe she still did. Alcoholism affects people in different ways. I wasn't sure though. Something deep inside me told me to go with my gut.

Petula gave me the impression that at some point in her life she became jealous of her daughter. Like, *deeply jealous*. Alexandra was clearly head and shoulders more attractive than her mother had ever been. Even in Petula's heyday.

The tattered album grew thicker on the left side than the right. I began to see photos of Alexandra which looked more like the person, *or apparition*, I had come to know.

Petula commented on each and every photo in great detail.

When she had turned the last couple of pages of the album, I noticed many of those photos included other people. They looked like photos taken at parties.

Petula had already told me, about five pages ago, Alexandra's father was long gone. Apparently, he was flying out the door, the second Petula had told him she was late for her period way back when. Alexandra was her only child.

When she turned the next page — another page with photos taken at parties — something subconscious in my mind took notice, although I couldn't put my finger on why. Something about the people in these photos on this page, aside from Petula and her daughter.

'You sure loved the parties,' I said without thinking. It didn't take my best detective work to figure out this latest set of photos were taken in this very room.

'Well,' Petula whispered, 'I love to have people over, and there's nothing like throwing a good neighbourly get-together,

right? And as I am the most sociable butterfly on this block, it seemed always to end up here.' She spoke with more pride about the parties than her daughter. I peered closer at the last photo on this page. There was something about it this particular photo that made me feel uneasy.

It was a photo of Petula, Alexandra, and three men. All standing close. Snug. When I leaned in closer to study the image it was as if Alexandra was staring right at me. *Trying to tell me something.*

In the photo, Petula was dressed to the nines. Over the top, in my opinion, for a party at home.

And she looked drunk. *Very drunk.* Her eyes were the giveaway.

Alexandra, on the other hand, looked clearly uncomfortable. Squirming is probably the apt word. Petula turned the page. I wished she hadn't. Before I could think of a reason to ask her to turn back to the previous page, the photos on this new page had the hairs on the back of my neck doing the cha-cha.

Same party. Petula and Alexandra. Now only two of the men from the previous photo. But this photo was taken closer. Or Petula had had it enlarged. Speak of the devil, the mother looked as pissed as a fart. The middle-aged man to her left, grinning from ear to ear, huddled in close.

I could almost read his less than gentlemanly intentions by the look on his face. Shoulder to shoulder with Petula was Alexandra. I could almost read the look on her face too. It said that she wished she could be anywhere else on the planet other than in this very room at this party.

Standing next to her was a younger man, and alarmingly similar to the other male in the photo, left of Petula, his desires were clearly etched on his snide little face. Christ,

he looked familiar. Couldn't place it, though. But when I glanced back to the older man next to Petula, I joined the dots. These two men. Similar faces. Identical in height.

Father and son. It had to be. I would put my hard-earned money on it.

'Friends of yours?' I said, nodding to the picture.

Petula smiled. I caught a whiff of Scotch mixed with a packet-a-day of cigarette breath.

'Neighbours across the way. Or next block. So many parties. Hell, I can't remember, Dee-tective Megamann,' she said.

I couldn't be bothered correcting her.



MEGEVAND RELISHED THE fresh air. Even with the air-pollution problems that have dogged London for decades, it was a vast improvement on Petula's flat. He cursed the woman. Being stuck in a room full of second-hand smoke for even a short time always resulted in a headache.

The detective longed for some aspirin though he knew he'd have to go searching for a chemist, which was almost as painful as the headache itself. He decided to wait until he got back to the office. He hoped the packet in his office draw was still there, but he wasn't confident.

Flagging down a cab, he looked up the road and felt a little relief. The traffic wasn't as bad as it was earlier. He gave the friendly cabbie his destination who responded with a tip of his old cap, but once he sat in the back and got comfortable, his pager buzzed.

He read the short message twice.

'Fuck me,' he muttered.

The cab driver had heard, and glanced at him in the rear-view mirror. When Megevand fell into silence, staring out his passenger side window, the cabbie knew it was not his place to ask his passenger if everything was all right. Being a cabbie in London, the driver would have known the organisation located at the address Megevand had just given him.

And the cabbie knew a policeman when he saw one. Megevand turned back and looked straight ahead, through the front window. The detective caught the cabbie's eyes in the rear-view mirror.

'You okay mate?' the cabbie said with genuine concern.

Megevand took a long time to answer. When his lips moved the cabbie could see the look of a man with the weight of the world on his shoulders.

'My Da, and two brothers, lifelong policemen. All gone, now,' the cabbie said in a friendly tone.

Megevand nodded, he couldn't speak after reading the message on his pager.

'I'm sorry for your loss,' Megevand said without making eye contact with the driver.

The cabbie nodded; he appreciated his passenger's words. Most wouldn't have said anything.

'You need me to get you there as quickly as I can?' the cabbie asked.

Megevand closed his eyes and nodded.

'I need you to take me somewhere else,' and gave the cabbie the new destination.

The cabbie took a deep breath, putting two and two together and pressed the right foot down on the peddle just that little bit harder.



Megevand thanked the cabbie, giving him a tip for his good service.

'You take care of yourself,' the cabbie said.

When the cab pulled away from the curb, Megevand

spotted Thatcher. His face was ashen. Megevand walked up to him and put his hand on his partner's arm.

'Mate,' Megevand stood slightly closer, 'it was not your fault,' he whispered.

Thatcher took a deep breath before eventually meeting Megevand's eyes.

'I saw them. I should have known. I started towards them because they were staring at me with a "*we're going to fucking kill you*" look on their faces.'

The big man shuffled on his feet. His chest rose and fell. His emotions were not something seen in public.

When he looked up and met Megevand's eyes, he said, 'I swear on my life they looked like those two from Clapham South Station, I realised afterwards.'

The detective felt as if his partner had just slapped him. He stood back and felt his face flush with heat.

'What?' but before Thatcher could respond Megevand added, '—you mean,' Thatcher nodded.

'West and Bailey?' Megevand said in a mere whisper, scratching at the stubble on his chin, '—you absolutely sure?'

His partner nodded, 'tall bloke, grey hair, ponytail, ugly fucker. The other, short, round and pudgy. Face like a rat.'

Megevand stepped back, visibly shaken. Two people walked past. He waited for them to enter the building. Once the doors were closed, with his anger rising, he turned back to Thatcher, and said through gritted teeth, 'This is getting bloody serious Maggie.'

Thatcher stared at his partner for a time. 'How do we arrest two fuckers who are already supposedly dead, Albert?' the big man said. Megevand shook his head.

'The last thing I want to do is arrest them,' he responded,

his eyes telling his partner exactly what his true intentions were.



Constructed to aid drainage of water from the platforms in deep Underground Stations, the idea, first conceived back in the early nineteenth century, in modern times, had another use. Later coined ‘suicide pits,’ the trench built underneath the actual train tracks, had saved lives.

Not all, but often. Even those who had wanted it all, to end.

‘There he is,’ Megevand walked into the hospital ward and spotted the policeman.

‘How you holding up mate?’ Thatcher followed Megevand into the room and tried his best to put on a positive face. He still felt as if this was his fault. Megevand stood next to the policeman’s bed and smiled. Sergeant John Charles Bristow, Megevand surmised, looked as if he’d aged ten years since he’d last seen him. Which was only yesterday.

The poor bloke was still in shock. He looked pale, and was now the proud owner of some decent scratches and bruises, that started around the top of his face, and ended down on both arms. A bandage was wrapped around his left forearm and Bristow’s right eye appeared as if the bloke had been punched in a fist fight.

Bristow reached over and awkwardly shook Megevand’s extended hand, gasping in pain from the ache in his right shoulder.

‘Thank God,’ Megevand said, ‘I don’t need to express to you how happy I am to see you’re still with us mate.’

Bristow took a moment and met Thatcher’s gaze.

‘This big oomph over here,’ he smiled weakly at

Megevand, 'you need to take him to the pub tonight and buy him a pint or two. He thinks this is all his fault.'

Thatcher shuffled awkwardly and Megevand turned to him.

'See,' Megevand shook his head lightheartedly, 'Bristow is telling you.' Thatcher looked over Megevand's head as if searching for something before he managed a faint smile.

Megevand turned back to Bristow and said, 'I'll take care of him, now tell me, are you okay?'

The sergeant looked deep into Megevand's eyes. 'Ever had a near death experience, Ian?'

Megevand nodded. If there was one thing he'd experienced in his life, this, was one of them. His heart shuddered at the memory.

'That I have my friend. It was quite confronting to say the least.'

'The Orphanage?' Bristow asked.

Megevand nodded.

'It all happened so bloody quickly,' Bristow said.

'Mate, thank the lord above that station had the pits huh,' Thatcher said.

Megevand could hear the serious conviction of his co-worker's words. He agreed with him. If this had occurred on an above-ground, or what is commonly known as an 'over-ground,' station, they would not currently be conversing with Bristow. They would be talking to his corpse.

'Before I had time to do a thing, I was in mid-air; the train was six feet off. A few seconds more, I would have collided with the front of the train before I hit the ground.'

Megevand shook his head in wonderment. Fate. How goddamn fickle it is, he thought.

Bristow sat back and stared into the distance. 'They were ghosts, right?' he eventually said.

'Yes,' Megevand responded. He didn't see the point in speaking anything but the truth to Bristow.

'Which means if they somehow were able to push me off that platform—'

The thought had not occurred to Megevand. The realization of Bristow's comment made the detective shudder. 'Fuck,' Megevand said with a mix of anger and bewilderment. 'We're just relieved we didn't lose you Sergeant,' he said.

Megevand stared out the window and wondered what the hell they were going to do now. 'This shit is getting way out of control,' Megevand said.

'What are you going to do?' Bristow responded.

'Go to the nearest pub and buy Thatcher that pint,' Megevand said, patting Bristow carefully on his shoulder.

'—and then after that, figure out how in God's name we put an end to all this,' he added.

Bristow nodded. He took a deep breath and when he spoke to Megevand he looked over to Thatcher.

'—well count me in, Detective,' he sat up in his bed straighter.

'—if they want a fight, they sure as hell have got one. Once I am right to go,' he paused for a moment and surprised Megevand and Thatcher with a resolute grin, adding, 'I'll be back,' channelling his inner Arnie Schwarzenegger as if he were the Terminator, himself.



LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR hours later, Sergeant Bristow's spine-chilling prophecy was fulfilled. The platform at the Clapham Common Underground Station was infamous in its flawed simplicity. Locals had been complaining about the problem for decades.

Known as an 'island' platform, it beggared belief that a station as busy as Clapham Common possessed a shared inbound and outbound platform only ten feet wide.

Passengers often jostled from either side when the platform was crowded. When the standing area is that narrow, it is understandable. On this day, the passengers wedged onto the ten-foot-wide expanse panicked when the lights in the station suddenly pulsed on and off, seconds before the city bound train was approaching. But to make matters worse, the next outbound train approached the station almost at the same time as the inbound.

A lone passenger, towering at six foot six, witnessed the carnage with his own eyes. He told authorities he was standing dead centre on the platform about twenty feet from the city end. He claims to have witnessed a man, with long grey hair pulled back into a ponytail, acting strangely.

After viewing mugshots of Richard 'the old' Bailey, the witness believed the two men were one and the same. The

witness was asked if he'd seen William West on the platform, but he said he hadn't, citing how many people were squeezed onto the platform at the time.

Another passenger, who couldn't believe he'd survived the fracas, was much closer to the action. He recalled the man who looked like Bailey, and because of the smell, he remembered West. He said the shorter man's body odour was overpowering, it reminded him of the stench of rotting meat.

With the trains less than ten feet from passing one another, it was at this point all hell broke loose. Passengers screamed in terror. They all knew. There were too many people on the platform and seasoned locals, who used the dangerous station regularly, realised the day had arrived.

The young mother of two often complained to her husband how difficult it was to get anywhere on a train where she wasn't wedged against other people. She made the decision to fight her way to the end of the platform and enter the train through the doors near the driver.

Today, along with a middle-aged man with a broken arm, her issues of being pushed into the corner of a carriage with people pushed up against her, were no more.

The man with the broken arm had thought he could grab her in time, not realising until a moment later, he too was being pushed in the same direction. But directly across from this, on the opposing side of the narrow platform, the tragedy would leave an indelible mark on millions of Londoners for years to come.

Three sisters. The oldest, sixteen, the middle, fourteen, and the youngest of the trio, only twelve years old. A collective life that should have spanned at least a couple of hundred years.

At the same time, the young mother and her tragically

chivalrous stranger trying to save her died almost instantly; after being pushed onto the path of the incoming train, the three siblings were being shoved in the opposite direction.

As the passengers realised what was occurring, and their collective panic congealed, it would result in another death. An elderly lady, who had sadly picked the wrong day to visit her late husband's grave.

How more people did not get trampled as scores of people tried to escape the station stunned the emergency services. It would be one of the gravest days, so far, since all this began.

Megevand started to wonder if the spirits of Bailey and West had *'a thing'* about the Northern Line, especially around the Clapham area. What also made Megevand's head spin was finding out that the Mount Pound Inn had burned to the ground under mysterious circumstances a little while ago. The late Bailey and West's favourite drinking hole.

The pub, which was a stone's throw away from the same station that had reopened only days ago. The Clapham South Tube Station. Now this. Clapham Common Station was the next station down from Clapham South.

Megevand knew, this latest tragedy would increase the pressure on the task force, tenfold. The death toll was starting to mount. He wondered if, at some point, the authorities would be forced to shut down the entire train network until they found a way to bring this all to an end.

This was his first thought after learning of the incident at Clapham Common. But, twenty-four hours later, a BBC reporter claimed to have obtained a leaked memo. Something, he claims, the authorities had wanted to keep *hush-hush*. Megevand believed it would have been better if it had.

The people who had died at Clapham Common that day. The young mother of two. She was married to a Constable. Metropolitan Police. The man with a broken arm who tried to save her. He had been, until today, on desk duties. A Sergeant. British Transport Police.

The parents of the three female siblings on their way to school. Both ex-police, now working for MI5. The elderly woman. Her late husband, who she was married to for sixty years. A long-retired Inspector. London Police.



MEGEVAND, THATCHER, BRISTOW, and Kitcher sat in a booth at the Boleyn Hotel, a barely touched pint in front of them all. The mood in the booth was palpable. Only when Thatcher took a long drink of his pint, did the other three men follow suit.

Bristow sported bruises and scratches from his near-death experience. It had been one week since the 'Clapham Common Tragedy,' as it was now known in the press. Bristow was released from hospital the day after the incident involving himself. He'd spent the last week or so at home recuperating from his physical injuries. His wife of thirty years wondered if he would ever recover from the psychological effects.

Catching up with Megevand, Thatcher and Kitcher was Bristow's first trip out for the week. Originally, he'd declined the invitation, but it was his wife who talked him around.

She knew it would be good to get out of the house and to socialise. He was also annoying the shit out of her being home all day.

'This all goes back to her,' Kitcher said to no one in particular.

Megevand's eyes met Thatcher's, and with the slightest nod of both heads they knew they were in agreement. Bristow stared at his beer, lost in his own thoughts. 'I think

we can all agree on that one Kitcher,' he eventually said. He took a sip of his beer.

'Did you all hear the latest reports this morning?' knowing without doubt the others had. It was all over the news.

'How many?' Kitcher asked.

Thatcher took a long pull of his pint before he said, 'apparently, hundreds of them.'



The incident was top billing on BBC news services first thing. Overnight, the maintenance crew at the Bank and Monument Complex, who were removing Megevand's name from the wall on platform nine, all of a sudden heard noises coming from deep within the train tunnel.

The supervisor claimed the noises sounded like a group of people wailing in pain. As the seconds ticked by, the team realised the noises were getting louder. It dawned on the maintenance crew that whoever was making the freakish sounds were getting closer. They all downed tools and scurried over to the platform. When one of the men spotted what he thought were people approaching from the darkness, what they were wearing made his skin turn to ice.

The people looked dirt poor, dressed in rag-tag clothing but, curiously, he said, they looked as if they had come from another time. He'd even had the thought that this might be a movie in the making, and they hadn't been notified. He'd swung around in the opposite direction expecting to see cameras, but there were none.

One of the other workmen panicked, falling backwards and landing on his arse. By the time he had scrambled to his feet he saw the rag-tag people advancing forward, revealing

scores more behind. 'Fuck this!' he said to the other men before running off.

Dozens of rag-tag people moved along the tracks, and when the front of the pack came up to the crew standing on the platform, frozen in a combination of fear and fascination, a gutsy crew member smiled and said; '—you lot okay? Are you lost? It's not safe to be in the train tunnels, even at this time of night.'

Silence. Not a word uttered amongst the entire group. But then, the group of rag-tag people abruptly began walking onwards down the track.

'Are they ghosts?' one of the maintenance crew members asked another.

His co-workers had been too petrified to answer. The more the rag-tag people advanced further down the tracks, heading in the other direction, the more of them came out of the other end.

'Time to go lads,' said the supervisor, 'we don't get paid enough for this!' And with that, they, too, legged it down the platform towards the nearest exit.

Later, the crew supervisor told the BBC reporter exactly what they had seen, adding that when he had peeked out from the pedestrian tunnel just before they left the platform heading out, the entire space from one side of the tunnel to the other, had filled, shoulder to shoulder, with the saddest looking mass of people he had ever seen in his life.

Hundreds of them! he said, "walking on, heading for someplace else," he quoted. The reporter had been trying to make some sense of it all while fleshing out facts for the new story.

'Ghosts?' he'd asked the supervisor, a little dismissively.

'It appears so,' was the reply.

The reporter smirked. 'So, you can tell the difference between the living and the dead?'

The supervisor shrugged. 'They're ghosts alright, they had to be, but by God, you couldn't tell the difference. They were as real as you and me!'

'After the cameraman had stopped filming the interview, the reporter had apparently asked the supervisor what he thought all these strange goings on was all about,' Megevand said.

'And what did he say?' Kitcher asked.

Megevand stared off into the distance, and was about to answer Kitcher, when Bristow said; 'I know.'

Megevand looked over to him and Bristow nodded with confidence, '—one of the oldest rumours going around the complex,' he said, then adding, '—he would have said it was the burial pit, right?'

Megevand nodded. Bristow was right.

'Bugger me dead,' Thatcher said, before he turned to Bristow, 'how many?'

Bristow stared at Thatcher before it was his turn to stare off into the distance. Without turning, he said, '—buried? Thousands, they say.'

With that unnerving fact laid bare, all four men, reached for their pints and drank.

The awkward silence which followed was eventually ended by Kitcher.

'Megevand, if this all started with Alexandra, do you think it will all end with her?' he said.

The detective took a deep breath and nodded, though with the vagueness etched on his face obviously not entirely sold on the idea.

But he still replied, 'My gut feeling is that yes, it does.'

Megevand sat back against the bench seat and crossed his arms. After a moment he leaned forward and rested his elbows on the table. After another bout of silence, he sat bolt upright and this time shared a determined look with his three drinking companions.

‘We need to find those four men who robbed the poor girl of her life. If my past experiences are anything to go by, once they are behind bars, this could all end.’

‘You a hundred percent on that?’ Thatcher said to Megevand.

Megevand nodded, although he didn’t meet his work colleague’s eyes. He was still thinking about Bailey and West and the deaths at Clapham Common a week ago. Bristow leant over the table and patted Megevand on the hand.

‘Hey mate,’ he said with a smile, ‘this is not all on you, you know,’ as if he knew what the detective was thinking. Megevand shook off the doom and gloom hovering over his thoughts and smiled.

‘Thanks John,’ he replied.

Thatcher shrugged. ‘Go have a chat to her, Ian. Ask her the question. Find out as much as we can. Together,’ he nodded and looked over to Kitcher and Bristow, ‘—we can do this, right?’

Megevand took a deep breath and gave Thatcher a more determined look.

‘Damn right,’ he said.



THE NEXT MORNING, I met Sergeant Bristow at the Control Room of the Bank and Monument Complex. It was his first day back on the job since 'that day.' His co-workers were pleased to see him back at work. They all gave him words of encouragement coupled with pats on the back.

A few minutes later, Bristow walked alongside me in silence, whilst we headed for the dead-end maintenance tunnel where Alexandra's body was found. I wasn't surprised by the lack of conversation and the awkward silence. There would be a fair bit going on in Bristow's head right now. Being back here was one thing. Heading for a platform where a train would eventually turn up was another. I certainly felt for him. It must have been a horrific experience.

I decided to quote Thatcher:

'Alright?' I asked, lightly.

'I'm fine,' Bristow replied, though his tone and body language said otherwise.

'You don't have to do this,' I said.

'—I can get down there on my own,' I added, ensuring I didn't offend him.

Bristow shook his head adamantly.

'I need to get back on that bike, Detective,' he said, staring straight ahead.

‘—even if I fell off and nearly got run over by a one-hundred-and-ninety-tonne object.’

His joviality impressed me, but I felt like another go at it.

‘Once we get to the platform, you can head back to the control room if you like,’ I said.

Bristow nodded, ‘no, thank you, but I need to face it.’ He straightened his shoulders in a show of determination before he said ‘—I will get you to the door.’

I was in awe of the man. Ten days ago, he was a split second away from being killed. *Murdered*, in fact. But here he was today, with me. Back on the job. Bloody impressive, I say.

It was nothing but an absolute miracle that Bristow’s body slipped through the track’s half a second before the train roared right over the top of him.

A fellow BTP officer had said to other officers in the control room that Bristow should go and purchase a lottery ticket. I agreed, but was just relieved he’d not died, as I was growing fond of him. He was a fine and conscientious policeman, and a fine and conscientious man too.

Five minutes later, we arrived at the entrance to platform nine. In the corner of my eye, I noticed Bristow flinch. Coincidentally, it was at the precise moment we both found ourselves looking at the dark void that lies at the edge of the platform. But true to his word, he stepped out onto the platform.

He walked on towards the door, our final destination, but it was located at the opposite end of the platform. To him, surely the distance would feel like it was ten miles long.

Fortunately, for Bristow’s frayed nerves, a train entered the station just as we reached the door. Any earlier, and it may have been a problem.

‘You want to wait here for me?’ I offered, thinking at least to give him the option. He shook his head vigorously.

‘Who knows how long you will be,’ he smiled tensely, ‘now that I think of it, probably better I head back to the control room. You okay with that Detective?’

‘One hundred percent okay with me,’ I responded.

He pulled a set of keys out of his pocket and unlocked the door after finding the right key.

‘Thanks mate,’ I said, opening the door and taking a moment to peer into the dimly lit tunnel inside.

‘I’ll see you back at the control room soon,’ Bristow said, his nervousness evident as he shuffled on his feet.

‘See you later then,’ I said, mustering a smile, though I felt way less confident being here than I sounded.

‘Lock it behind you, yeh?’ Bristow said.

‘Will do,’ I said.



Once I closed the door and locked it from the inside, I straightened myself up a bit. Anything to make myself feel less shit-scared. It didn’t help, not even in the slightest. I gripped the torch just that little bit tighter. Just to be sure, I double-checked the door was locked. I didn’t want any uninvited guest gate-crashing my, err, meeting.

I heard the ubiquitous sound of a train somewhere, not sure where. As the driver of the train applied the brakes, I could almost feel it in my teeth. Even through the walls. The sounds of metal screeching on metal — a sound that was becoming familiar.

I’d only walked a few feet further in, when the dank, oily smell came at me from the floor. I was coming to realize something in that moment. This was an all-too-common

smell, throughout the entire Tube. But at least today, the waft of piss, the one that stayed in your nostrils for hours, was non-existent. In regards to that awful smell, Bristow had put it all into perspective a little while ago; 'wait until they do a number two!' he said. I couldn't argue with him.

The areas of my exposed skin told me the air in here was much colder than back out on the platform. I felt a shiver deep in my bones.

My senses only heightened when my breath turned to a thick fog. Thick enough to blow a smoke ring if I desired. I could feel my heart beating faster. I wasn't sure why I was feeling so nervous. I had spoken to Alexandra previously. Her ghost, I mean. But something deep down told me today was going to be different.

The light of the torch's beam cast grey shadows around the edges, making it all the more unnerving. When I turned the next corner, I froze. Her — just standing there. Bolt upright. As if she had business elsewhere and was in a hurry to get to it. On instinct, I shone the beam of the torch downwards, forgetting it didn't matter. You can't blind a ghost, right?

'I've been waiting for you,' she said. I walked towards her.

My heart was still racing but I felt as if I'd gotten over the first hurdle. I took my time and steadied my breathing.

'I'm glad,' I had no idea why I'd said that. Probably the nerves. Maybe I just needed words to come out of my mouth and hope to build on them. But they weren't coming quick enough. Alexandra stared at me, her eyes locking on mine.

'Things in the Tube have gone completely haywire,' I said.

Alexandra nodded, but her face revealed nothing. I stepped another couple of feet closer to her. We were now six feet apart.

'A couple of my colleagues have a theory it all started with what happened to you, Alexandra,' I said carefully. She stood there staring at me.

'Do you believe that, Detective Megevand?' she eventually said.

I felt myself nodding even before I was planning to. Alexandra's face turned angry so quickly I nearly fell backwards in recoil. But the tone and volume of her voice did more than the sudden change of her emotions.

'It was not my fault!' she screamed. My ears momentarily squealed before the sound of ringing felt as if my eardrums were about to explode.

'You think I want all this?' she shot her arm up and was pointing behind me.

'I will never be able to put into words how sorry I am for what happened to you,' I said, each word difficult to say.

Her face was still lit up in an anger I found frightening. My heart was beating so hard against my chest I put my hand on it in the hope of making it slow down. Seeing me do this did something. The anger in her eyes dissipated. But her jaw was set and I could tell she was still angry.

'All I was trying to do was go to school,' Alexandra said. I went to say something but she cut in over me.

'—but no, I end up right there,' she pointed angrily to a point between us.

'—and those monsters did what they did to me!'

I closed my eyes and tried to imagine what it must have been like. Those last few moments of her life. I couldn't even begin. The fear I was feeling at that moment changed. It was as if she had flicked a switch inside me. I found myself getting angry as well.

‘They need to pay for what they did,’ I said, staring at where she was pointing before my eyes found hers.

‘—and I will make it my mission, MY MISSION,’ I was now shouting, ‘IN LIFE TO NOT REST UNTIL THAT IS DONE!’

Alexandra’s face softened. I think I’d made my point.

‘It is no coincidence Detective Megevand. The Black Nun, you know the one, right?’ she now nodded back in direction of the platform back behind me.

‘—I know of her. Her real name is Sarah Whitehead,’ I responded, not sure why I named her.

‘That’s her. She was the one who first told me after I’d—’ I knew what she meant, I nodded.

‘—she found me down here. She said that there was something special about me. Even in death. Actually, more so in death. I’m some sort of guiding spirit. At first, I didn’t believe her.’

I could feel the cogs in my mind starting to turn.

‘What did she mean?’ I asked.

Alexandra closed her eyes for a moment. ‘I’m some sort of a leader, of spirits in this realm. Not sure what she was going on about at first but then she eventually made enough sense.’ She stepped closer to me.

‘She said I have the ability to take anyone lost in this realm, who cannot find the way, to the next life.’

Jesus Christ. The déjà vu meter was going off. This sounded like six years ago. She must have seen the change in my expression.

‘You know what I’m talking about, don’t you,’ she said, smiling faintly.

‘Maybe, this is why you are here,’ she whispered.

Now things were starting to fall in place, I thought.

‘—You’ve seen all those ones down here. The large group of spirits I mean,’ she said.

I hadn’t, but I knew exactly what she was referring to. The spirits of the pit, as Bristow had named them.

‘I heard about them, yes,’ I said.

Alexandra nodded. ‘They were looking for me,’ she said.

Now it made sense. They knew she was down here somewhere. They knew she could take them to the next life, why they hadn’t been able to get there in the first place, I had no idea.

As if reading my mind, Alexandra said, ‘I know what the Black Nun means now. I can feel it in here somewhere,’ she pointed to her chest.

‘But what she soon realised was, where you come into the picture, Detective Inspector Ian Megevand.’ She stepped closer. ‘You see, I am, like her, like all of us down here. Trapped. Trapped that is, here, in this existence. I can’t go to the next life even if I wanted to,’ she said.

‘Why not?’ I asked. Alexandra stared at me. Now she stood closer to me again. She was one foot away and I still felt quite uncomfortable in her presence. Especially this close.

‘The monsters who took my life. They need to be brought to justice. Once this takes place, I will be set free.’

I had no idea what the fuck was going on. For a moment I felt as if this were all a dream. But I tried as best as I could to stay on track. Then, a thought occurred to me.

‘You mean killed?’ I said incredulously. I could see a little annoyance on her face.

‘Fine by me, but I know that’s not possible. I can’t ask that of you. But—’ her words trailed off into silence. I decided to see if I could finish off her sentence for her.

‘—Once we find those bastards and put them behind

bars, you'll be set free?' and before I would let her answer I added, '—and you will take all these trapped spirits in the Tube with you?'

It sounded too good to be true. We bring those evil men to justice, that would be enough for me. Just that alone would make my day. But in addition, Alexandra could take all these other spirits who are causing so much disruption in the Tube as well?

'You are serious?' I found myself saying. Alexandra nodded. Her look was absolute.

'Yes,' she said.

'We really need a breakthrough in your case,' I said.

The smile on her face, did nothing to diminish the unease swirling around in the pit of my stomach. I think it made it worse, especially what she said next.

'I have an idea.' She stared at me, 'but you are not going to like it,' she said.



MY WORK COLLEAGUES have noticed the change in me over the last few weeks. After what I had done, I wasn't surprised they'd noticed. I could feel it myself. I was struggling to find a way out of the dread.

There I was, getting off the train, when the others bumped into me, with her in tow. They said she needed medical attention and were taking her to ensure she made it there safely. I thought nothing of it until I saw the look on one of the men's faces. It said something to me and in that instant, when he made eye contact with me, something happened. A sick, animal instinct engulfed me.

I haven't been able to sleep a full night since. What we did was despicable. But if I give myself up, I will spend years in prison. Right now, I feel as if I deserve that sort of punishment. But I am a gutless sod, void of courage. I can't bring myself to do it. I am selfish and can't bear the thought of spending the rest of my life behind bars, because surely, they'll kill me on the inside.

I've never been in the 'in-crowd' at work and never will be. Socially, I'm too awkward. The whispers in the kitchen are getting more frequent. My work colleagues are staring at me more often now. I can feel it in my bones. It's as if they know

who I really am. I am part of the group the press has recently labelled, "*The Complex Four*."

Four men, the police are now searching for, in relation to the sexual assault and murder of a teenage girl at the Bank and Monument Complex. She was alive when I ran out of there! I fucking swear! I am damn well sure of it. No one would believe me anyway, so what does it matter?

But the other two were still there with her when I made a run for it. So did the third bloke. He tripped over and collided with me because his pants were still down around his knees. I let him fall to the ground, where he was groaning his fucking head off. I wasn't going to hang around and help him back up. All I know is, I didn't kill her.

But my plea means nothing. Regardless of who did it — we'll all be tarred with the same brush. I actually saw him the other day. How could I forget his bloody face? His wet dick hit the side of my pants and left a stain. I still remember that feeling. I threw the pants away that afternoon, but, not before I was forced to wear them to work the whole bloody day.

Just the other day, out of the millions of people in this town, I end up in the same carriage as him. What are the odds? Wet Dick, is what I call him. When he made eye contact with me, the recognition was swift. He was sitting down. I was standing up.

We were only ten feet apart. I didn't know what to do. It was surreal. I felt the blood drain from my face. You can't run too far on a train. I felt as if I was about to be exposed to the world.

I tried to find somewhere else to look, other than in his direction. But like a magnet, I was eventually drawn back. Like we were now permanently connected. I swear, the prick

was grinning at me, and when his left eyelid closed and quickly opened, I realised he'd just winked — at me.

As if he was proud of prodding me with his wet cock. I didn't reciprocate the wink. Or the grin. I closed my eyes and shuddered at the thought.

The police say they are working on footage from cameras. They said they would be close to releasing images. The descriptions thus far were vague. Descriptions matching quite possibly millions of men in London. But unlike that cocky mother fucker on the train that day, I had no illusions of grandeur. I knew, deep in my soul, unless I got my act together, or took a one-way ticket to some faraway land, they would be coming for me. I just knew it.



'I CAN'T,' I pleaded with Alexandra.

'You can't, or you won't?' she replied.

I stared at her for a moment. Was there a difference?

'—I can't, and I most certainly don't want to,' I said.

Alexandra rolled her eyes.

'You want this to be over? You want to bring them to justice?' she said.

I couldn't argue with her logic. But the last time I did what she is asking me to do, it messed me up for months. All right; I am being generous. It messed me up for *years*. Somehow, she knew I'd done this very thing before. And now, she wanted me to do it again.

This is how the process works.

I put myself in the exact spot where it happened, and where she died. I then hold my hands out to her, before she puts her hands in mine. I know this sounds ridiculous, but stay with me here.

When this occurs, I see visions through the eyes of the spirit (in this case Alexandra), when they were alive. The last time I did it, I saw things I wish I hadn't. The problem we (the police) have, is fairly simple. We have no concrete leads. Nada. We are getting desperate. We need something. But truth be told, I never thought it would come to this.

I take a deep breath. The fear, swirling around my stomach, is working its way into every inch of my body. I can feel my muscles going stiff. Alexandra eventually places a hand on my shoulder. It does nothing to calm my fraying nerves.

'You can do this, Detective Megevand. I know it. It's the reason why you are here. I can't remember anything. It was all a blur,' she whispered.

I came to realise in that moment; this may be our only hope. Our only chance. The adrenaline, now pumping through my body, is overwhelming. I felt woozy. I try to swallow. Fight or Flight, they say. I felt like running. But I don't run. I knew what this meant. Time was up.

I began to count, starting at the number one. When I hit number five, I hold out my hands, palms up. I felt the sense of her hands, connecting with mine. So light, I had to concentrate, but a second hadn't passed when it happened. A bolt of white-hot lightning suddenly blinds my vision.



And then the colour of the blinding white light begins to change. At the same time, I could feel big hands gripping my arms, as if they wanted to tear them off my body. A sudden explosion of black shapes in my vision is so powerful, I recoil in shock. I could feel them. Sense them. And I am powerless.

An excruciating pain shoots through my neck and in that moment, I knew I am being choked. I can't breathe. I feel the bony knuckles of someone's hand, pushing up under my jaw at the same time. The pain was paralysing. One of the Bank and Monument Four had Alexandra by the throat and was choking her to death.

The pressure on my neck is so intense I feel as if my eyes are being squeezed out of their sockets. On instinct, though

completely futile, I try to fight back. But there is no point. There is nothing I can do. In my vision, the man's face whose hands were around Alexandra's throat appeared out of the darkness, but it is just a blur, before violently mashing his lips against Alexandra's. I feel my own lips explode in excruciating pain. I taste blood.

Then, I feel his hot breath, followed by the sickening taste of cigarettes and chewing gum. I feel as if I am going to be sick, but then, it happened. The man pulls his mouth away from Alexandra, and in doing so, if only for a few seconds, revealed his face and other details about himself to me.

Round glasses, covering beady, angry, and wild eyes. A nose I could instantly tell was shaped by being broken in a fist fight or in a boxing ring. I'd seen it a hundred times before. It had a unique shape about it.

I saw other things in this murderous bastard I would later recall. High forehead. Thinning hair. Something about his eyebrows. A little thicker than normal, dark brown in colour, same as his hair.

When I catch a glimpse of his neck, I see that on the day, he is wearing a bright blue tie.

White shirt. Black suit. Overcoat. Christ, he was dressed like half a million men in London on their way to work.

But this one is different and I will tell you why. When I get my hands on him, he will wish he was like the other four hundred and ninety-nine thousand plus men going to work in London that morning. Because I am going to fuck him up with my bare hands. And, his three accomplices.

The visions in the next few moments became frighteningly blurry. I can't make anything out. I couldn't feel anything. Something was wrong. Then, it happened.

Sounds. Voices. Grunts.

‘Sime! Sime! *My turn now.*’

As clear as day, the man’s voice cut through the haze. I recognised the accent. Londoner. He spoke with a twang that indicated to me that the bastard had a silver spoon wedged firmly up his arse. The veil of darkness suddenly weakened and turned into dark grey shapes.

At the same time, I felt one side of Alexandra’s face being pushed up against the wall. Whoever it was doing this horrible thing to her, held her head there in a vice-like grip.

I could feel the concrete wall on one side of my face. Christ, it was cold, like ice. An animal rage cut through me from my core. I wanted to scream. These men were not going to end up behind bars. In those few seconds, the rage I felt was so strong my thoughts were that I would track them down and kill all four of these fuckers. When I studied the man standing to one side of her, he was staring at her whilst licking his lips. I took note of what he was wearing, and the snide little face.

I will never forget those eyes. The fire in them. It was primal. It was animal. It would be the last thing I saw in the vision. Someone had grabbed Alexandra by the hair. The pain shot through my head. I felt as if my scalp was about to get ripped clean off my head.

The groan in my throat transformed into a child-like scream. The hand in her hair, pulled tighter. When I felt poor Alexandra’s face, suddenly, getting pulled off the wall, I knew this was not going to end well. The hand, pulled even harder. I thought I was going to pass out.

Seconds before he let go of her hair, which would result in her head smashing back against the wall, he leaned in close and looked straight into Alexandra’s eyes. If only for a flash in

time, I saw his face. It was the same man as before. The other animals had called him 'Sime.'

His jaw was set with determination, and an evil, sickening grin. Then, the bastard let go. The result was my vision exploded with a blinding light. The pain so extreme, I blacked out.

What Alexandra had experienced, in those unspeakable few minutes, at the hands of these men was nothing short of heartbreaking. I found myself sobbing as my body slumped sideways.

Then, nothing.



BRISTOW WAS THE one who found him. When the detective hadn't returned to the control room, the sergeant knew something was wrong. Reluctant to set foot on the platform, he pushed the ill feeling aside and headed for the maintenance tunnel in search of Megevand.

'Ian!' Bristow bellowed when he turned the corner and spotted Megevand's still body lying slumped against the wall. He checked his pulse. To his relief, the detective's heart was beating like a horse.

'Megevand. Megevand,' Bristow sternly said, before giving the detective the lightest slap in the face he could manage. It did the trick.

Megevand's eyes shot open. Bristow let out a sigh of relief. He crouched down and looked at the detective as if he'd seen a ghost himself.

'You okay mate?' he whispered.

Megevand blinked heavily. He shook his head as if trying to remove the heavy fog from his mind. Bristow didn't know if this meant he was okay, or not. Megevand looked as if he was on the brink of shock. Eventually, he sat up straighter. His eyes darted from one side of the tunnel to the other.

'Where is she?' Megevand muttered.

Bristow looked from his left and then to his right, before he shook his head.

‘Haven’t seen her,’ he said.

Megevand nodded. Bristow could feel the fridge-like temperature of the maintenance tunnel creeping under his collar. His body shook from the cold as he adjusted in his crouching position to get more comfortable.

Megevand moved his body awkwardly, indicating to Bristow that he wanted to stand up.

Bristow rose to his feet and reached out a hand to help the detective up. The temperature of Megevand’s hand felt as if he’d just swum across the English Channel in late December.

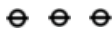
‘Christ Detective, you are as cold as ice. Let’s get you out of here and back up to the control room. You look like you could use a cup of coffee,’ Bristow said, with an emphatic smile. Megevand rose to his feet unsteadily, but once standing seemed to regain his balance.

‘What time is it?’ Megevand muttered.

Bristow glanced at his watch. ‘Nine thirty, why?’ he said.

Megevand looked around the place before turning back and meeting Bristow’s eyes.

‘Thinking of something stronger than a cup of tea, that’s all,’ he muttered.



Megevand felt as if he’d walked from one side of London to the other by the time they arrived back at the control room. But the long walk had helped clear his head. He felt as if he’d been in a fist fight and had lost.

Whilst Bristow went and fetched Megevand a cup of coffee, the detective sat in the seat and gathered his thoughts into some sort of order. He said nothing. Megevand took a

deep breath before running his left hand over his head. This was a habit repeated many times a day, every day.

When his hand made contact with his scalp, it felt so sensitive, it sent a shot of pain down his vertebrae. Only after he muttered 'fuck,' did something in his memory click. Something about the visions he had seen. They had pulled her hair, hard. *Fucking animals*, he thought.

'White with one,' Bristow appeared from nowhere and placed the cup on the desk in front of Megevand.

The detective took a sip and welcomed the warmth it brought. As it worked its way through his body, he turned to Bristow.

'Would you have a pad and pen I could borrow?' Megevand said.

'Sure,' Bristow said, 'hold on.'

He came back with the items the detective had asked for and handed them over. Without another word Megevand went to work. He started making a long list of notes. Bristow left him alone. When he returned half an hour later, he noted Megevand was on his third page.

This time, he wasn't making notes. He was drawing.

'How's it going?' Bristow said.

'Nearly there,' Megevand said. He continued to sketch. Bristow could see a face forming on the page. He waited until Megevand had finished. The detective sat back and drew a heavy breath. He held up the page to Bristow and said, 'When we have a few moments, I will explain to you how this all came about.'

Bristow remained silent. He knew the detective had more.

'—but in the meantime, this is the face of one of them,' he added.

Bristow studied the image. He thought Megevand had done a decent job with the sketch.

‘You should have been a composite artist,’ Bristow smiled.

‘Not enough excitement,’ Megevand replied and returned the smile with his own, ‘but yes, I’ve been told that plenty of times before.’

‘There’s something else I want to do,’ Megevand added.

Bristow sat down next to Megevand, ‘I’m all ears,’ he said.

Megevand stared at the picture before turning back to Bristow.

‘I want forensics to go back over the maintenance tunnel. Inch by inch. From the access door at the platform, to where the tunnel ends.’

‘On it. How soon?’ the sergeant asked.

‘Like yesterday,’ Megevand said.



Megevand and Bristow donned coveralls. Although the tunnel had been searched before, they had only concentrated on an area about ten feet around where Alexandra’s body was found. This time, as per Megevand’s request, they painstakingly sifted through every square inch of the tunnel from one end to the other.

Three arduous hours later, one of the forensics team turned to Megevand.

‘Detective, you may want to check this out,’ he said.

Megevand carefully stepped over to where the policeman was crouching. He bent down and watched the officer pull out a pair of tweezers. He was focusing his attention on a gap in the concrete floor, some twenty feet away from where

Alexandra was found. It was a crack about ten millimetres wide.

A reflection off an object caught Megevand's eye as the member of the forensic team pointed his torch downwards. The officer carefully reached into the cavity with the tweezers and, taking his time, pulled what had caught his eye in the gap. As it slid out of the cavity, Megevand could see it was a shiny little object, gold and silver in colour.

It took the detective a mere second to realise what the officer was holding up in his tweezers. A tiepin. Megevand took a good hard look at the object. Interesting thing to find in a maintenance tunnel of all places, he thought.



TIFFANY THOMAS SPOTTED Wendy Wright from across the fruit and vegetable section of her local Sainsbury's. In that moment, she wished she could snap her fingers, go back in time one minute, and scurry off to any other corner of the supermarket. Maybe the car-park.

But she didn't have the ability to time travel, so she knew there was little chance of avoiding Wright. The wife of her husband's co-worker at the firm where he worked, she'd met the woman a number of times. She had tried to like her, but it was a struggle she could not overcome. Thomas' issue had something to do with the other woman's high-pitched voice, her too-long eyelashes (obviously fake), and the fact that the woman had an IQ similar to her next-door neighbour's pet Shih Tzu.

'How are *yo-u*!' Wendy gushed, after pushing her way through the mob of pensioners hellbent on clearing the supermarket out of anything and everything on special today. It was pension day, after all. Tiffany took a deep breath and told herself, 'You can get through this.'

'Never been better, err...' shit, she realised she had gone blank on the woman's name. The ensuing silence was punctuated by the screeches of mobile scooter tires all around them.

Wendy's eyes narrowed. The cat was out of the bag.

‘Wendy, Wendy *Wright*,’ she said, feigning her annoyance.

Tiffany stepped forward, pulling out a big smile, before giving Wendy an air-kiss on one cheek.

‘Wendy I’m sorry, I’ve got so much on my mind at the moment, do forgive me, I’m terrible with names.’

Wendy nodded, noting the other woman’s makeup. She wondered if Thomas had applied her makeup with a trowel this morning. ‘Apology accepted!’ she said, before exploding into laughter that was more akin to a hyena’s mating-cry.

‘Busy day?’ Tiffany said, praying that at any moment the fire alarm would be set off so she could make tracks for the front door.

‘Matter of fact yes, you could say that!’ Wendy had obviously recovered from the forgotten-name awkwardness, and was back to her normal self, adding ‘—off to Harrods to do some shopping.’

Tiffany felt her eyeballs instinctively about to roll in annoyance of the other woman’s comment though staved off the urge. But, if she had to spend another sixty seconds standing here talking to this woman, she may not be able to avoid it next time.

‘I see, some new clothing I assume,’ she said. She didn’t realise she’d said the first thing that had come to mind and instantly regretted it. Wendy bit her bottom lip and ignored the innuendo.

‘Matter of fact, I have to purchase Tony a new coat. The silly bugger lost his last week on the way home. Said he left it on the train. How forgetful of him.’

Tiffany was already well zoned out of the conversation, watching two old men fighting over a bunch of bananas. But when what Wendy had said eventually registered in her head, something in her pinged.

‘He lost his coat on the way home from work, last week? Do you remember what day?’

Wendy scrunched up her face, wondering why Tiffany had asked. But when she could see the other woman’s frown and eyes locked on her, she felt a little intimidated.

‘Wednesday night, as I recall. Why you ask?’ Wendy said.

Tiffany stared at the other woman, her mind spinning, wondering what she should say in response. She took a deep breath and checked no one was in hearing distance.

‘Simon came home the same night. No jacket, either. He loved that stupid winter coat. Could never get him out of it. Said that he’d left it on a bench on the platform at the station on the way to work.’

Wendy smiled, not knowing what to do, but Tiffany leant forward, anything but jovial.

‘Don’t you think that’s kind of weird, Wendy?’ she said. Wendy stared at her long enough for Tiffany to wonder if the other woman was fully with it today. Tiffany decided to take the initiative.

‘How long until you finish shopping?’ she asked.

Wendy looked down into her half full shopping trolley and said, ‘nearly finished, why?’ Tiffany nodded before leaning in closer.

‘There’s a cafe next door; I think we should have a cup of tea or coffee and chat some more about this coincidence.’



LONDON WAS A city on edge. The Tube was in disarray. The chairman of the organization who oversaw its operations had stood down at midday today. No doubt the notion of his golden handshake had won out in the end. Plain and simple, he couldn't handle the pressure, or the heat. He was sitting on a bloody bonfire of sorts.

The other transport services — the overland train system and the buses — were days away from a complete meltdown themselves. This of course, only exacerbated the overall transport problem choking the city. Cabbies, who, at first, thought the public transport woes were the best thing that ever happened to them and their wallets, had quickly changed their tune.

The roads in and around London were at a standstill from sunrise to sunset. Tensions were at a flash-point. Cabbies had been bashed, robbed, and one poor sod got stabbed. A road-rage incident gone too far. He would live to tell the tale, but he swore his days in the cab were well and truly over.

I'd talked through the events of the day with Yukiko as soon as I arrived home, not long ago.

She is the best sounding board. Well for me anyway. My wife listens until I have run out of breath. Only then, does she offer her thoughts.

‘This is almost a repeat of what happened six years ago,’ she said over her glass of wine. After she takes a sip, she adds, ‘but on steroids.’ She stared out of our kitchen window for a time and without turning to me she said, ‘I think you are on the money. This all seems to centre around Alexandra.’

When we heard the start of the BBC nightly news theme from our portable T.V. on the kitchen bench, we scurried off for the lounge room so we could watch the news there instead.

As was the case over the last few days, the first segment of the news spoke about London’s transport system at break-point. They offered no new revelations, other than the obvious.

Things were getting worse. Oh, and the news that the chairman of London’s Regional Transport, Peter Ford, had stepped down today. The press had crucified him, as had the public. He’d been abused right out the front of his office. People were heckling him, calling him a ‘gutless-sod’ from across the street.

But I was more interested in another news story, I knew would be coming tonight. The first images and composite sketches of ‘them’. Four men, I would dearly like to get my hands on. “The Complex Four,” as they were now known in the press.

We’d worked through dozens of hours of closed-circuit camera footage. From every nook and cranny of the Bank and Monument Complex. We had come up with what we believed were ‘as good as they could get,’ images of the four men we’d like to question in relation to the crime.

With millions of Londoners displaced, many stuck at home, the hope was the masses would pay more attention to this horrific news story involving the death of Alexandra

Young. Although we'd pulled it off delicately, we'd ensured the media department at Scotland Yard had pushed the news services to cite, in our belief, that all of this chaos seemed to have started with the death of Alexandra.

It was a subtle inference. We didn't want it said straight out. But all of us in the task force knew it was indeed true. We just didn't want the public to think we were turning into the British version of the Ghostbusters.

'Whoa,' Yukiko stared at the telly.

'—I gather the close up of this one you believe to be "Simon," came from what you saw with your own eyes?' she added.

I stared at the image on the telly and felt my chest tighten. The BTP officers had pulled footage from one of the entrances to the complex, sadly the camera angle was not the best, neither was the quality. Quite a distance away. But when I saw him, even at a distance, I knew.

It was him. Sime.

Thatcher had made a "Thatcher" comment at one point this afternoon. "Add the letter 'L' after the first letter," he mused. Slime. That's what this man was as far as he was concerned. God help 'Sime' if Thatcher got to him first. I shot Yukiko a look and felt my teeth grinding.

'Yes,' I declared, 'he's the one I want to speak to the most—'

Suddenly, the home phone began to ring from the hallway. I wasn't keen to peel myself away from the telly and answer it. As a compromise, I dashed off towards the kitchen, so I could snatch up the cordless and continue to watch the news, thanks to the portable telly which lived on our kitchen bench.

'Megevand,' I said, forgetting I was home.

‘Ian. Have I caught you at a bad time?’

Quentin Brookes. I knew the voice well.

‘Q?’ I said, more of a statement than a question. I quickly added, ‘it’s never a bad time when you call. What you up to old mate?’

Quentin mumbled to someone at his end of the line. I heard him say ‘shush.’ I assumed it was his wife, Mary.

‘Everything all right Quentin?’ I asked. I continued to watch the news. They were now back to talking about another related story to the transport crisis. I was just relieved they’d released the images of the Complex Four. I turned my attention to the phone, currently sitting against my ear.

I heard further hushed voices between Quentin and Mary. Quentin appeared to have made no attempt to cover the handset. It seemed as if they were having words.

Quentin sounded frustrated. The last thing I heard him say to her was that if she wanted to speak to me, instead of him, she was bloody-well more than welcome to do so.

‘Ian?’ Mary said.

‘Hi Mary, what’s going on over there?’ I said, growing concerned.

‘I would have preferred to talk about this in person,’ Mary’s tone was grim.

‘—but I think we’re too stressed to wait for the opportunity to see you at such short notice.’

‘Sure,’ I replied. I sat down on my stool, wondering what this was all about, ‘what is going on?’

Yukiko appeared at the kitchen bench. I saw the frown on her face which surely matched mine.

‘There was an incident this afternoon at Lacham Station,’ Mary said. She sounded on edge.

‘God, another one,’ I let out a sigh, before making eye

contact with Yukiko and shrugging my shoulders. 'Is everyone okay Mary?'

I could hear Mary's shallow breaths. I could almost sense a feeling of fear coming through the phone. 'Mary, you still there?' I said.

'I was with Heather,' she eventually replied, I could hear the hesitation in her voice.

'—just the two of us,' I then heard Quentin mumble something in the background to her.

'You know how Heather feels things. You know how special our little Heather is, right Ian?' Mary said.

I knew exactly what she was saying. My mind went back to the last time I saw Heather at the Cafe in Lacham. The same day of that insane and terrifying event at the Clapham South Station. When I thought about it, I then remembered what Alexandra had said not long after that fatal day.

They weren't after Finley Brookes. Nor his parents. Or words to that effect.

Thinking about it, now, I could feel my body go cold. 'Yes, I know what you mean,' I said to Mary. '—Heather is very dear to our hearts. Please tell me she is okay,' I found speaking all of a sudden in a whisper.

Yukiko's face turned ashen. I winked at her, as if to say, it's all okay before giving her a nod over in the direction of the kettle. I was no longer in the mood for wine. I needed coffee.

'Well,' Mary went on, 'we were standing on the platform. There was hardly anyone around. The train was still a few minutes away. Surprising that there was actually a train at all. But let's not worry about that.' I heard her take a deep breath.

'Out of nowhere, I felt Heather wrap her arms around my leg. Like, tight. Then, she began to shiver. I've never seen

her do this before. A second later, she burst into tears. I could not get her to stop crying.'

'My God Mary, what—' was all I managed to say before she continued;

'—when I picked Heather up, she wrapped her arms around my neck so tight I thought she was going to suffocate me.' I could hear Mary struggling to continue.

Quentin jumped back on the line '—Megs, when Mary felt a draft from somewhere behind her, turning to see what was going on, she thought she was going to faint.'

I sat riveted to the phone. Yukiko stood next to me. She'd turned the volume down on the TV and could hear Quentin's voice.

'Megs. It was them.'

My heart sank. 'Bailey and West. Fuck, Quentin,' I said.

'Mary could see their faces, they were that close. She said they looked angry. Her words, mate. Bailey had pointed directly at Heather, before he then put the same finger up to his neck and slid it across his throat, from ear to ear.'

I could feel the pit of my stomach turn to stone. I was about to ask why the hell Mary and Heather were in a Tube Station, of all places, but knew better than to and kept my mouth shut.

'Jesus Christ,' I muttered. Yukiko put her hand on my shoulder. When I made eye contact with her, I could see her eyes misting over.

'What happened then?' I said, not really wanting to know.

'Well, this is where I hope you are sitting down,' Quentin responded.

'Matter of fact I am,' I said.

Quentin paused for a moment, before more whispers from Mary.

The ghosts of Bailey and that little fat fuck West, they started to walk towards Mary and Heather. Mary had never seen Heather in such a state, ever before. She was shaking so violently, Mary nearly dropped her. But she hung onto her.'

Quentin took another breath before he continued;

'—then something else happened. Out of a pedestrian tunnel, someone else appeared. When Bailey and West saw this other man, they became instantly agitated. They started abusing him, shouting obscenities, carrying on like pork bloody chops.'

'Jesus,' was all I could manage to say.

'The thing is Megs; they turned their attention on this person and went after him. He, in turn, took one final look at Mary and Heather, and made a run for it. The last thing Mary saw was this other fella entering the train tunnel. Bailey and West in pursuit.'

'I hope he's okay, whoever he is,' I said, and meant it. A good Samaritan. We needed more of them around here.

'—Ian, that's the thing,' Quentin said, obviously now getting to the point, 'he, wasn't a he.'

'A woman?' for the love of God I wish Quentin would just come out and say it.

'It was my mother, Ian.'

I stifled a gasp. Janet Brookes. Jesus. For the second time of late, she'd been there to protect her grandchild. Even though she was long dead. Pushed off a platform into the path of an oncoming train.



MEGEVAND WOKE EARLY the next morning, instantly wishing he hadn't. He'd had a woeful night's sleep. He'd tossed and turned and felt as if he'd been awake more than he'd been asleep. He could not shut his mind up. He'd even told it a number of times. Shut. The. Hell. Up.

This particular murder investigation was high-stakes, and he knew cases like this often took their toll on his physical and mental well-being.

And as much as he tried to resist, the senseless, grotesque act of what the Complex Four had done to Alexandra was slowly but surely eating away at his sanity. Adding to this was all the paranormal activity going on in the Tube. He felt as if all this was sitting squarely on his shoulders. And only his.

The pressure from the powers that be was increasing exponentially every day. They wanted an end to it all. Just because, six years ago, he'd lived through all the goings-on in Lacham at the Orphanage did not automatically mean he possessed some magic fucking wand when it came to ghosts and the paranormal, he mused, whilst making his breakfast.

In the middle of all this, the return of the ghosts of Bailey and West. 'Damn it,' he cursed remembering their faces, as he buttered his toast. 'Absolute scum of the earth,' he muttered.

And to add to all this, Heather, Finley, Quentin, and

Mary Brookes had come into direct contact with the spirits of these two shit-bags of once human beings with near dire consequences in one instance.



'Bloody hell,' Megevand smiled half-heartedly to Thatcher when he arrived at the office just after eight o'clock. '—we may end up having to sleep here old mate,' as he sat down at his desk, 'the roads are shagged!'

'Megs, takes me twice as long to get here,' Thatcher shrugged, '—it can't go on like this.'

Megevand rubbed his eyes for what seemed like an eternity.

'You okay, Albert?' Thatcher asked.

'Slept like shit,' Megevand responded, closing his eyes and wishing he could leave them shut for a few hours.

'Believe it, Albert, we will get the break we need. With the images released last night, and all the tabloids running the story this morning, we'll get something,' Thatcher grinned and Megevand smiled knowing his partner was doing his best to lift his mood.

Thatcher was good that way, Megevand thought. When he was down, Thatcher always stepped in and brought him back up. And when Thatcher was feeling flat, Megevand always did the same for him. It was what made them good partners.

'It's all going to work out,' Thatcher patted Megevand on the shoulder.

By the time the clock on the wall hit eight thirty, the phones in the office had been ringing steadily for fifteen minutes. Extra staff had been rostered on this morning, in the hope leads would start coming in, after the news last night.

Megevand and Thatcher even chipped in, taking calls when required.

Most of the leads would have to be followed up. When the call Megevand answered had some bloke telling him he knew where one of the four suspects lived, Megevand's pulse heightened. It seemed too good to be true. When Sergeant Bristow arrived at the office five minutes later, Megevand gave him the details of the lead.

When Bristow read the address, he looked down at Megevand, and the detective knew something was amiss.

'Twenty-three to twenty-four Leinster Gardens, Hyde Park,' Bristow read the address out loud and shook his head with a slight grin on his face, but still looked slightly annoyed.

'I wish I'd taken that call,' he said, 'I would have told that git to stop wasting our bloody time.'

Megevand tilted his head quizzically and Bristow continued;

'—if I had a dollar for every time I'd been given that address over the years, I'd be a wealthy man. That's the address of the townhouses that have a fake frontage. They're not real. At the back is an opening for ventilation as there are train lines running behind it, just below ground level.'

'Thanks,' Megevand nodded, 'now I know. Next time I am given that address, the person is going to cop an earful. Pardon the pun with the cop bit!' he said trying to lift his own mood somewhat.

'Good idea,' Bristow said, 'now it's my—'

Detective Kitcher entered the room and made a direct line for Bristow and Megevand.

As he approached, he glanced at the clock, his expression darkening when he read the time.

'Megevand, Bristow, and Thatcher, good Morning,'

Kitcher said, looking stressed. The three men exchanged greetings.

‘What is it?’ Bristow asked.

‘There’s been an incident at Moorgate Station,’ Kitcher said, his eyes falling on Bristow after he glanced at both Megevand and Thatcher.

It was Bristow’s turn to instinctively check the clock on the wall. Eight fifty-six. Kitcher and Bristow stared at each other long enough for Megevand and Thatcher to wonder what was going on.

‘Let me guess. Ten minutes ago,’ Bristow said, his face looking as grave as Kitcher’s.

Kitcher nodded. Eight forty-six. Megevand would later realise the significance.

‘You’re thinking what I’m thinking,’ Kitcher said, his tone as grave as the expression on his face.

‘What’s this all about?’ Thatcher rose to his feet trying to figure out what the two men were referring to.

‘I’ll explain on the way,’ Kitcher said to Thatcher, giving both him and Megevand the nod.



WHEN BRISTOW AND Kitcher started telling Thatcher and me the story of what had gone down at Moorgate Station twenty-five years or so ago, it brought back vague memories. The worst 'peacetime' incident in the Tube at the time — an infamous day in the history of London's Underground train network. A tragedy which, to this day, still has people asking. Why did it happen?

We traversed our way through the busy streets of London. Bristow mentioned the fact that most, if not all members of the British Transport Police had their own opinion of the Moorgate tragedy. And those opinions were mostly black or white.

Kitcher unpacked the story. The first train for the day on the Northern Line was driven by a fifty-six-year-old World War Two Dunkirk veteran. Leslie Newson was his name, married, with two teenage daughters.

Newson performed, without incident, several return trips on what is regarded as one of the shortest routes in Greater London's train network. At eight forty-five in the morning, Newson eased the six-carriage train carrying around three hundred passengers out of Old Street Station. Travelling at normal speeds, Moorgate, the next station, was a mere fifty-six seconds away.

The line ended underneath Moorgate Station, just past the end of Platform Nine. A five-foot thick reinforced concrete wall. Bristow, turned from the front seat and stared at us, frowning.

‘—You couldn’t write this sort of thing in a fictional novel,’ he said, his face sullen. He turned to Kitcher, who continued with the story.

‘—A junction with another train line is located a short distance before the line enters Moorgate Station. It is at this point, the driver is supposed to have the train ‘coast’ across the other merging tracks, for safety,’ Kitcher said.

‘Some of the surviving passengers later recalled the train didn’t ‘coast’ through the junction at all. But,’ as Kitcher turned the corner we approached Moorgate Station, ‘—things only worsened in those few moments. Not only had the driver failed to ensure the train was slowing down, but worse; the surviving passengers said they could feel the train accelerating.

At this point, this close to Moorgate Station, trains were supposed to be traveling no more than fifteen miles per hour. Witness statements of those standing on the platform,’ he shook his head in bewilderment, ‘—said they clocked the train at speeds of well over forty miles per hour.’

‘Fuck,’ Thatcher muttered, shaking his head.

Kitcher took a quick glance in the rear-view mirror and continued.

‘There was something else in those statements that really blew me away,’ he said.

Kitcher looked over to Bristow and the men seemed to share a collective thought. They both stared straight ahead for a time before Kitcher pressed on.

‘At least four witnesses standing on the platform caught

a decent glimpse of Newson as the train roared into the station at its frightening speed. One statement described him appearing to look like a statue. Eyes staring straight ahead.

Bristow nodded. 'Another witness statement said it was as if he was in a trance,' he added.

I felt a chill run down my spine. The thought of standing on the platform and watching the train hurtling towards what everyone knew was a dead end, Jesus. But then another more paralysing thought occurred to me. Imagine if you were a passenger on board the train. What must have been going through their poor minds.

Our car pulled up at the main entrance of Moorgate Station. Two British Transport Police officers stood there, looking quite stressed and both slightly pale.

'Detective Kitcher, Sergeant Bristow,' one of the officers said, who obviously knew our BTP counterparts.

'Sergeant Parsons,' Kitcher smiled briefly when we reached the two officers. Bristow greeted Parsons with a pat on the shoulder, '—tell us what you have Sergeant.'

'It's platform nine alright,' Sergeant Parsons said.

Kitcher bristled. Bristow bit his bottom lip. This was the news they hoped not to hear but had suspected. Sergeant Parsons acknowledged their reactions but pushed on.

'We've shut down the underground section of the station. The overground areas remain operational,' he said. Bristow was about to walk off, but Sergeant Parsons gently grabbed his arm.

'Not sure the last time you were in a sauna, Sergeant Bristow, but you're about to step into one down there,' he said. Bristow and Kitcher looked at each other again. In silence they walked off in the direction of the escalators. Thatcher and I followed.

We'd walked about ten feet further in before I could feel the change in temperature.

As we approached the top of the escalator, Bristow was the first to say what we'd all been thinking in that moment.

'Shit, the smell. Here we go again,' he said.

As I stepped off the bottom of the escalator, I wondered what struck me more. The absolute putrid smell of death, or the monumental difference in air temperature compared to outside. Bristow and Kitcher removed their jackets. Thatcher did the same. I knew I had to. The heat down here was bonkers.

'Let's get moving,' Kitcher said, wiping the sheen of sweat from his forehead. He marched off into the pedestrian tunnel.

Thatcher's skin was getting paler the further we walked on. Not that I wanted to admit it, but I was starting to feel a little sick. Bristow to Kitcher said, 'you know how hot it got down here after the accident happened, right?'

'Forty-five degrees,' Kitcher responded, before covering his mouth with his hand.

Bristow turned to me and Thatcher;

'—the heat after the train crash. It was so hot; the rescue workers were forced to work in twenty-minute stints. Anything more was deemed dangerous.'

I shook my head in wonderment. Thatcher went to say something but coughed.

'The smell?' he eventually said to Bristow.

'Most of those deceased in the first carriage were trapped in the wreckage for four days. With the heat in the dead-end tunnel,' he said in disbelief, 'it must have been something out of a horror movie.'

I could see that we were almost on platform nine. I swallowed what little saliva was left in my mouth.

'Mother of God,' Bristow bellowed as he arrived properly onto the platform.

'What the fuck?' Kitcher said, with what he could see just out of my field of vision.

As I rounded the corner, words failed me. I couldn't fathom it. It looked so grotesque; I had to momentarily look away. Wreckage of an old train. A "London Underground 1938 Stock," was its official name. A train specially designed for the original London Underground.

The wreckage was at a completely wrong angle. The back of the carriage was wedged high against the ceiling. The rest of it was wedged deep into the section of the train tunnel past the platform. Kitcher whacked Bristow on the arm.

'It's the two-seventy-two!' he said, almost manically.

Later, I would learn 'train two-seventy-two,' as it was known in the British Transport Police, was the reference to *'the'* train from the Moorgate Station disaster.

'How the fuck did it get here?' Bristow muttered.

By now, the heat was making me dizzy. I turned to Thatcher. He was as pale as a ghost.

'Can someone tell me what the fuck is going on?' I asked.

Bristow and Kitcher walked a bit further down the platform to get a better view.

'It's the bloody train, Bristow, but how?' Kitcher said.

I couldn't help but see the terror etched on Kitcher's face. Bristow was about to say something but stopped. He cocked his head in the direction of the wreckage.

'Did you hear something?' he asked us all. I heard it too. It was coming from the wreckage. I could feel the hairs all over my body quiver.

‘This can’t be real!’ Kitcher shouted, before he stepped over to the edge of the platform and stepped down onto the tracks.

‘Kitcher?’ Bristow’s sentence was cut short. Sounds from the train grew louder. A woman’s high-pitched scream echoed around the station. Where it came from, I have no idea. Kitcher looked up to Bristow.

‘It’s not here! It’s not bloody real!’ he shouted. I was starting to wonder if the man was losing his mind. Bristow looked at the train carriages and shook his head.

‘I can see it, Detective. It looks bloody real to me.’

Kitcher obviously didn’t agree with him.

‘There’s only one way to prove it,’ he responded.

Kitcher marched towards the train. As he drew closer, he turned back to Bristow and shouted: ‘It’s a trick. A ghost train!’

Bristow had other ideas. ‘That carriage is as real as I am!’ he responded.

Kitcher was clearly not taking Bristow’s point of view. He walked up to the wreckage and stopped, one foot away. Kitcher had only been standing there one, maybe two seconds when in the next second, I thought I was going to literally shit my pants.

I’d never heard the sound of an explosion like this before. It freaked me the fuck out. My heart felt as if it were going to break my ribs. It sounded like a bomb being detonated. Or, I thought later, a train colliding with a five-foot-thick concrete wall at forty miles per hour.

The ringing in my ears came next. I fell backwards onto the platform. I quickly stumbled to my feet. I turned and found Thatcher plastered to the platform wall. As his eyes met mine, he vomited.

Bristow lay on the platform closer to the train. Slight movement told me he was at least conscious. I grabbed him to make sure he didn't fall off the platform and onto the tracks. As I helped him to his feet, we found ourselves peering over the edge and onto the tracks.

Kitcher lay flat on his back between the train tracks. Then, his eyes shot open; he looked panicked. But panic soon made way for an explosion of anger.

'Fucking train!' Kitcher shrieked.

He stumbled to his feet, like he was drunk. In a fit of rage, he shouted more profanities before doing something which caught the rest of us off guard. He stumbled towards the wreckage of the train shouting, 'you are not fucking real!'

Things went from insane to completely ridiculous. Kitcher fell into the wreckage and disappeared before our very eyes!

Bristow mumbled incoherent words. Thatcher went to say something, but Kitcher suddenly reappeared out of the wreckage. With not a scratch on him! He looked up to the three of us. His previously angry, batshit-crazy expression was gone.

'Jesus bloody Christ!' he shouted in terror, before breaking into a run down the train tracks and away from the wreckage.

In those few moments, Kitcher seemed to have legitimately lost his mind. When he was about twenty feet down the tracks and still running as if his life depended on it, the hideous sounds we heard earlier coming from the wreckage, started all over again. But this time, much louder.

Suddenly, another figure burst out of the wreckage. It was at this point, I wondered if it was me who had lost my mind. His uniform was a clear giveaway. Later, when I was

shown photos of the man, I confirmed one hundred percent who I'd believed I'd seen. 'Motorman' Newson.

Newson spotted Kitcher, and whilst shouting obscenities at him, started chasing after him.

'Get away from me!' Kitcher pleaded.

I stood on the platform and watched Kitcher helplessly trying to get away from the ghost of Motorman Newson. When Kitcher got to the other end of platform nine, things, shall we say, went next level.

Dozens of people came spewing out of the train wreckage. They were falling on top of each other whilst hurling vile abuse at Newson. They stumbled after him, fighting each other to get to him first. Kitcher, was now running into the darkened train tunnel away from Moorgate. I knew what I was seeing. But it was hard to believe. The carriage. Train two-seventy-two. The passengers.

Forty-two of them had perished in the tragedy along with Newson.

They all looked as real as Bristow and Thatcher standing with me. The mob ignored the three of us on the platform, as if *we* were the ghosts and not them. They moved en masse in the same direction as Newson and Kitcher.

I turned to Thatcher and was about to say something akin to 'what the fuck' when my three words were interrupted by the unmistakable sound of metal scraping on metal. It was coming from the wreckage. Thatcher and Bristow took a step back.

I found myself doing the same. Eventually, we all had our backs to the wall on platform nine. I was trying to tell myself the train wasn't there. But by God, it was hard to utter these words in my head when I could see it right in front of me.

As if this couldn't get more insane, sounds of commotion

sprang out from the other end of the train tunnel. Kitcher reappeared. Now, he was running back towards the wreckage!

‘This is bloody unbelievable!’ Thatcher muttered.

Ten feet after Kitcher, Newson, the driver came into view. I couldn’t figure it out. Couldn’t ghosts fucking fly? This was getting ridiculous! To my left, the wreckage gave out more groans of metal shifting on metal.

Suddenly, it began to move. It rocked from side to side. I had an awful feeling brewing. Something was about to go down. Kitcher, having earlier done an about face, was now halfway back towards the ghost train. The train driver and the passengers, not far behind him.

He spotted the wreckage moving unsteadily. The wreckage’s movement was increasing, as if possessed by some sort of poltergeist.

‘What the hell is going on?’ Kitcher said to no one in particular, before surprising the three of us on the platform when he stopped running.

As if the wreckage itself had taken offense to Kitcher’s words, it shifted about ten feet towards him. He’d barely had time to react before he took one last look at the three of us, terror in his eyes, taking a panicked glance over his shoulder where the ghost of the driver, and all the passengers, were closing in on him from the other direction.

The train straightened. It moved back onto the tracks. Without another second’s warning, at the same time as the driver and passengers burst into movement towards Kitcher on the other side, the train exploded into full speed backwards.

‘Kitcher!’ I heard Bristow shout at the top of his lungs.

When the train and the passengers collided, right on top of Kitcher, the sudden explosion of bright light was so intense, I was temporarily blinded.

And then silence. Eerie, silence. No sounds of screaming passengers, or the driver.

Or a ghost train.

I opened my eyes, turning to Thatcher, then Bristow. If they were thinking the same thing as I was — how quickly can we get the fuck out of this station — I wouldn't be at all surprised. I could see it in their eyes.

Oddly, the heat and the smell remained around us. Bristow walked over to the edge of the platform.

'What in God's name—' he muttered.

I walked over and stood next to him.

'You can't be serious,' I whispered.

Kitcher lay between the tracks, his eyes wide open, staring up at the ceiling. His eyes wandered over to the three of us standing above. As the seconds ticked over, his body began to shake.

Damn it, he was going into shock.



DETECTIVE KITCHER WAS rushed to St Bartholomew's Hospital. Bristow accompanied him, whilst Megevand and Thatcher remained at Moorgate Station, where they talked to the frazzled policemen stationed there up top, and eventually finished up.

Thatcher's shirt was drenched. Megevand, the same. His chrome dome was lathered in a sheen of sweat, as if someone had polished it with Vaseline.

'What do you want to do now?' Thatcher asked him.

Megevand pulled at his nose. He'd do anything to get the rank smell of death out of his nostrils. His mouth was bone dry. He longed for a drink of water. Then, something stronger. The vision of a cold pint at the Boleyn made his mouth water.

The vile taste swirling around in his mouth was beyond repellent. He loathed anyone who spat in public, but in this instance, he had no choice. If he'd swallowed, he knew what would probably happen next.

'We can't work the whole day like this,' Megevand said, wiping his mouth, before pulling at his shirt, the sweat glueing the fabric to his body. He longed to take it off. He'd tell Yukiko to throw it out, as he doubted, she'd ever get the smell of death infused with sweat out. If dry cleaning didn't get the

putrid odour out of the suit he was wearing today, he'd tell her to bin that too. Right now, he was beyond caring.

'I'll drop you off at your place, duck home myself and then swing back and pick you up. Change of clothes, a shower, and then we get to brief Windebank,' Megevand said, motioning his partner to their car parked nearby.

'I hope we can wind the windows down.' Thatcher dug deep and pulled out a weak smile. It wasn't easy. Megevand caught a puff of wind which blew the rank smell coming off his own clothes back in his face. He swallowed without thinking about spitting and instantly felt sick. He shook his head and looked over to Thatcher across the roof and said, 'you and me both.'



'This is not bloody happening,' Windebank roared. His face was a deep shade of red, en route to purple. Thatcher wondered if the boss was going to pop a valve. The vein on the left side of his neck looked close to bursting.

Megevand and Thatcher sat mute on the other side of Windebank's desk. No response was forthcoming. The detective chief inspector let his matter-of-fact statement hang in the air of his stuffy office. Megevand and Thatcher were unusually still. Both were still shaken from the events at Moorgate a few hours ago.

'Moorgate is now out of fucking action like all the others,' Windebank said. He looked at Thatcher, before turning his gaze to Megevand. He caught the distant smell of what only could be death coming from the two men.

'Commander Freeman called just before you returned.' Windebank rested his thick arms on the desk and leant forward.

‘There are reports coming in from all over the network that hundreds, possibly more—’ he stopped mid-sentence. Windebank rested his weary head in his hands. He closed his eyes.

‘—are roaming the tunnels. In packs,’ he said.

Windebank opened his eyes before he leant back in his chair. Megevand went to say something, but his boss cut in over him.

‘—Freeman doesn’t believe it,’ he said.

‘Doesn’t believe *what*, Boss?’ Thatcher asked.

‘That the figure is in the hundreds.’ Windebank responded.

Windebank’s nostrils then flared and his face reddened even more. ‘—some dipshit in Downing Street is doing what they always do,’ he muttered, clearly frustrated, ‘which is, water the true facts down to cat’s piss.’

‘Freeman believes it’s more?’ Megevand asked.

Windebank nodded.

‘The man knows when the bullshit is being piled on. He has contacts in every nook and cranny.’

Thatcher was about to say something but Windebank got in first.

‘—Thousands, gentlemen. And whatever train lines are still operating, they are causing absolute havoc.’ Windebank swivelled his chair sideways and stared out of the window. Without turning back, he said; ‘if Freeman’s sources are on the money, you know what will happen next, right?’

Thatcher turned to Megevand. He had a rough idea. But he felt as if he hadn’t slept in days. Megevand could see the look in the big man’s eyes. His was spent. Megevand felt the same.

‘The train drivers,’ Windebank said, turning back to the

two men, before checking his watch and gritting his teeth, '—in three or so hours.'

The train drivers were pulling up stumps. By five o'clock today, no train driver would get behind the controls of any train which operated within the boundaries of Greater London. And the kicker was not just below ground, but above ground as well. London was about to become a megacity without a functioning rail network. The old town was about to witness first-hand the shit royally hitting the fan.

And the three men, sitting in Windebank's office, all knew it.



‘FINLEY BROOKES,’ QUENTIN said to his nearly four-year-old son between shortened breaths, ‘—enough. My legs need a break!’

Father and son had been kicking the football around the grass for over an hour. To Quentin, it felt more like five. He smiled at his son. Finley had an abundant source of energy which never seemed to run out. Quentin convinced Finley to go back to the rug and take a break.

Two friends of Mary, who work with her at the children’s hospital, had invited her to an impromptu afternoon picnic in the grounds of the Clapham Common. She said she’d be delighted to attend, if they didn’t mind Quentin and the children tagging along. The two female friends adored Mary’s kids, and both adored her husband too. Wisely, though, they kept that little nugget of information to themselves.

As Quentin made his way back to the picnic rug, he glanced over at the Clapham Common Bandstand, not that he was ever interested in historic structures of a bygone era.

The Clapham Common Bandstand was reputedly the oldest structure of its kind in England. It was a roofed structure, open on all sides, where various bands would play to those who gathered around. But Quentin cared less about the rickety old bandstand and its history.

It was what used to be found in the grounds of the common, located on the opposite side of the bandstand, that was top of mind. An old pub, probably as old as the bandstand, located near the Mount Pond. Thankfully the pub was now gone, a lone patch of dirt now marking the spot.

Quentin hadn't bought into the hoo-ha the local papers had banged on about as far as where the pub had once stood. They said anything planted in the patch of dirt where the pub had once stood never survived. Plants. Trees. Shrubs. Grass. Anything. Nope, not even weeds.

Quentin reckoned it was more about two hundred years of stale beer seeping through the floorboards into the soil, rather than the purported tales of the cursed ground and ghost stories.

But walking through this part of the common and staring over yonder, Quentin could not help but feel a sense of unease deep in the pit of his stomach. He wouldn't readily admit the feeling to Mary, who at this present time was immersed in a deep conversation with her two girlfriends.

'You all right over there, Mr Brookes?' He heard Mary eventually call out. He'd suddenly realised he'd stopped walking and was staring in the direction of where the pub once stood.

When he turned in her direction, Mary and her two girlfriends were all staring at him. A second later the two girls took a sip of their champagnes and continued their fevered conversation minus Quentin's wife. She held Quentin's gaze and smiled.

'Get over here and have something to drink you baboon.'

Quentin walked over to the picnic blanket. Heather was sitting to one side of his wife, reading a book contently.

Quentin and Mary could not believe how much their daughter loved to read. She was in her own little happy place.

Finley sat on the other side of the blanket, with the football on the grass right next to him. He gnawed on a cereal bar as if he hadn't eaten in days.

'What do you feel like, Mister?' Mary looked up to her husband.

'Water first, beer second,' he said to Mary with a boyish grin.

After he gulped the water down, Quentin twisted the top of his bottle of beer and savoured the frosty temperature. This was going to hit the spot, he thought. As he took the first gulp of beer an unexpected gust of wind suddenly blew over the commons.

'Jeez-Louise,' one of them said, 'where did that come from?'

Mary turned to Heather who hadn't missed a beat. She sat immersed in her book.

'She could read in a hurricane, our little munchkin,' Mary said to Quentin and her two friends. They all stared at Heather for a moment, who hadn't even looked up from her book. But suddenly, Heather's head snapped up and the fear in her eyes gave Mary one hell of a fright.

'Heather, what is it?' Mary whispered.

'No!' Heather screamed. The little girl's gaze fell just beyond her parents.

Quentin was the first to turn around.

'What the fuck,' he muttered.

Finley was on his feet. The gust of wind had blown the ball away and he was off after it. By the time Finley had almost reached the soccer ball about twenty feet away, the

wind had died down, but the football was still moving. And Finley, was running after it.

‘Finley, stop!’ Mary called out to him.

Quentin sprung to his feet. He knew something was wrong. Finley’s football was moving as if it were being pulled by an invisible string. And Finley was hell-bent on getting it back.

‘FINLEY!’ Quentin shouted, ‘STOP THIS INSTANT!’

The ball was now rolling at a ludicrous speed. What alarmed Quentin more, was the fact that his son was running as quickly as the bloody football was travelling. The ball and his son who were now a good fifty feet away from him.

The ball’s forward motion then saw it curl around the bandstand. It was as if the ball had turned into a remote-control car. Balls do not bend around buildings. Unless Becks had kicked it, and he was nowhere in sight.

Finley was now running around the structure of the old Bandstand. He continued to ignore his father’s cries to stop running after the ball. Quentin grunted and pushed his legs as hard as he could. His lungs were screaming in pain.

As the ball approached the dead-patch of land, Quentin had made some decent ground. He cared nothing for the bloody football. It was Finley he wanted to catch. And now. With less than twenty feet between father and son, Quentin just kept pushing his body to the outer limits.

He’d not bothered trying to tell his son to stop running anymore. The football just kept rolling. It was the freakiest thing Quentin had ever seen. When he saw the ball was heading directly for the dead patch of land where the infamous Mount Pond Hotel once stood, his heart sank.

Something deep inside was telling him he could not allow Finley to reach the alleged cursed patch of land. He had

seconds left to intercept his son and the patch of dirt. There was an abundance of lush grass between him and Finley and in that instant, he knew what was going to happen next.

He dove into the air, doing his best impersonation of Superman he'd ever mustered. At that exact moment the ball stopped moving right on the edge of the dirt. Finley was about six feet from the ball when Quentin caught him almost mid-air. He fell to the ground with his son in his arms.

'Daddy?' Finley quizzed, as his father rolled over and sat up in the grass. The young boy looked at his father with an alarming sense of curiosity.

'You okay mate?' Quentin asked, realizing that Finley had no idea what was going on.

Finley just stared innocently at Quentin, before turning and looking at his football. In between deep breaths and a pain in his chest (which Quentin hoped wasn't a sign of an impending heart attack) he followed his son's gaze to the possessed football. Father and son sat there in the grass and stared at it for a time.

Slowly, Finley rose to his feet. He took one last look at his dad before taking one step towards the ball. Quentin flung his arm out and caught Finley by the back of his t-shirt, just in time.

'Hold on!' Quentin hissed.

It happened in a flash.

Quentin had zero chance of reacting. The ball shot into the air with such force it was if it had been fired from a cannon. The ball appeared to have one target in mind. Quentin's head.

The ball hit him dead centre of his forehead. WHACK! Quentin fell backwards, thanking his lucky stars the grass around him was long. He'd grown up playing football and

was known for his skill at pulling off match-winning headers. But it still hurt like hell.



Quentin held tightly on Finley's hand. He had no intention of letting it go. Finley, not really understanding what all the fuss was about, walked alongside his dad as if nothing unusual had happened. His football, snug under his right arm. Mary and Heather walked behind them.

The picnic had abruptly ended moments after the boys had arrived back. Mary didn't have to be told it was time to leave. She could see the look in Quentin's eyes. She opted out of telling him there was a huge red mark in the middle of his forehead.

Quentin guided Finley across Nightingale Walk, reaching the other side without looking back to see where Mary and Heather were. By the time he was halfway across the last remaining oval in the common, Mary cleared her throat behind him and said, 'don't forget your wife and daughter, Mister Brookes.' Quentin slowed and turned around.

'Sorry love,' he tried to put on a smile for Heather, who was staring at him. He could not figure out the look on her face, 'I just want to get home,' he added.

Mary caught up to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

'—I know. Don't forget we are trying to keep up,' she smiled.

Mary's smile always had the same effect. He felt himself calming down. Though he wouldn't be truly happy until they were home and all the doors locked. As for the football, he was certain that at some point the thing would disappear, he would make sure of it.

Finley smiled at his mother. Mary looked down at him and winked.

‘Can I hold your hand Mummy?’ Finley asked.

Mary made eye contact with Quentin. ‘Time for a kid-swap?’

Quentin nodded as he let go of Finley’s hand, but only when Mary was literally millimetres away from taking it. When he reached for Heather’s hand, that strange look on her face had changed. She now looked frightened.

‘You, okay?’ Quentin asked her.

‘No,’ she muttered, ‘I want to go *home*.’

Quentin held her hand a little more tightly as they walked towards the Lacham Hill Road. He could sense something was wrong with his daughter but brushed it off, refocusing on getting home and putting today’s freakish events behind them.

Quentin wondered if it was a good idea to come this way. They would pass the entrance to the Clapham South Tube Station. Quentin knew it would be the first time his children had come this close to the station since the horrific events where Finley was thought to have originally been lost and drowned.

They had no intention of catching a train home. No. Bloody. Way. The Brookes family had caught a bus from their home in Lacham to the Clapham Common, and there was nothing on earth that would see them get home any other way.

Their bus stop was on the opposite side of the road just up from the station’s entrance. Quentin wished he’d not been so consumed by what had happened earlier. He would have preferred to have cut across the Common sooner and avoid venturing so close to the station’s entrance.

He was tired, and his legs ached. He longed for a cold beer or a Scotch. Maybe both. He would collapse onto the sofa, drink in hand, before getting down to the difficult task of trying to figure out what happened today. And what the hell to do about it.

Mary walked with Finley, in front of Quentin. Heather held onto his hand and said little. He glanced down at her but was distracted by a flash of movement on the pavement ahead. Two teenage boys on bicycles barrelled towards them.

Quentin thought they were travelling too fast for his liking. He gave them a dirty look. They either didn't see it, or more likely ignored him. They had no intention of slowing down. As the Brookes family collectively came up to within twenty feet of the entrance to the Clapham South Tube Station, Quentin felt his blood boil.

The idiots were going too fast and in too close a vicinity to him, his wife and children.

'For fuck's sake!' Quentin realised he'd dropped the f-bomb in front of his kids, but it was too late now, '—slow down or get on the bloody road you lot!' he shouted.

Mary pulled Finley aside, just in time to avoid encountering the first boy. Quentin quickly swung Heather over to his left side so she wouldn't get in harm's way. When the first boy passed, he grinned at Quentin and for good measure flipped him the middle finger. Quentin wondered if he would get arrested for t-boning a fifteen-year-old lout on a bike. Probably.

He quashed his urge for violence, stepping aside for the twat. The second boy on the bike was obviously keen to one-up his mate. As he flew past Mary, he flicked his leg out and kicked the football clean out of Finley hands.

Quentin, still with Heather holding his hand, realised he

was in no position to do anything. But he let go of Heather's hand and spun around. He gritted his teeth and wondered if he ran after him, would he catch the kid. He felt someone next to him. Mary.

'Fuckers,' she hissed. At least he hadn't been the only one to drop the F-word this afternoon.

They stood there for a moment and collected themselves. It had only taken Mary two seconds to realise she couldn't feel the presence of her two children nearby. Quentin saw terror in her eyes.

Husband and wife spun around. 'Finley!' Heather's voice was the first thing they heard.

The football was on the move again, with Finley in tow. And Heather, running after her brother.

As Quentin and Mary made a mad dash for their children, things turned from bad to worse. Of its own volition, Finley's football curled around the corner of the building before entering the main entrance of the Clapham South Underground Train Station.



I STARED DOWN at my whisky. I pondered how many I could drink before I passed out. I'm certain this is my seventh. That drunk feeling courses through my veins, and it feels good. In my opinion, albeit a bit sloshed, whoever had invented alcohol should get a medal. One of the finest inventions in mankind's history, I reckon.

The bar is steady for this time of the day, early afternoon. Just enough people to give it atmosphere. If you like drinking your woes away in a bar, it is perfect. I glanced around the place before I spot someone on the other side of the bar. Me. I see my eyes staring back at me. I looked half-cut, and don't care.

Even though I am drunk, I notice out of the corner of my eye in the mirror, a man staring in my direction. Was he looking at me? In slow motion, I turned my head away from the mirror and in his direction. What the fuck? Where has he gone? Am I seeing things in my very tipsy state? I turned back to my whisky and focused on that instead.

'Excuse me,' said a man's voice behind me. I was ready to bounce off the stool and make a run for it. I ignored the voice. He was probably speaking to someone else.

'I said, excuse me,' the man said. I felt my chest tighten.

I sat up straighter before slowly turning. When I made

eye contact with him, he stared at me for a moment. It was him, the man in the corner. He'd recognized me. My life was over.

'You drop this?' he held my wallet in his hand, but the way he was looking at me still had me on edge.

'Ah, tha-t thing hass legs,' I replied.

I could hear the slur in my words. Silently, the stranger with a piercing glare placed the wallet on the bar, next to my whisky. He seems to be waiting for me to say something. But I'm all out of words. Something deep inside is telling me to shut the hell up.

I start to wonder if he is expecting me to buy him a drink. Christ almighty, I would have found my bloody wallet by the time I was ready for my next drink. Give me a fucking break!

'Say, do I know you from somewhere, mate?' he inquired. Unlike me, he sounds as sober as a judge. I glance down at my whisky and ponder what my response will be.

Option One, 'Yes. You got me. I'm one of the *Bank and Monument Four*.'

Option Two, the one I go with. I take a breath and muster a more coherent response:

'I must have one of those faces, I think,' it's a line I've used countless times before, because it's true. For a long time, people would come up to me and say, '*do I know you?*' Most would eventually tell me I look like one of the actors from an American Sitcom. Friends, I think.

The one where they all live in New York. I fucking hated it. The bloke's eyes don't waver. My blood turns to ice.

'That's right,' he speaks eventually, his expression tells me he appears suddenly bored with the conversation, but adds, '—not sure about that, mate. Just feels like I've seen you around.'

I shrug. My heart is beating so hard in my chest I'm sure it's about to give out. I can hear the beating sound in my right ear and it's making me feel so nauseous. I'm wondering if I'm going to throw up.

My mind switches to survival mode. I know what I should be doing. Get the hell out of this bar. Leave what's left of my whisky and make tracks.

Life for me is getting harder as every day passes. All this bullshit going on in London's Underground. The paranoia, gnawing away at my insides, getting worse by the day. Whisky only helps for a time before it eventually wears off.

I realise I've been daydreaming. Then, it dawns on me. The good-Samaritan has disappeared. He must have walked away. Thank fuck.

The barman smiles at me as I order another drink. I don't know why but there is something in the smile that's unnerving to me. Pull it together! I tell myself. When the barman places the whisky in front of me, I can safely say that I now feel properly pissed as a fart. Not sure how a fart can be pissed, but I move on and focus on my drink.

I slug the whisky and wonder how many more I'll get before the bartender cuts me off. One more will be fine with me.

Whilst I wait to catch his attention, I look around the bar once more. I've got nothing else to do. A couple sit at the bar down the other end, deep in conversation. Three blokes in suits all with full pints, huddled together, laughing. A group of about six people in the booth on the far side talking amongst themselves, the banter loud and raucous.

I feel a pang of jealousy. All these people in this bar, living their lives, here, having a drink and a good time with friends. I wish I was one of them. I turn back to my empty

glass. Something makes me look back across the bar in the mirror, at the only man here drinking on his own. Me.

When I turn my attention just a smidgen to the left, my bladder feels as if it's about to burst. The good Samaritan, sitting on a stool, on his own. Right near the front door.

Staring at me.

I shudder at the realization. He's not drinking. I take my eyes away from the mirror and stare down at my hands. Shit, I've got to get out of here, *now*. A thought comes to mind. I've spent half my life drinking at this pub, but the barman here today, I've never seen him before. I decide to take advantage of it.

'Where's the loo, barman?' I say loud enough for half the bar to hear me.

'Down the right side,' he points, which is good for effect, 'over there.'

Stifling the powerful urge to look in the good Samaritan's direction, I shuffle off in the direction of the toilets. At the end of the corridor, on the opposite side to the loo, is the back door of the pub. Normally reserved for deliveries and the staff entrance. Not today.



‘QUENTIN!’ MARY SHOUTS, breaking into a full-blown sprint, but it’s Heather’s voice he can only hear up ahead. ‘Finley, stop!’ the little girl screams. Quentin spots the top of her head entering the escalator before it disappears.

Quentin bolts for the escalator. He spots his two children further down and feels a sense of dread rising from deep within.

‘NO!’ he hears the pain in his wife’s voice not far behind.

Finley has now exited the bottom of the escalator. The ball is still moving of its own accord, rolling off towards a platform. Heather is halfway down the escalator and appears to be on a mission to do nothing but stop her little brother from getting to his possessed football.

‘FINLEY, STOP RUNNING!’ Mary screams at the top of her lungs from the top of the escalator.

Her son is once again transfixed by his football and the desperate need to get his hands on it.

‘Finley!’ Quentin hears Heather calling out. She clears the bottom of the escalator and runs after him.

‘Heather, wait!’ Mary shouts.

Halfway down the escalator, Quentin feels the familiar whoosh of air. A train arriving. It’s stronger this time because two trains are arriving on both platforms simultaneously. The

lights all around the station begin to pulse. Quentin realizes there was a reason why he should have avoided coming anywhere near this station at all costs. It's cursed.

He stumbles at the bottom of the escalator and falls. Mary collides with him as she flies off the escalator, unable to stop. He spots Heather running down the inbound platform.

Quentin knows something dreadful is about to happen. He can feel it in his bones. And right on cue, his worst nightmare comes true. The lights go out. The Underground Station is plunged into total darkness. He is completely blind.

The Emergency lighting system fails.

Darkness. Terrifying, darkness.

'NO!' Mary screams.

'Finley, Heather! Tell us where you are!' Quentin shouts.

This couldn't get any worse for Quentin, but it does. When the realization comes, it's as if someone has hit him over the head with a spade. There are no trains running today. The train driver's strike has shut down the entire train network.

'Quentin!' Mary is close. Quentin reaches out in the direction of her voice in an attempt to find her.

'FINLEY, HEATHER... WHERE ARE YOU?' Quentin shouts, panicked by a sudden, uncontrollable fear gripping him. Never in his life had he felt so helpless. He stumbles into Mary. They grab hold of each other before locking hands.

'Where are they!' she cries.

The couple stand in the blinding pitch black. Distant, muffled sounds are heard all around them.

'Mummy?' Finley's voice carries across the phantom wind in the station.

'Jesus,' Mary gasps. 'The train drivers' strike — there are no trains running Quentin!'

‘Heather!’ Mary pleaded, ‘stay where you are, we will find—’

Her daughter’s scream makes Mary flinch. She’d never felt more terrified and helpless at the same time. The wind whooshing around her suddenly dies. The lights throughout the station begin flash on and off.

Quentin’s certain he’d spotted Finley. The boy was standing at the edge of the station’s inbound platform. Quentin—still holding onto Mary’s hand—moves towards him. The young boy just stands there staring at the two of them as if they are strangers.

The emergency lighting system finally kicks in proper. It douses the platform in a faint, orange light. It made the place all the creepier. Mary rushes forward, dropping to her knees. She wraps her arms around her son. Finley just stands there, dazed.

‘Where’s Heather?’ Mary asked him.

Finley pulls away from her. He stares at his mother, as if he was offended by the question. He turns his eyes up towards Quentin’s. It scares the hell out of them both.

Finley turns away from his parents. Painfully slow, he raises his left arm, pointing at the end of the platform and into the darkness of the train tunnel.

Quentin looks in the direction of where Finley was pointing. He’d felt as if he was going to vomit. Mary groaned before bursting into tears. The arm Finley was pointing with drops to his side. He turns back and faces his parents. When he starts laughing, it makes Quentin shudder.

‘My football!’ Finley squeals with glee. It sits ten feet away from Quentin on the edge of the platform. Mary follows her husband’s eyes to the ball. She would never look at a football the same way, ever again. But the ball itself, has

other ideas. Without any forewarning, it shoots up into the air like a rocket. It makes a beeline for someone's face as if it were laser guided.

Mary.

It connects with such kinetic energy, that it knocks her clean off her feet, before her head hits the tiled platform with a sickening crack.



WHEN QUENTIN ARRIVED at our office, I knew something terrible had transpired. Thatcher calmed Quentin down as best as he could under the trying circumstances. Windebank, who was about to leave for an appointment, told us we could use his office.

He knew the meeting he was attending could drag on for hours. This was because things in London were going from bad to worse. And this summation of mine was before Quentin had arrived. Mary Brookes was in hospital, in an induced coma.

The sickening crack Quentin had heard when Mary hit the platform was his wife's skull. It didn't look good. Yukiko was a complete mess. So was I.

Thankfully, David and Christine were available to take Finley. The four-year-old didn't really understand what all the fuss was about. It would eventually come to him in the middle of the night when his big sister wasn't available to help him deal with his night terrors.

Heather Brookes, six and a half years old, was missing.

So far, the search of the Clapham South Underground Station had failed to produce a single piece of evidence that she had ever set foot there in the first place. The vast, adjacent

circa-World-War-two air raid shelter complex was being searched as I speak. So far, nothing.

Prior to Windebank leaving for his meeting, he sent a shiver down my spine, in a good way. Our boss was famous for his cast-iron exterior. In all the years I had known him, I had never heard him speak so compassionately to anyone, like he had today.

‘Quentin, I want you to know something, son,’ placing his hand on my friend’s shoulder. Quentin didn’t even bother to meet Windebank’s eyes.

‘Son, I need you to look at me,’ Windebank whispered.

From my vantage point, it appeared Quentin struggled to look up to the man standing in front of him. When Quentin eventually did, I could see tears streaming down his face. But he didn’t blink. And he didn’t wipe his tears away either.

He just stared at Windebank. It was the saddest thing I had seen in a long time. I swallowed, fighting my own emotions, though I knew I needed to be strong. Quentin would need me. This would come to be his greatest time of need.

I take a deep breath. I look over to Thatcher. I hoped he would set me straight. To his credit, he knew what I was thinking. He nodded before giving me a subtle wink, but his expression remained stoic. I knew what he was telling me. We need to remain in check. Quentin needs us.

I stood straighter. A resolution rose from within me.

Windebank’s eyes remained fixed on Quentin.

‘I will not stop,’ he averted his gaze over to the two of us before staring back to Quentin, ‘Megevand and Thatcher, they will never stop either.’

He moved his hand away from Quentin’s shoulder and lightly patted him on the side of his face. ‘You may have felt

like you never had a father, but there's a man in this room who will gladly take that role in a heartbeat.'

He glanced over to Thatcher, and then to me, before turning back to Quentin.

'—and the three of us, with the backing of every single policeman in this city, will not ever stop searching for her.'

I'd always heard about Windebank's soft side. But like Colonel Sanders's secret recipe, I'd never seen it with my own eyes.

'Thank you,' Quentin whispered.

Windebank frowned, 'I mean it son,' he said, as if daring Quentin to argue the point. He stood back, taking one last glance in our direction, before saying his goodbyes and leaving.



Some good fellow had brought a box of donuts in today. The *nutritious* delights never went astray. I dished up two and put them in front of Quentin. I then made him a coffee. I hoped he didn't mind the taste of the Thames River, boiled to within an inch of its life.

Copious amounts of sugar helped the near poisonous taste. Quentin nibbled on the donut and gulped down the coffee. We told him we would leave him be for a few moments.

Thatcher closed Windebank's office door before we retreated to our desks. About an hour later, Quentin told us he was ready to talk.



'I should never have gone near that station, or that bloody common either,' Quentin said.

‘You never knew this was going to happen,’ I said.

Hearing the sentence aloud, I was conscious it was a piss-weak response. Nevertheless, it was the first thought that came to me.

Quentin stared off into the distance. He looked like a man with the weight of the world on his shoulders. We sat in silence. Quentin closed his eyes for a time. When he eventually opened them, he stared straight at me.

‘The death of Alexandra. It did something down there, didn’t it,’ Quentin said.

Before I could figure out what to say (but knowing he was pretty much on the money) he added, ‘—and anyone who died in or around the Underground, their spirits never left. Right?’

I could only nod. I had the same thought a few weeks ago which I kept to myself, mostly.

I may have mentioned it to Yukiko, and the big guy sitting next to me, but that was the extent of it.

‘Bailey and West—’ I saw Quentin flinch at the mere mention of their names.

‘—Remember that night when you and Mary called me?’

Quentin nodded before taking another sip of coffee.

‘You said Mary had spotted two men at the station. Two men who she said looked creepy as hell,’ I added.

‘That would be them,’ Quentin said. His jaw tightened and I could see his face morph into a mixture of anger and hatred.

‘The giveaway was Heather,’ Quentin eventually said.

‘What do you mean?’ Thatcher asked him.

Quentin stared at his coffee, before shaking his head as if the thought was something he just couldn’t accept.

‘Mary said she had never seen Heather that scared before.

I remember one day at the park, with the kids. A German Shepherd came out of nowhere and made a beeline for Heather. It almost knocked her to the ground.

The dog was just playing around, but she didn't know it at the time. Looking back, I thought she was scared then. But Mary said that the day on the station platform, Heather was one hundred times more scared than the day in the park with the German Shepherd.'

Thatcher leant forward and asked the question I knew he was going to ask.

'Why are those men,' Thatcher corrected himself, '—ghosts, whatever the hell they are, so fixated on her?'

Quentin closed his eyes for a time. He sat there probably drowning in what ifs.

'We all think they had something to do with this, right?' Thatcher added.

Quentin opened his eyes, before looking over to me. We both reluctantly nodded at the same time.

'To answer your first question,' Quentin took a deep breath before he continued;

'—Mary thinks our Heather reminds those two dead-bastards, especially Bailey, of one of the orphans who died at the Ravenstone Orphanage.'

I gazed out of the window. I didn't want to make eye contact with Quentin. Something told me there may have been more to this. But pressing him about it, wouldn't achieve anything. Maybe later. Thatcher sat back in his chair, absorbing Quentin's words.

'So, we have ghosts who can somehow kidnap a child of flesh and blood,' Thatcher said, crossing his arms, letting that comment hang in the air but added, '—how the hell is that possible?'

Before either of us could respond, he shook his head in bewilderment.

‘And your daughter reminds one of them of an orphan who died at the orphanage?’ he said.

Quentin turned from Thatcher and stared at me for a time. When he turns back to Thatcher, his face is set in stone. ‘Bailey. He *murdered* the orphan, whose name, was Heather.’

Thatcher’s face said it all. It was as if Quentin had just slapped him.

‘Shit,’ he whispered. The room fell into an awkward silence. After what felt like hours, Thatcher leant forward.

‘Who was behind the demise of this Bailey character, and his friend West?’ Thatcher asked the two of us. Quentin stared at me, his eyes not wavering for a second. His face was no longer angry. Or lost. Now, he looked resolute. A man who was ready to take on the world to get one of his favourite human beings back. His daughter.

Without turning in Thatcher’s direction, he answered my partner’s question with dread.

‘*Me*,’ he whispered.



Megevand sent Thatcher home. He'd insisted on coming on the drive to the hospital, but the detective said there was no need. Megevand told Thatcher the more sleep the big bloke raked up, the better it was for the cause.

Quentin knew Megevand needed sleep as well. He could see the bags under the detective's eyes. He looked paler than normal, too. Megevand was starting to remind Quentin of 'Uncle Fester' from the Addams Family. At that point he knew he would have to insist the detective drop him off at the front door of the hospital, and go home himself to rest.

Megevand knew from the look on Quentin's face after telling him to go home, that arguing the point would be futile. He watched Quentin make his way up the steps of the hospital, before he pulled out into the oncoming traffic, pissing off yet another bicycle rider, who he hadn't seen riding past.



The first thing Megevand did when he arrived home was wrap his arms around Yukiko and not move. She cried. He told her everything would be okay. Ten minutes later, she placed a cup of coffee in front of him on their kitchen bench.

He savoured the aroma of the freshly made brew before

taking a sip, the vision of him crawling into bed and closing his eyes, a tantalising vision. He'd closed his eyes for only an instant, before the shrill of his home phone ringing, yanked him straight out of his daydream with an almighty thud.

'Shit,' Megevand mumbled, putting his hand to his chest and hoping his heart wasn't about to give out. He reached over and snatched up the receiver. 'Megevand,' he muttered into the mouthpiece.

As the person on the other end of the line was speaking, Megevand made eye contact with his wife. His tired eyes revealed nothing, which was unusual. She could normally get a gist of the conversation simply by reading his eyes.

'Go on,' the detective said, rising to his feet unsteadily. Megevand took a drink of his coffee as the other person kept talking.

'You've got to be bloody kidding me, where? —*today*? Christ, almighty—'

Megevand checked his watch. He shifted his feet. Yukiko knew what that meant.

'—I'm on my way. I'll grab Thatcher on the way — yes — yes Windebank. I'll get there as quickly as I can.'

Megevand replaced the handset. He took one long gulp of his coffee. He followed it up with another. Yukiko knew he was getting as much caffeine into his system as possible. Good. He needed it. 'What's going on?' she asked.

'That was Windebank,' Megevand straightened himself and tried to shake the fog from his head. '—a report came in thirty minutes ago.'

Yukiko could see the instant change in her husband's demeanour. The hunter had just got the scent. 'An off-duty policeman believes he made brief contact with one of

them. One of the Complex Four. *Today*, at a bar. Highgate, apparently.'

Yukiko knew exactly who her husband was referring to. He had used the term so many times in the last few weeks he would never have had to refer to 'them' by name.

One of the suspects.

The Bank and Monument Four.



'I feel so refreshed,' Thatcher grumbled, grinning. He extended the seat belt to its outer limits. Megevand knew there was literally no chance his partner would have even begun to have slept, let alone rested. The detective wondered if it had scarcely been thirty minutes since he'd dropped Thatcher off.

'You could have least put a fresh set of clothes on, *shit-house*,' Megevand smirked, as he sped through the streets. He'd popped the portable blue light on the roof. More so, because he was dog-tired and wanting to get back to the office, than cutting through the traffic.

'Anyone mentioned the teapot calling the kettle black?' Thatcher gave the detective an exaggerated sideways glare before shaking his head.

Megevand burst into unabashed laughter. It felt good. He laughed so much he could feel tears welling in his eyes. He knew the hiccups were only a second away. This happened when he laughed hard.

'Did I miss something Albert?' Thatcher said, looking at Megevand, his eyes narrowing.

Megevand's laughter eventually died down, and yes, the hiccups then came. Once he got them under control, he shot a quick glance over at his partner.

'It's the POT,' he smiled,'—calling the kettle black. Not the *teapot*, you silly twat.'

Thatcher was the king of improv. He turned away from Megevand and stared straight ahead, acting as if he'd been slapped down into submission for botching up the saying. Megevand watched him from the corner of his eye as he sped around two buses, and down the wrong side of the road.

As he righted the car back to the correct side, Thatcher shrugged and crossed his arms.

'You repeat what I just said, and I will carefully remove your head from your shoulders and relieve myself down your exposed throat.'

Megevand burst into laughter again. Thatcher had said it so calmly, and quietly, it made it so much funnier. The big man eventually followed suit and laughed himself. The two tired policemen rode in silence for a time. London, in the evening, sped past them outside their car windows.

Without taking his eyes away from the windscreen, Thatcher said, '—Washer thinks it could be the real deal?'

Megevand nodded. 'You know that tone he gets in his voice?' Megevand said before taking a quick look over at his partner.

'Right, that one,' Thatcher said.

Megevand ran a red light. Thatcher didn't blink as he sat there, staring dead ahead.

'—It's not hope, more than confidence, is it?' he eventually said.

'Your guess is as good as mine. He was very animated about it, but he's probably running on fumes like we are,' Megevand said.

The two men watched a car appear from a side-street, clearly cutting them off, but Megevand swerved around the

moron, not missing a beat. The blue light flashing on top of their car indicated to the other driver to get the hell out of their way.

Megevand could see their building coming up. He would make a beeline for the coffee and not care how bad it tasted. Hell, he'd even consider scoffing a doughnut if there was one left.



WASHER STOOD IN our office, with a few other men milling about. Commander Freeman stood next to him. Both rigid. Bristow nodded in our direction, a few feet to the left of Windebank and Freeman, chatting to someone I didn't recognise.

When Windebank spotted Thatcher and me, his demeanour instantly changed. He looked relieved. It certainly made me feel wanted, and it also gave me a boost of loyalty towards the best boss I'd ever had. Commander Freeman made eye contact with me and nodded.

'Gentlemen, thanks for getting back here in good time,' he said.

'No problem,' Thatcher responded. He was all business with the Commander. Suck-job more like it. I had it on good authority Windebank's Boss liked my partner, but Thatcher, all jokes about sucking up aside, never wanted to come across to Freeman as a loose cannon.

'This here is Constable Latson.' Windebank shuffled over to where a young man was standing with Bristow.

'Constable Latson, this here is Detective Inspector Ian Megevand and his partner, Sergeant James Thatcher,' Windebank said.

'Constable,' I reached out my hand. A strong, firm

handshake. Thatcher did the same and mumbled, 'good to meet you.'

'Let's all go and sit for a moment shall we,' Windebank nodded in the direction of the meeting room, 'it's been one hell of a long day. We all look as if we all need to get off our feet for a moment.'

I followed the rest of the men down the hall and into the meeting room. I'd managed to grab a mug of coffee and as if the Gods were looking after me, the last lone, surprisingly edible doughnut.

Windebank took a quick glance over to Commander Freeman, who nodded. Let's get this going, was what it meant.

'Gentlemen, I've brought you all back tonight because Constable Latson firmly believes he not only saw one of the men wanted for the sexual assault and murder of Alexandra Young, but also spoke with him.'

We all shifted our tired eyes towards the young constable. I could see him shift in his seat, knowing the spotlight was now pointed fairly and squarely on him. He looked to be in his mid to late twenties. Solidly built, around six feet tall, but with that spark in his eye that I'd seen before in a young policeman. Me, many years ago.



One hour later, we'd let Constable Latson leave. I smiled, when he told Windebank that he'd happily stay on if need be. Windebank shook his head but told Latson we'd be in touch. He'd been thorough, taking us through what had happened in every detail. And after carefully viewing all the photos and sketches we had of the Bank and Monument

Four, he was certain the man at the bar was one of them. This was significant.

It didn't go unnoticed, that, even though Constable Latson was off duty, his observation skills and capacity for taking notes was impressive. Latson thought he'd seen an old friend enter the bar. Upon entering the place himself, he'd realised it was a case of mistaken identity.

Somewhat embarrassed, Latson was about to make a hasty exit, but as he turned to leave, he spotted the suspect. His intuition told him to hang back for a few moments and watch the lone drinker. The man then dropped his wallet. Latson seized on the opportunity to approach the man, picking up the wallet and handing it back to him. The suspect thanked him for picking it up but was unfriendly and dismissive of the kind act. And, in Latson's words, was three sheets to the wind.

Latson was sure the man looked like one of the men wanted from the still images we'd released. Latson said nothing further to the loner, ordering a soft drink and going over to a table just near the front door.

At some point the loner spoke to the barman, before heading off towards the toilets. It had taken about five minutes for the constable to come to the realization his person of interest had done a runner.

When it dawned on him, Latson bolted to the toilets, to find the man nowhere to be found. Latson found the back door of the pub, unlocked. It led to a small backyard cluttered with junk, but otherwise secure.

The gate onto the street was locked, however he said that anyone could climb onto the old boiler and be over the fence before they knew it. During his report, I knew the bloke he'd

seen at the bar was not the one I'd named as the ringleader. "Sime."

But Latson had seen the images on the news, and then firsthand when we'd sent printouts of what we had to every single Police Station in England. When Freeman pressed him for assurance that, in his opinion, the man at the bar was one of the wanted men, Latson surprised us all and said, 'I will bet my future in the force on it.'

Even though he was officially off duty, Latson had approached the barman and, after producing his warrant card, spent a few minutes chatting to the guy. I was quietly impressed to learn that the off-duty policeman carried a notepad and pen with him whenever he left his flat, even when he was off the clock.

The kid was going to go far, that was for sure. When the barman told Latson he'd only been working there for two weeks, and was covering this shift for someone else, the policeman understood the barman didn't know if the suspect was a regular, or otherwise.

That would be something for the taskforce, tomorrow. Our team would end up interviewing every single employee from the pub, regardless of if they weren't on shift today. Windebank and Freeman looked to me, Bristow and Thatcher for our thoughts.

'We are running low on leads,' Thatcher said, knowing we were all thinking the same.

'He's keen, I'll give him that,' Windebank nodded, and after a moment's reflection he turned to Freeman, 'but we are at a crisis point here. We need to catch a break. *Now*. We don't have shit. And, as Thatcher pointed out, we are nowhere near solving this thing.'

Freeman stood and stretched his arms, before staring out the window which proceeded a slow yawn.

‘Any update on the drivers?’ I asked carefully.

Freeman made eye contact with Windebank before he turned back to me.

‘—This, stays in this room,’ he gave me that look that said more than his words. I nodded and Thatcher and Bristow followed suit.

‘—There’s a chance they’ll be back on the job in the next twenty-four to thirty-six hours.’

Bristow shook his head and waited for Freeman to make eye contact with him, ‘—they got the pay-rise they’ve been vying for, for the last few years, right?’ he said.

Freeman took his eyes away from the table and stared out the window. He eventually shrugged.

‘And then some,’ he found the energy to give the rest of us a fleeting smile, ‘—five percent on top of what they’d been fighting for.’

Bristow let out a whistle, and Freeman nodded as if in agreement.

‘They know the city is on its knees. And they have taken full advantage,’ he said.

Cheeky bastards, I thought.

The goings-on which started with Alexandra’s death have shown us all what happens when the train network goes south. But even with the trains potentially back in action soon, half the network, along many of the key stations, were still out of action.

We need to bring this to an end, I knew. I glanced over to Thatcher and watched him keep his eyes closed for just a few moments longer than normal.

I was about to nudge him, but Windebank cleared his

throat. Thatcher's eyes opened with a start. That'll do the trick.

'All of you, home, *now*. Get some sleep. I'll see you back here at eight o'clock.'

I glanced at my watch. Eleven pm. I'd survived on less.



MEGEVAND AND THATCHER had been sitting at their desks for just under five minutes when Windebank burst out of his office.

‘He’s awake,’ he said.

Megevand and Thatcher’s eyes locked on to each other. Finally. One piece of good news.

‘Can we—’ Megevand’s question was cut off by Windebank.

‘—You two need some fresh air. See if you can find anything out from him and then get over to Bank and Monument. I’ll see you there. We need to ramp this sodding thing up a notch,’ Windebank said with a sliver of impatience.

Megevand was already on his feet, reaching for his jacket. Thatcher, slightly sluggish from a restless night’s sleep, was by no means hot on his heels.



‘God, are we glad to see you with your eyes *open*.’ Megevand stood to one side of Kitcher’s bed, Thatcher on the other.

‘How are you feeling?’ Thatcher asked. Kitcher shook his head, grinning faintly.

‘—Like I’ve been hit by a fucking train, lads.’ It was his

tone that had Megevand and Thatcher smiling, then breaking into laughter. When the laughter died down, Kitcher frowned.

‘Fuck—,’ he whispered, a shadow passing over his face, ‘I’ve seen some weird shit in my time, but this takes the cake. Nothing will ever come close to what happened at Moorgate.’

Megevand and Thatcher agreed, though weren’t sure what to say. Kitcher sat forward and motioned to Megevand to grab the seat nearby.

‘Thatcher, find another seat and then let me tell you both some things you’ll never forget.’



Thatcher sat awkwardly on the flimsy plastic chair found out in the hall. How the hell it took his weight had to be one of modern man’s greatest mysteries. Megevand sat on the other, sturdier chair, which had been in Kitcher’s room. He wondered if he should offer to swap the chair with his oversized partner.

‘For fuck’s sake shithouse,’ Megevand stood up and grinned at his partner, ‘get over here and take this seat. I can hear the plastic groaning from here.’

Thatcher did not have to be told twice. When the two men had settled into their new seating arrangements, Kitcher took a drink of water and sat up straighter.

‘You two have open minds, right?’ he said, looking over to Megevand, and then Thatcher.

‘I am the Doctor fucking Who of London’s police force,’ Megevand said with a faint smile.

‘And I am the Tardis,’ Thatcher added.

‘You are about the same size in width and height,’

Kitcher said to Thatcher before glancing over to Megevand for assurance.

Megevand nodded, carefully watching the man in the hospital bed. He knew Kitcher was hesitant, but he also knew they were expected at the Bank and Monument Complex soon.

‘He was inside me,’ Kitcher just came out and said it.

Megevand and Thatcher looked at each other before staring back at Kitcher. He, in turn was watching them.

‘What do you mean?’ Thatcher responded.

‘Motorman Newson,’ Kitcher closed his eyes as if the statement was giving him physical pain. Megevand had no doubt. He was pretty sure he knew what Kitcher was referring to.

‘His spirit,’ Megevand said. Rhetorical question. Kitcher nodded weakly.

‘I know how that feels, my friend,’ Megevand whispered, even though the door to Kitcher’s room was shut.

‘You do?’ Kitcher responded, his face showing signs of hope.

‘More than once,’ Megevand said.

Kitcher stared at his hands for a moment and then looked at his two guests. ‘Newson never forgave himself for what happened, *especially* in death. He wishes he’d had his time over. The passengers, the ones who were killed, like Newson, were trapped in some sort of halfway point between life and death, down in the tunnels of the Tube. Their spirits have tormented him every single day since the accident.’

Megevand sat back and looked over at Thatcher, wondering what his partner was thinking.

‘Alexandra,’ at the mention of her name Megevand

stiffened in his seat, Kitcher staring at the detective before he continued, '—there's something about her, down there.'

Megevand sat forward, 'what do you mean?' he asked.

Kitcher stared off into space before taking a deep breath. 'Newson knew of her. When his thoughts were in my head, *I saw her*. It's as if anyone who died in the Tube knows her now. Newson's spirit thinks she can set him, and all the rest of them, free. He's so desperate to go to wherever they are supposed to go.

I've never really believed in heaven. I think they all believe Alexandra will take them there once she can free herself from whatever has their spirits all trapped in the Tube. Never in my life would I think I'd be sitting here talking about this sort of thing,' he said, a faint smile creasing the corners of his mouth.

'Ghosts. Spirits. Ones that can do these types of things. Seriously—,' he looked straight at Thatcher, '—you think I'm fucking nuts, right?'

Thatcher glanced over to Megevand but the expression on his face revealed nothing. When he looked back at Kitcher, he grinned.

'—The average geezer on the street will think you're stark raving bonkers. Surely, some writer will make this into an international best seller one day,' he sat forward watching Kitcher closely.

'—but I'm not one of those people, Kitcher. So yes, most would call you a sandwich short of a picnic, for sure. Not me though. I believe you,' Thatcher said.

Megevand watched the two men talking. To be honest, he felt Thatcher had said the right things to Kitcher. He recalled the early days of the case six years ago. He lost sleep over what other people would think of him if he'd told them

what he had seen with his own eyes. He was certain they would have called him a lunatic.

‘How long do you think you’ll be in here for?’ Megevand eventually asked.

‘All going well, I’ll be leaving late today. If not, by tomorrow,’ Kitcher said.

Thatcher looked over to Megevand, and he knew what that look meant. It was time to head off. Megevand rose from his seat and Thatcher followed suit.

‘We look forward to you returning to the fold,’ Thatcher said.

Megevand said his goodbyes but when he got to the door, he turned back.

‘After what you’ve been through, do you have any idea what happened with train two-seventy-two at Moorgate back in 1975?’

Kitcher regarded Megevand for a moment, lost deep in thought. After a few seconds, he nodded in the affirmative. ‘When all this is over, ask me that question again,’ he said.



I PULLED THE car up out the front of the entrance to Bank Underground Station. I still had no idea where the best place to park was. It didn't matter, really. We set the police sign on the dashboard; any parking officer who came across our car would curse us for not being able to issue a parking infringement.

We eventually found our way down the best pedestrian tunnel leading us through to the Control Room of the Bank and Monument Complex. Seriously, it felt as if we'd walked a mile. We probably had.

'Glad you could join us,' Windebank said. I couldn't read his face to figure out if the comment was genuine or not, and then it hit me; how dog tired the boss looked. It was obvious, the case was chipping away at all of us.

Sergeant Bristow sat chatting with three other uniformed British Transport Policemen. All four men watched me, Thatcher and Windebank without making it too obvious.

Bristow sat forward and flicked his head in the direction of the other three BTP officers.

'Detective Inspector Megevand and Sergeant Thatcher, meet a couple of my colleagues. Gentlemen,' Bristow nodded in the direction of one of them, 'this is Sergeant Cook.' The

sergeant, clearly the oldest and most enthusiastic of the three, sprang to his feet so he could shake our hands.

Once he'd done this and sat back down, Bristow continued.

'And this here is Constable Taylor,' Bristow looked to the second of the three men staring at us.

Constable Taylor rose to his feet and reached for my hand, then Thatcher's. I could see him wince slightly as he shook the big guy's hand. Most people did.

'And the third here is Constable Fletcher,' Bristow said.

This one stared at Thatcher just that little bit too long, and with what I was sure was an annoyed look on his face. I couldn't understand why. Solidly built sure, with broad shoulders, but Thatcher still outweighed and would put this guy straight on his arse if need be. The BTP officer then looked over to me. It was obvious to us all; he took his sweet time rising from his chair. What the fuck was this guy's deal?

'Frederick,' he took my hand and when he gripped it tightly, I wondered what side of the fucking bed this twat got out of this morning. Obviously, the side where he slipped into his *dickhead* shoes.

When the man let go of my hand, I kept my eyes on his. I didn't like this one. He ignored my vibe and turned to Thatcher and smiled thinly.

'You the one they call shithouse?' he asked, no offer of a handshake forthcoming.

The air in the room suddenly charged with an energy I was all too familiar with. It normally preceded violence. Bristow must have felt it too. He rose to his feet in silence. I could see he was about to say something, but Thatcher put a stop to it with a tone I knew meant business.

'You don't know me well enough to call me that, Constable Freder-*dick* Fletcher.'

His body wouldn't grow to the size of the Hulk's. He was already that big.

'Sit *down* Fletcher,' it was the first time I'd ever heard Bristow speak in such a tone. Cold. Hard. I wondered if Bristow was going to clobber the tosser himself.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see Windebank watching all the goings on. I could tell he was about to make his feelings known but held back. Normally, he would have put an end to this sort of shit in a heartbeat. Christ, he must have been tired. And he knew Thatcher had it all in check.

Once "*Frederdick*," (as Thatcher and I would now call the dipstick in private) went back to his chair and sat down, Bristow stepped closer to me.

'How is he?' Bristow whispered.

I nodded, putting on a positive face, 'he's a bit shaken up. But all in all, physically, I think he's going to be alright. He told me he'll go home tonight, or tomorrow.'

'What a relief,' Bristow said, managing a smile.

'Let's get down to business,' Windebank said.



Tensions ran high throughout the complex. With trains running again (although on a public holiday timetable for now), the Bank and Monument Complex was steady with people getting on with their day. Many of them looked wary. I could see it in their eyes.

They seemed as if they were all waiting for the next thing to happen. Something to jump out and scare the shit out of them. Most of the passengers shuffled around Thatcher and me. Heads down hurrying to get out of the place as quickly as possible.

The British Transport Police, aside from that imbecile

Frederick whom we met in the control room earlier in the day, were doing their best to get on with it under these trying circumstances. All were instructed to keep a very keen eye out for any of Bank and Monument four suspects during their patrols.

With Heather Brookes still unaccounted for, everyone was on the lookout for her as well. A team of plain clothes policemen were also working their way throughout the complex. They would sleep well tonight. There was a hell of a lot of ground to cover.

I watched many of them walking from one platform to the other, unobtrusively blending in with the public. In addition to this team, there were at least two dozen undercover officers, male and female, travelling around the Tube at large, watching out for any of the suspects and anything out of the norm. Windebank reminded us all, that all too often, perpetrators of any number of crimes will continue about their business, as if nothing had happened.

Same routes from home to work and vice-versa. But I knew, as Windebank had also said, that more often than not, their flippant behaviour was more about their ego. They were daring themselves. Right under our noses, they continued to go about their lives with a complacent attitude, believing that they'd gotten away with it.

When Windebank was about to leave the control room earlier, I'd mentioned to him that by days end, I'd try and locate Alexandra. I no longer had to infer that I meant her 'spirit,' to him. He was long over caring about semantics.

'—Do what you've got to do Megevand,' he had said to me, adding, 'we need to end this. Tell her if there is any way she could help, I'd personally appreciate it.'



‘YOU GOOD OLD boy?’ I whispered to Thatcher. I’d watched him rubbing his left knee, even though he’d tried to do it surreptitiously. We’d been walking down the passageway to the Northern Line Platform. It was a long way. My destination would be the dead-end maintenance tunnel where Alexandra’s body was found.

‘Bloody Rugby eh,’ he nodded indicating he was okay but then added, ‘who’s sodding idea was it to play it back then anyway, huh?’

It was getting on in the day. Last time I’d checked my watch it was nudging five o’clock. We’d been here all day. My knees were feeling it too. When we eventually arrived at platform nine, there were only three solitary passengers waiting for the next train. All stood on their own. I could feel the cool breeze coming from the train tunnels at each end.

The place still had an overhang of unease. It was as if the air was charged with something — a bit off. I could not shake that gnawing sensation of fear deep inside. I pushed it down and focused on the task at hand.

Dim light pierced the darkness. A train was approaching. As the accompanying breeze from the impending train increased, the exposed areas of my skin bristled with a mix of nerves and uncertainty.

As the train pulled into the station before slowing to a stop, the three lone passengers were already standing eagerly, at three separate doors to carriages. The doors had barely opened, and the passengers wasted no time getting the hell off platform nine.

I noted with surprise that no passengers disembarked from the train. It was the Bank and Monument Complex after all. No doubt the only people who were traversing the two interconnected stations were the ones who could not avoid doing so.

As the train began moving forward, Thatcher stared at me for a time. He was obviously weighing up his options. He looked around the empty platform and then back to me.

‘Walking back up through those pedestrian tunnels alone?’ He shook his head as if this was the answer. ‘No thanks.’

‘Alright then, I hope to be quick. Why don’t you—’ I nodded up ahead to the last bench seat, located ten feet from the end of the platform, and the door I was about to enter ‘—put your feet up and for God’s sake, don’t get into any trouble.’

Thatcher nodded. But I could see that look in his eyes. It was one I reckoned I’d only seen once or twice since I’d first met James Thatcher. He was secretly shitting his pants.



When Megevand closed the door, leaving his partner alone, Thatcher sat down and hoped Megevand would be quick. The man may have been built like the proverbial outdoor toilet, but that didn’t mean all this ghost and paranormal stuff hadn’t gotten under his skin.

And he was tired. Thatcher sat back, crossing his arms

over his chest. He completed the relaxed position by crossing his left leg over his right. Not too bad. Comfortable enough, the big man decided. In hindsight, he knew what he was about to do was a bad idea, but he did it anyway.

He closed his eyes.

They'd barely been closed, when his skin felt the sudden change of air to his right. Thatcher's eyes flew open and caught his breath in his throat. There was nothing in front of him. False alarm. Phew. His eyelids were barely shut the second time, when the voice he heard was so faint he wondered if he were imagining it.

'Mister?'

Thatcher swore to himself that he thought his heart was going to shoot out of his mouth like a cannonball being shot out of a cannon.

He turned to his right. Standing one foot away was a young boy. When Thatcher saw that the lad was carrying a bundle of newspapers, his impending heart-attack was averted.

'Would you like a newspaper mister?' the boy said.

Thatcher realised he had no change on him. Cursing himself, the young boy must have realised Thatcher's predicament. 'I've seen you around here,' the friendly boy said to the sergeant.

'—I'll give you a paper, you can pay me back next time I see you.'

Thatcher thought the offer was generous, and he felt obliged not to offend him.

'Thank you, laddy,' he said, accidentally putting on his Scottish accent although not meaning to. It just happened. The boy gave Thatcher a slightly amused look before handing over the paper.

Thatcher rested the paper next to him and watched the young kid walk off towards the pedestrian tunnel. He could not help but wonder if having a little kip down here was a good idea. He closed his eyes once more but told himself, under no circumstances, would falling asleep on this platform be a good idea.



I made my way through the darkened tunnel and wondered how Thatcher was holding up back out on the platform. I knew he would have preferred to be anywhere else.

This place was getting to us all. When this was over, I knew it would be a long time before I willingly entered London's Underground. As I brought my mind back to the present, I could feel the temperature of the air grow cooler as I rounded each corner. The smell down here was still rank. Arriving at my final destination, the flashlight shone on the last corner.

My chest tightened as the anxiety increased. The temperature in the tunnel had dropped so much in the last few feet that I could see my shortened breaths. Something didn't feel right.

I began to regret coming to Alexandra's tunnel. Nothing had happened so far, yet a feeling of dread closing in on me gave rise to a sudden surge of panic. Every step I took, the sound of my pounding heart echoed in my ears. I stopped and gathered my thoughts.

I decided it had to be my tired, frazzled brain playing tricks on me. 'Move, Megevand,' I whispered to myself.

I stepped around the corner. There was a fog-like mist in the air. And there she stood, her back to me. Strange, she'd

not done this before. I took a step forward. When I did, I found myself drawn to her hair. It was way, way shorter now.

‘Oh fuck,’ I muttered. The realisation hit me like a blow to the head with a sledgehammer. It wasn’t Alexandra’s ghost, standing there.

It was Richard Bailey.



'THIS IS SIMON,' he said, answering his phone in the confident, cocky way the business executive always did.

Silence.

'Yes?' he hissed, annoyed. He held the handset away from his ear, as if looking at it would tell him who was calling him. Naturally, it did not.

'S-Sime,' the meek voice mumbled.

'Who *is* this?' Simon said through gritted teeth.

'Simon, it's Ollie,' the man eventually said.

The tall, broad-shouldered business executive sat back in his chair as an arctic-like chill seeped into his bones. He took a long, controlled deep breath, through his nose. This normally calmed his nerves.

With his handset still against his ear, he studied his work colleagues through the glass walls of his office. Especially his personal assistant, whom he'd wanted to fuck the minute she had shown up for the initial job interview. His composure returned. It wouldn't last.

'What do *you* want, Oliver?' he said, endeavouring to sound relaxed, despite the butterflies beating their wings hard against the wall of his stomach. He had not spoken to this git for a long, long time, even after bumping into him recently on the way to work one morning.

Simon waved off his delectable looking P.A., who had just arrived at his office door, looking to enter. The look on his face coupled with the flick of his hand signalled he didn't want her to enter.

'We need to talk,' Oliver said, his voice shaky.

Simon was in no mood to speak to him. He'd endured a busy day, and the rest of the week was backed up. Much to his annoyance, the weekend coming up was booked out solid.

He was going to the Cotswolds with his wife. Simon *hated* the fucking Cotswolds, but his wife had insisted.

'I'm flat-out at work right now, and for the rest of the week. I'm away for the weekend too. Don't know when I'll be able to do this, Oliver. Maybe I'll check in with you later, sometime,' Simon said.

When the other man didn't respond, Simon was about to hang up, knowing the sooner he ended this call, the sooner his heart rate would return to normal.

He touched the knot of his tie and then ran his hand down to where the tiepin was positioned. He cursed himself every time he touched it. He loathed to think where the other one was. He knew the day he'd lost it.

'A cop was watching me at the pub!' Oliver said, barking the words into the phone.

Simon froze. He was thankful no one else was in his office right now. He sat there with the phone to his ear. Anyone outside would think he'd turned to stone. But after a moment, his big, over inflated ego snapped into action.

'What the *fuck* do you want me to do about it, Oliver?' Simon hissed.

He heard the dipshit on the other end of the phone

mumble something. He was getting annoyed with this call. But he couldn't ignore the feeling deep in his gut.

'Mate, if you're getting paranoid get the fuck out of London. Don't call me again, right?' But without a moment's hesitation Oliver snapped back, his response surprising the *big* man sitting in his *big* office behind his *big* desk.

'You started this!' Oliver barked.

And? he responded. Simon followed his response with a bitter laugh and instantly regretted it when Oliver responded.

'—And I will end it,' Oliver said, before the line went dead.



'I'VE BEEN WAITING for you, you fucking pig,' Bailey's words cut through the foggy darkness. Megevand stumbled backwards and found the wall.

'You always had a foul mouth, *Bailey*,' Megevand had no idea where this response came from, albeit it being one hundred percent accurate. Megevand, in that second, knew what he had to do. Get out of there. Without another word, the detective made a run for it.

He found the second corner — with his face. He smacked into it hard enough to disorient himself momentarily. He stumbled forward and kept moving.

'Little piggy knows how to run,' Bailey's voice was chilling, yet annoying at the same time.

Megevand knew Bailey was coming after him.

The detective ran. He side-swiped the tunnel wall hard and felt the subsequent pain explode in his left shoulder. He almost tripped over something but had a flash of clarity. Megevand reached out with his right hand and knew that if he ran with his hand against the wall, he'd make it back to the doorway safely.

'You have no idea how much I am going to fuck you and your friends over, Detective,' Bailey's voice sounded as if he

was only a foot behind him. Megevand ignored the threat and tried to focus on getting back to the platform.

Once there, Thatcher would back him up and then he could deal with this evil turd of a dead man. He wasn't sure how, but that was his plan.

'West, keep up, we've got farcking work to do you little shit,' Bailey said.

'I'm right behind you,' West's annoyed voice did nothing but further Megevand's panic.

The detective smacked his hand running along the wall against a pipe. The pain shot up his arm, and he winced, gnashing his teeth as it reached his shoulder. But he kept moving. Somehow, as if it were divine intervention, he saw the smallest slit of a light ahead and knew it was the access door to the platform. He was nearly there. He ran for it at full speed.

'Shithouse!' he shouted at the top of his voice, seconds before he crashed through the door and fell flat on his face on the platform.

When Megevand rolled over and stumbled backwards his head snapped to the left. Thatcher sat on the bench with a paper wedged under his crossed arms. It only took Megevand a second to discover his partner was asleep.

'Fuck!' he said.

The access door to the dead-end tunnel flew open and smashed against the wall with such force, Megevand was amazed it didn't fall off its hinges. The air that burst out of the tunnel was so putrid, Megevand nearly gagged. The force of the wind was so strong it pushed him back along the platform nearly fifteen feet on his backside.

Thatcher's eyes suddenly shot open. Clearly dazed, he sat there for a moment as if he was in a trance. He was bug eyed,

just staring ahead. As if someone had snapped their fingers, his head shot to the left where he met Megevand's panicked eyes.

'What the—' he muttered.

'Run!' Megevand shouted.

When the detective stumbled to his feet, it dawned on him that Bailey was standing in the doorway staring at Thatcher with nothing but murder in his eyes.

Thatcher turned, and when he saw Bailey, with West standing next to him, he jumped to his feet. In slow motion he turned in the direction of Megevand and then made a run for it. By now, Megevand was a clear twenty feet ahead of him. The detective took a quick look behind him, relieved that his partner was at least moving.

But when he saw that Bailey and West were taking their time walking out of the access tunnel, something told him this was a bad sign. And it was at this point he had another thought.

Can't ghosts just fly? What the hell are they waiting for? But as quickly as the weird thought had come and gone, the detective's blood ran cold. Behind Bailey, then West, were at least ten more men.

Surely more ghosts, Megevand thought. Had to be. They all looked like hardened, pissed off criminals, just like Bailey and West.

'These two men need to experience the feeling of death gents!' Bailey's casual comment to his crew sent a deep wave of panic through Megevand. Weeks earlier, the spirits of Bailey and West had somehow managed to murder innocent people at Clapham Station.

The thought had Megevand fearing that Bailey's words could come true.

‘Come on!’ Megevand shouted to Thatcher. He was way closer to Bailey, West, and the other dead bastards. Megevand suddenly felt the rush of air.

Oh no, another train was coming into the station and would arrive at their platform.

Shit. Shit. Shit.



THIS WAS ALL happening too damn quickly, I thought. The train approaching was literally seconds away from arriving. The timing could not have been worse. Thatcher was not going to make it to the end of the platform ahead of the train, where I was waiting for him.

The entrance to the pedestrian tunnel was to my left. This would be where we would run like hell. That was the hastily devised plan. Piss weak, really. Bailey surely had read my mind, for he broke into a fit of laughter.

'Farcking big pig is a bit out of breath lads!' he said, but not one second later, his head flicked in the direction of the train tunnel.

'So, let's give him a hand so he doesn't need to worry about farcking breathing anymore huh!'

A heightened sense of panic came over me. Thatcher was running, but the train was going much faster, even with it slowing to pull into the station and stop parallel with the platform.

Then things turned to shit. The lights all around the station began to pulse, and three seconds later went out. This thing with the lighting was starting to give me the fucking shits.

But unlike the other times, the emergency lights came on immediately.

It hardly helped. The platform was now bathed in a low, moody light. I could barely see a thing. 'Thatcher!' I shouted, hold—'

In the darkness, all I saw was a blur. It was as if Bailey, West, and the other bastards had congealed into this huge, black mass of evil.

The mass had so quickly engulfed Thatcher, I barely had time to register what the hell was going on.

'Meg! —' was all I heard Thatcher shout in a voice I'd never heard before. It was high pitched. It was panicked. It was as if he knew he was seconds away from—

The black mass abruptly moved sideways. I could just make out Thatcher's legs and one arm.

The mass then stopped right on the edge of the platform. I wondered, naively, if they were just messing with him. Wishful bloody thinking. The black mass stopped its movement, but Thatcher's body did not.

'NO!' I screamed.

As his body flew through the air, I swore I saw a puff of what I could only describe as thin, white smoke explode to his right. I was surely losing my mind. All this bloody smoke. I lost my footing and stumbled to the ground.

The train's brakes locked up. The screech of metal reverberated through my teeth like long nails running down a blackboard. The train eventually stopped. I collapsed. My left shoulder ached. I felt as if my soul had just been ripped out of my body. My bottom lip quivered. I was fighting an overwhelming deluge of emotions.

Thatcher.

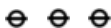
The best partner I'd ever had. The best friend I'd ever

had. I looked over to the train. The train driver burst out the door, his arms flapping around in panic and shock.

‘I tried to stop!’ he shouted.

The driver and I stared at each other. I had no idea what to say. A sound made us both turn and stare back towards the other end of the platform. The mass of arsehole spirits had returned to their original form. They all stood there staring at us. Bailey and West stood in front.

‘One down, one to go,’ Bailey said.



I told the driver to get back in the cabin and lock the door. Judging by his panicked expression, he did not have to be told twice. I stumbled to my feet. I felt weak. Spent. Ready to give up. I struggled to get air into my lungs. The fight in me was no more. I was resigned to it. Death.

I knew, one day, it would come for me. It's one of life's few guarantees. I just didn't think it would be so soon. I guess most people had the same thought, just before it happened.

‘You have no idea how much I am going to farcking enjoy watching you cross over, you bloody prick,’ Bailey hissed. The other men laughed as if it were the funniest thing they'd ever heard. I had no comeback. Okay, maybe one.

‘It's “*farcking*,” you dead dickhead. Not “*far-king*.” Get your swear words right, you dumb shit.’ That felt good.

‘Pigs got a sense of “*far-king*” humour lads!’ Bailey roared, laughing his dead head off.

I sat there and stared at the mob. For a second, I wondered if I had any gas left in the tank to make another run for it. I took a deep breath, and decided, probably not. My legs ached. It was a long way to the control room. Even further to get back to street level.

‘West, get in that *farking* train and reverse it back a bit. We will watch this one die just like his big teddy bear turd of a partner did,’ Bailey said.

West and two other men from the mob moved towards the train. I had to blink twice. The three spirits looked as real as I did. This shit was seriously messing with my brain. The doors on the train weren’t even open, but it didn’t matter. They just passed right through them.

A moment later, I heard the train driver’s panicked voice followed by a muffled scream. The poor bastard was going to have a day he’d remember for some time to come. Without any forewarning, the train began to reverse. I couldn’t believe what I was seeing.

When the train reached the point of where Bailey was standing, he shook his head and laughed once more.

‘Finally, that little turd of a dead shit West has redeemed himself!’ he said to his other dead friends.

Bailey then turned his attention back to me, his hawk-like eyes and antagonistic scowl sending shivers down my spine. I’ve seen the meanest men in the world snarl, but this one was in a league of his own.

‘I’m going to savour every *FAR-KING* moment of this,’ he shouted. It was obvious he really wanted to make a point about that word to me.

Bailey and the other men, in a flash, morphed instantly into the raging whirlwind of black, dense smoke again. I stifled a breath, and muttered to myself,

‘I will always love you, Yukiko.’

I watched in muted horror as the dense black whirlpool moved slowly towards me. I closed my eyes and had the strangest thought.

“Think of England.”



NEVER, IN ALL his life, had Megevand heard such a loud, high-pitched scream explode from nowhere. He felt it reverberate through every muscle in his body. He reached up and plastered his hands over his ears. Suddenly, the air around him burst to life with frenzied movement.

He wondered what on earth could be going on. When he saw the figure appear, standing between him and the mass of evil darkness of Bailey and his cohorts, he had to look twice. Then, another figure suddenly materialised alongside her.

And then another one. Within the span of five seconds, there were so many 'people' standing between Megevand and Bailey and his gang, the detective lost count. He rose unsteadily to his feet. Megevand realised who the first person to appear was.

The hat was the giveaway. Without any hint of what was about to come, she shot her stick up and pointed it at the mass of black evil. The second scream pierced the cold air, as loud and frightening as the first time.

The wind swirling around the station picked up to nearly hurricane force. Papers, rubbish, dust, decades of soot, all flew up and Megevand was momentarily blinded by the flying debris.

The group standing in front of the detective began to

move. He made the wise decision to crouch down and cover his ears and close his eyes. Above the ringing in his ears, Megevand was sure he heard Bailey's voice.

He was the only man who said the 'eff' word like that. It sounded as if the cocky dead gang leader was in a state of panic, cursing and shouting. Bailey sounded as if he were in some sort of pain. The mayhem continued. All he wanted to do was get to Thatcher.

Megevand pushed himself against the wall. It was getting crazy down here. The screams of the woman who'd stepped in front of Megevand went on. Other people were making all sorts of weird and disturbing sounds.

Megevand knew he was completely powerless to do a thing. Then, in a flash, the ferocious wind ceased. All the rubbish, dirt, soot, dropped to the ground. Megevand opened his eyes.

Standing with her back to him, was the old lady, head to toe in black. She was alone. The dozens of other spirits who had come to her aid had disappeared.

The Black Nun. The ghost who had been causing havoc in the depths of Bank Station for over a century.

Bailey, West, and the others stood there, defiantly staring at her. But a second later, they too simply vanished before the detective's eyes. Megevand sighed with relief.

'Don't you ever set foot in this station EVER again,' the Black Nun shouted down the platform before she let out another deafening howl.

Megevand winced. It was damn well near impossible not to. The Black Nun turned around to face the detective. She stared at him. The scowl on her face evaporated any hope Megevand had that she was happier now the evil spirits of Bailey, West and cohorts had gone.

Megevand glanced to his right after hearing a muffled sound. The train sat idle halfway down the platform. In the corner of his eye, he thought he saw movement.

When Megevand glanced back to the Black Nun, her eyes were still fixed on him. He stiffened and waited. For what, he didn't know. Ever so slowly, she turned her head in the direction of where Thatcher had met his fate.

When the head of the spirit of the painter and decorator appeared from below the edge of the platform, Megevand's first thought was quite ironic. He couldn't believe how clean he was.

As if this was the most important thing to notice.

'Well?' The Black Nun asked him, sounding impatient and annoyed.

Richard Head looked straight at her, ignoring Megevand. It was as if the detective wasn't even there.

'Yes,' he said.

She turned back to Megevand and stepped towards him. He wished he could move back a few feet, but he was up against the wall. When she stepped closer again, Megevand couldn't help but stare at her awful, scary face. Especially her big mouth. Yellow teeth. The absence of lips.

'*Alexandra* told me you are here to help her,' she hissed.

Megevand went to respond, but she spoke over him.

'—That is *WHY*!' she screamed.

Without another word spoken, the Black Nun vanished right before his eyes. Megevand felt as if he'd been slapped in the chops by an angry, one-hundred-and-fifty-year-old, pissed-off old bag with an ugly face.

Megevand glanced over to see Richard 'the' Head, the spirit of the painter and decorator, staring at him. A friendly

smile lit up his face, before he promptly looked downwards at something near his feet.

‘I used to be a champion wrestler in my day,’ he said.

Megevand had no idea what this meant. He awkwardly rose to his feet, reluctantly stepping towards the edge of the platform. It would be the hardest, most painful ten steps Megevand had ever taken. He didn’t want to see what waited for him on the train tracks.

Thatcher.

Richard the Head stood there staring at Megevand as the detective drew closer to the edge.

With every agonising step taken, an increasing sense of dread swept over him. Then, without warning, his stomach lurched and that all too familiar feeling of nausea surfaced.

He peeked over the edge.

What the hell? he said out loud.

As he looked down at Thatcher, Richard ‘the’ Head’s words came back to him in an instant. The vision of the whirl of white seconds before the train came upon his partner. Megevand felt tears of joy.

Richard the Head continued to stare deep into Megevand’s eyes. The painter and decorator crouched down and lightly patted Thatcher’s head, stroking his hair as if the big man was a poodle.

Thatcher’s body twitched. Megevand wondered if he was dreaming.

Thatcher’s head moved. When his eyes opened, he grinned up at the detective.

‘What did I miss?’ Thatcher muttered.



THE GOTT TASK force interviewed all members of staff at the Waterlow Pub in Highgate. With the detailed description of the suspect in hand, the task force was hopeful that one of the workers at the pub knew him. Regrettably, none did. But, when the officers were interviewing the last worker on the list, the woman offered a glimmer of hope.

When Windebank told me that the young girl had advised the interviewing officers they should talk to a man she simply knew as 'Doogs,' I asked him what we were waiting for.

"Nicholas Doogood" is, as we speak, backpacking through Bali,' Windebank responded.

I could see the annoyance in Windebank's frown. 'He worked at the pub up until how long ago?' I asked.

Windebank studied a document on his desk, 'finished up two weeks ago. The young girl said he'd worked nights and weekends, mostly. He was at university, studying something she can't recall.'

'Family?' I asked.

Windebank nodded. 'Already located. Very cooperative. They corroborated everything in the girl from the pub's statement. His mother said he's not one to keep in regular touch.

Likes to get off the beaten track when he travels. Fucking annoying Megs, if you ask me!’ Windebank groaned.

‘How can you not call in and speak to Ma every Sunday night, huh? What’s wrong with this generation?’ I added, shrugging before asking the most bleedingly-obvious question.

‘—So how the hell do we find him?’

Windebank shook his head, ignoring my stupid question.

‘The mother will contact us the second she hears from him. She knows how important it is. Hell, I’ll even send two of you to interview him in person if I must,’ he said.

I sat back and hoped ‘Doogs,’ would call his mother soon. Windebank stared out the window before turning back to me. He leant closer across the desk.

‘How’s he holding up?’ Windebank asked in a hushed tone.

I turned and stole a glance out onto the main floor of our open office. Thatcher sat at his desk with his head down. Paperwork, files strewn all over his desk. I saw the newspaper he’d been given just before the shit hit the fan. I was surprised he still had it. I watched him for a moment.

A near-death experience affects us all in different ways. I’ve been where Thatcher is right now. Trying to deal with it. The shock. Being so close to death, you can almost touch it. Feel it. Smell it. Some, never recover. Fortunately for me, I did, but it took a lot of work to get over it. I pray to God Thatcher does. I need my partner back. He didn’t notice both of us watching him.

‘You know nothing ever shakes shithouse up, right?’ I said, without turning back to Windebank.

‘That’s what I believe, yes,’ Windebank said eventually.

I turned back to the boss. I could see that look in his eyes. He was worried about him as much as I was.

‘It has now,’ I said.



TIFFANY THOMAS LOVED her English Crime shows. 'Midsomer Murders,' and 'Agatha Christie's Poirot,' ranked as her two favourites. The recently released 'Silent Witness,' had her undivided attention. Her obsession was trying to stay one step ahead of the police, and guessing who the culprit was way before they were revealed to the audience.

More often than not, she nailed it. Maybe in another life, she could have been a policewoman. She's certain she would have made a good one. When she'd agreed to have an impromptu morning tea with Wendy Wright after awkwardly bumping into her at their local supermarket a few weeks ago, she'd struggled to figure out what to do.

Her mind was in turmoil. Their respective husbands worked at the same accountancy firm in central London. The two women didn't know each other well, making this even more awkward.

Both women spoke protectively of their husbands during their morning tea.

But as the conversation progressed, they could both see a similar look in each other's eyes which was unmistakable.

Doubt.

Tiffany continued to watch her crime shows. She tried to focus on what she saw on the box. Not, on this other 'thing.'

But the fact that both hers and Wendy's husbands worked at the same firm was not the point. The location of their building to Bank Station was. Their stop.

How both men *'lost'* their jackets on the same day as the other. Coincidence?

The day the body of Alexandra Young, a seventeen-year-old hairdressing apprentice, was found in a disused corridor deep within the bowels of the Bank and Monument Complex?

Just another coincidence? Tiffany was in complete denial about the photos of the suspects. She honestly could not see any resemblance to her husband. She knew mentioning it to him would cause nothing but outrage. So, she didn't.

Tiffany's husband Simon was a womaniser. Tiffany was one hundred percent certain he'd been unfaithful. Tiffany suspected Simon was only hanging around because of her elderly father's estate. It was as big as a whale, financially speaking. When old Bertie passed Tiffany and her two sisters would be quite wealthy. Simon had already talked incessantly about the idea of an apartment on the coast in Spain, as the first thing they should do when the money comes.

She, in turn, had not pulled the plug on their marriage due to his infidelities because she was waiting for their daughter's seventeenth birthday. Based on her own experience, the long-fed-up wife believed this was the best age for her daughter to deal with the end of her parent's marriage.

But that was eighteen months away. Not that Tiffany was counting. When she bumped into Wendy that morning at the supermarket, she believed it was some sort of divine intervention. An idea had been playing on her mind for the last few days.

She knew asking Simon for Tony's home number would have her husband asking why she needed it. The two women

had agreed to not say a word to their husbands about their recent morning tea. When Tiffany hatched the idea to Wendy, she thought the idea had merit.

Wendy had mentioned to Tiffany on the phone that the last few weeks at home had been difficult. She said her husband had been acting strange and her own paranoia was starting to unravel. She was struggling to sleep. Especially next to a constantly testy, gnarly husband. Tiffany's idea would hopefully move things along and bring a resolution to their suspicions.



'You know I love this restaurant,' Simon said, a smile following, though Tiffany wondered if he was being sincere, or sarcastic. It didn't matter. Simon was already onto other things. Tiffany ignored her husband's lingering stare at the waitress who had just given them their menus and filled their glasses with water.

It was only when he continued to stare at her as she walked away, Tiffany cleared her throat.

Simon's eyes turned back to his wife, who was doing her best not to show her displeasure. He took a sip of water, and before he could put his glass down his attention was drawn to someone over Tiffany's left shoulder.

It came as no surprise, therefore, that her husband's roving eyes had shifted to a slender and very attractive woman walking past the table. In that split second, she was able to glance at her watch and stifle a short, shallow breath. It was time.

When she spotted Wendy entering the restaurant, she smiled at her acquaintance's punctuality. Literally right on the nose. She turned back to her husband and smiled, counting down the seconds.

‘Tiffany?’ Wendy beamed from a few feet away, ‘what a coincidence!’

Tiffany saw the reaction on Wendy’s husband’s face when he spotted the back of Simon’s head and wondered what this was all about. Talk about a deer in the headlights!

‘It’s been, like forever!’ Tiffany pushed the seat back and stood up, embracing Wendy as if she was a long-lost friend.

As she stepped back, Simon looked up and made eye contact with his co-worker. The two men looked clearly uncomfortable being in the same space as each other. Tony’s face flushed scarlet, while Simon’s forehead gleamed with perspiration that a second earlier, had been bone dry.

‘You here for dinner too?’ Tiffany said to Wendy. Wendy, bless her, nodded and without a moment’s hesitation (and as rehearsed) said, ‘why don’t we get a table for four!’

Both men showed signs of unease, one seated, the other standing. Simon lightly drummed two fingers on the table, while signalling his irritation to his wife with a look that had the ability to turn her to ice.

‘Thought we were having a romantic dinner, Tiff.’

‘We’ve had enough of those Simon, let’s socialise with your work friend and his lovely wife.’



The conversation eventually became easier after the second bottle of wine had been cracked open.

‘Coast of Spain huh?’ Wendy said to both Tiffany and Simon after Simon had spoken of ‘their’ plans to purchase an apartment there. Tiffany played along, knowing hell would freeze over before an apartment in Spain was ever purchased with her father’s money.

'It's Simon's dream to spend more time there, play golf and get a yearlong tan,' Tiffany smiled.

Simon's eyes toggled between Tony, and the young attractive waitress. He wondered if his wife would mind if he took the waitress to the apartment in Spain instead of her.

When he thought he spotted Tony's wife watching him out of the corner of his eye, he fixed his gaze back on Tony.

'Well maybe you two can be the first guests we have when we've found a place,' Simon said, taking a gulp of his wine. He was lying through his teeth of course. Tony had been subdued for most of the dinner. Even Simon could feel it. The two wives had made eye contact a few times sharing the very same thought.

'The sooner the better,' Tony said seconds after Simon had mentioned the apartment.

It was almost out of sync with the conversation. As if an afterthought. Tony was drunk but was still super-conscious of being out with his wife, his co-worker and his co-worker's loud-mouthed, shit-talking wife.

Tony wished a hole would open below the table and swallow him whole. A couple of patrons sitting nearby had been staring at him for a fraction too long. Or so his drunk mind told him. The alcohol was messing with his already overheated brain but all the same, being here with Simon was increasing the anxiety levels tenfold.

Simon had recently decided to get a crew cut. How bloody coincidental. It was his way of hoping not to be recognized as one of the men wanted for questioning over the alleged sexual assault and murder of the girl at the Bank and Monument Station Complex. For Tony, he didn't think it was enough.

He'd seen the photos in the papers. Most of the photos

albeit as grainy as hell, he could see who he believed was Simon and himself. To be honest, he was surprised they'd not been arrested already.

'Need a holiday do you mate?' Simon responded to Tony's delayed response and followed it with what he hoped sounded like genuine laughter.

Tiffany stared at her husband. She knew that laugh. She knew all his different laughs. This one was as put-on as his facade of being a faithful husband.

Tiffany waited a moment for Wendy to meet her eyes. The subsequent nod between the two women was subtle. The men didn't see it. Tiffany knew it was time. The whole reason for this set-up dinner. She took a deep breath and began.



'I think we could all use a holiday,' Tiffany announced, 'with our transport network being up shit creek in a barb-wire canoe.' Simon and Tony grunted so it was Wendy's turn to continue;

'When do you think this is all going to come to an end?' she asked the others. Tiffany shrugged.

'Rumours abound, I hear,' she said.

Wendy took the cue.

'What rumours, Tiffany?' she said.

Tiffany looked over to her husband and then to Tony. They both sat there watching her. She wondered what was going through their heads at that exact moment.

'I hear the police believe that it all started with the murder of the girl. All the ghost stuff. The disruption to the Tube.'

Tony scoffed. Tiffany and even Simon shot him a disparaging look.

'You believe in all the woo-woo ghost stories do you Tiff?' Tony muttered.

She could hear it in his voice. The slur. Good.

'And you don't?' she shot back.

Simon watched the interaction with growing concern. This evening had been a fucking disaster. There was no chance in hell he would have ever organised a dinner with Tony. He was doing everything he could to avoid him at work.

They agreed not to be seen in public together. Trips to the cafe were out. Traveling to work? No way. Too risky.

'Can't say I do Tiff,' he responded.

Simon was about to cut in and tell him to stop calling his wife Tiff. Only close friends had permission to do that.

'So, this is just all made up then?' Tiffany pushed on, making eye contact with Wendy, who sat there stone faced.

'—and I guess it all just simply began with the death of the apprentice hairdresser, that is nothing but a figment of half of London's imagination?' Tiffany pressed harder.

Tony clenched his jaw. It always happened when he'd had too much to drink. He was a light drinker. Two glasses of red wine and he was almost on his fucking ear. As usual, when a woman was verbally pushing him, his temper simmered under the surface, ready to be unleashed.

And it wasn't far off. He looked straight at Simon and wondered why the hell he hadn't put a stop to his wife's provocative questions. He felt like kicking the bastard under the table as his way of telling him to do something.

Instead, he gulped a mouthful of wine. In hindsight, it would be the pivotal moment in his life which he would later regret. He slammed his glass hard on the table, nearly spilling the remaining wine. Snatching his napkin, he dragged it

across his mouth, his eyes wide and menacing as he glared at Tiffany. The loathing was unmistakable.

‘An apprentice hairdresser, my bloody arse,’ he spat, a blotch of spittle landing on the white tablecloth in front of him.

‘—no apprentice goes to school without her kit of brushes and scissors.’

The atmosphere around the table instantly changed. Simon stared at Tony as if he’d just called his wife a cock-sucking whore.

If he could telepathically rip the bastard’s head off, he would be halfway through it by now. Farcically, he wondered if only he had heard what the moron had just said. And not the wives. Wendy and Tiffany looked at each other for a second. Tiffany suddenly pushed her seat back and stood up.

‘Need to powder my nose,’ she said.



Tiffany walked back towards the table. In a split second, it became clear what her husband had been doing in her absence. And the obvious fact he was sitting alone. Simon stared squarely at the young waitress, as if the young girl was the only person in the room.

For the first time, a thought hit her like a ton of bricks. The murdered girl had straight, thick black hair. She caught her breath. The waitress looked just like her. Her husband was staring at the young woman as if in a trance. She cleared her throat as she came up behind him.

‘The others have left?’ she said, struggling to keep herself in check.

Simon looked up at her. ‘Does it look like they’re no longer sitting at the bloody table, Tiff?’

She stared at him for a time, before pulling her chair out and sitting down. The young waitress approached their table and Tiffany quickly glanced at her husband. He was fidgeting in his seat, clearly uncomfortable.

‘Would you like to order dessert?’ she asked, her million-watt smile beaming at a transfixed Simon, and a pale faced Tiffany.

Tiffany shook her head, whilst her husband smiled at the girl before dismissing her politely with a simple ‘no thanks.’

‘No room left after the main course,’ he added, staring at her.

As Wendy reached down for her handbag, she could have sworn she heard her husband say under his breath, in between his last mouthful of wine.

‘—not unless I can order you for dessert,’ to the waitress.

Thankfully, the young girl didn’t hear him. Or she ignored him. One of the two. Tiffany rested her handbag on the table and turned to her husband. Enough was enough.

‘What the fuck did you just say?’ she hissed, leaning in close enough for him to feel her hot breath on his face. Simon watched the young waitress walking off towards the kitchen, ignoring his wife’s snarky question, reflecting on how big a disaster this night had turned into.

He thought back to Tony’s hasty exit. Only minutes earlier, whilst Tiffany was powdering her nose, Tony had abruptly sprung to his feet, announcing to Simon they weren’t interested in dessert, and were leaving.

Wendy didn’t even make eye contact with Simon nor say goodbye. Simon barely nodded before he watched them scurry off towards the front door. He hoped the fucker would square off their portion of the bill before he walked out. He’d find out soon enough.

Simon had sat there alone and relished the moment of peace, before a thought brought a grin to his face. His desire to spend more time in Spain needed to be moved forward.

Way forward.



FIVE DAYS HAD passed since Thatcher's near-death experience. I was still searching for Alexandra. I had returned twice to her corridor with Detective Kitcher, but she wasn't there. I would be lying if I didn't wonder whether she had crossed over to the other side, somehow.

But the shitstorm of paranormal events, blackouts, and constant breakdowns in the functioning parts of the Tube continued. Maybe it wasn't about her anymore. Maybe, it would all end when we apprehended the criminals after all.

Bailey, West and his gang of dead turds were spotted several times, scaring the Christ out of passengers still crazy enough to enter the Tube. Strangely, they had not orchestrated any deaths in the last five days. But I knew this couldn't be taken for granted.

Maybe the Black Nun had put the wind up them, so to speak. I doubted it. So much was still going on, and we were no closer to cracking the case. The one and only good piece of news today was we learned that early this morning, Mary Brookes had woken up.

She was responding well to the medical staff, Quentin said.

He didn't know how to broach the subject of Heather. It

would be the first question Mary would surely ask when she was able to properly communicate. Heather was still missing.

Thatcher had opted for a walk at lunchtime and said he'd grab a sandwich on the way back.

To my surprise, he said he'd do it alone. Clear his thoughts, he said. To be honest, I was a little worried about him.

But I was certain he could survive a lunch break on his own. Thatcher leaving me at the office ended up being a god-send. Bristow had timed his call perfectly. Five minutes after Thatcher walked out the door, my phone rang and Bristow gave me yet another thing to ponder.

The white board was seriously running out of available space.

'One thousand percent certain, Megevand,' was the last thing Bristow said before ending the call.

During a conversation with Bristow the day before, I had gone through every step of what had happened five days earlier at the complex. From the moment we'd first arrived on the platform, to when I'd discovered Richard the Head had, somehow, saved Thatcher's life.

But there was one point when I noticed Bristow's ears prick up. It was a part of Thatcher's account of what happened. Only when Bristow had called me just now did he tell me that there was something about what Thatcher had recounted that he found out of place.

He agreed in the grand scheme of things it wasn't important, but to Bristow, interesting.

I sat at my desk mulling over what Bristow had just called about. What did it mean? Probably nothing. Yet something clicked in my head a moment later.

Being the only one in the office, I rose to my feet and

peered at Thatcher's desk without the threat of anyone else wondering what I was doing. Files and paperwork littered his space. As my mind started to wander, there it sat on top.

I rewound my memory over the last few days. I'd been into the office every day this week.

I stared at something sitting on his desk, and moving in a little closer, a breeze brushed across my neck. I wondered if it were a sign. Thatcher, whether doing it on purpose, or by accident, made sure it sat on top of the files on his desk, all week.

Surely, just a coincidence. I took a step closer. I picked up the pile of paper and turned it around. It now faced me front on, right side up. When I unfolded it, I suddenly felt dizzy at the realisation of what I was looking at.

It was the newspaper.

The one Thatcher had told me the young boy had given him on the platform at the Station.

Bristow's words replayed in my mind, as I saw the date of the paper.

"One thousand percent certain, Megevand. There was no record of anyone going platform to platform selling newspapers that day. But here's the point. They don't do that anymore. And if you really want to be freaked out, a young boy died down there years ago, when they used to sell papers that way. Platform nine. The one you two were on five days ago." But I had told Bristow Thatcher had been physically handed a real paper, in the flesh. I was looking at it right now.

And that date in the top right-hand corner. Seventh day of March. 1969.

I needed a bloody drink. A stiff one.

When Thatcher came back from his lone-ranger lunch I made the executive decision to give him the rest of the day

off. He gave me an annoyed look until I told him that he'd been carrying around a twenty-seven-year-old newspaper which had been handed to him personally by the ghost of a dead paperboy who met his fate on the same platform years earlier.

I could see Thatcher's giant frame wobble as I told him, as if the axis of the man's core was struggling to remain upright. I told him I would call him later in the day to check on him. He grabbed his jacket and walked out of the office in silence.

I arrived at the Bank and Monument Complex Control Room one hour later and had called ahead to ask Bristow to meet me there. We walked over the road to a Cafe and sat in a quiet corner where we ordered some lunch.

After our plates were cleared, I pulled out the newspaper from a satchel and laid it in front of Bristow. Only when he saw the front cover properly, did his eyes widen.

'This is incredible, Megevand,' looking up to me, then said the first thing that had come to my mind an hour earlier.

'Why?' he muttered.

We sat back and stared at the twenty-seven-year-old newspaper. I turned the front page and felt in awe of the fact that the paper itself felt as if it had only been printed last week.

'Why did a ghost hand Thatcher this paper, is that what you are asking me?' I responded to Bristow. He nodded, staring out through the front windows before scratching his head.

'What's the significance of this date?' he said without looking at me or the paper.

'That's why I am here. I was hoping you could step into that vault of knowledge and tell me!' I said with a smile. Bristow grinned before turning back to me.

'Something,' he stared down at the front page before

shrugging, 'is scratching at a memory.' He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

'Trivia is my secret weapon,' he whispered still sitting there with his eyes closed.

'Seventh day of March,' he muttered.

I watched in slight fascination as the expression on his face changed, he was thinking, and hard.

'Don't bust a valve Bristow,' I said.

'I'm sure it will—'

'Ah Hah!' Bristow's eyes shot open. He looked over to me with a smile of the cat that had got the cream.

'Don't ever play against me at trivia night at the pub, my friend,' he beamed.

'Come on, let it out then,' I said.

'Wait one moment,' Bristow said, pushing the paper back over so it sat on the table in the middle of us both.

'Let's see if it's—,' he turned the front page, and then the second page.

'Bingo,' he said. He looked down at the open pages and nodded.

'This is the significance of that day, Megevand.'

He watched me as I scanned the third and fourth pages of the newspaper.

'Can't be a coincidence that it involves an Underground Tube Station,' he said quietly.

'Green Park Station,' I said, skimming over the article, which had a familiar face of someone well known in these parts, standing there with a familiar smile.

'Queen Elizabeth the second, opening the newly created Victoria Line,' Bristow said. I read through the article; it was obvious this event had been quite the spectacle. It was the

first time the Queen had ever 'driven' a train. Well, ridden in the driver's compartment, that is.

'This has to mean something,' I said. Bristow shrugged.

'Two questions for you then,' he said, carefully putting the pages back together and folding the paper.

'Shoot,' I responded.

'One, do you know the history of Green Park, which is located right next to the Tube Station?'

'What is the second question?' I asked.

'Visited the station there recently?' he said.

I shook my head.

'Well, then I'll give you the history lesson on the way,' but his face was pensive.

'You want to go there right now?' I asked, surprised.

Bristow grinned, picking up the newspaper and sliding it under his arm as if he was heading home to read it in front of the fire.

'Someone wants us to go to Green Park Station, Detective.' I could see a glimmer of humour in his eyes, but his face was serious.

I pushed my chair back and grabbed my jacket. As I fell in behind him to leave, I muttered, '—considering all we have been through of late, they could have simply just told us to go there.'

I saw a faint nod from Bristow.



MEGEVAND WAS GLAD he opted for a plain sandwich for lunch. Ham and cheese. The history lesson the British Transport Policeman undertook on route to Green Park Tube Station made the detective feel a bit unwell.

And he still wanted that stiff drink at knock-off. Now, more than ever. Green Park, situated next to the aptly named Green Park Underground Station, had a back story that was better off buried along with the bodies of hundreds of lepers found there, which originated from the nearby St James' hospital.

As Bristow had mentioned, Green Park was once a massive, swampy burial site for diseased Londoners, a stone's throw away from the Underground Station.

'What is it with our forefathers?' Megevand asked Bristow.

The sergeant looked askance, wondering what the detective was asking.

'What do you mean?' Bristow said. As was the case nowadays in central London, the roads were choked with traffic, the likes of which had never seen before.

'Burying the dead!' Megevand said.

The detective swerved around an imbecile on a bicycle who acted as if he were a car, riding smack bang in the

middle of the road. Bristow shrugged, as his way of answering Megevand's question.

'Good point mate,' he said, stealing a glance in the detective's direction before turning back to the windscreen.

'—back then, they obviously hadn't thought that far ahead. But fast forward to now and you'd agree. Wish they'd shipped all the burial pits out into the countryside, huh?'

Bristow followed his words with a nod to his left. Green Park Station was coming into view.

He took a deep breath, before turning to the detective.

'You know Green Park is up there, right?' Bristow said.

For a second, Megevand wondered what he meant, but it didn't take long to guess the inference. Just to make sure Megevand turned to Bristow.

'As in haunted, spook fest, like the complex?' he asked.

Megevand changed lanes while preparing to pull up near the entrance, ignoring the blare of the horn from the car behind.

'That and then some, my friend,' Bristow said, his tone void of humour.



The two policemen made their way into the Underground Station. The station itself was empty, save for a handful of people here and there. Bristow said it was normally as busy as Bank and Monument.

Megevand picked up on the familiar scent that seemed to follow him everywhere he went below ground. Death. Bristow shook his head and put his hand to his nose. 'Fucking hell,' he said under his breath, but walked on.

As they descended the long escalators to the subterranean area of the station, Megevand could feel the change.

‘Normally this warm down here?’ he asked Bristow.

Bristow took off his jacket and nodded.

‘Renowned for it,’ he said, adding, ‘they’ve tried to find ways to fix it over the years, but nothing seems to work. All year round too. You don’t want to be down here in July.’

Megevand removed his jacket and felt a bead of sweat run down the back of his neck.

‘I suppose it has nothing to do with the former swampy park sitting right next door?’ He said.

Bristow grinned.

‘You are quite intuitive, aren’t you, Detective?’ he said, wiping his forehead with the sleeve of his shirt he’d already rolled up one moment earlier.

‘Shouldn’t be, but that’s one of the myths that’s been bantered around for many, many years,’ Bristow said.

The two men reached the concourse. Megevand could see Bristow had taken him down to the Piccadilly Line platforms.

‘Three lines?’ he asked Bristow, who nodded.

‘Piccadilly here,’ he pointed to the sign up on the wall that split the East and Westbound platforms from each other.

‘Victoria and Jubilee lines making the second and third.’

Megevand looked around. He was still wondering what they were doing here, based on the mysterious newspaper handed to Thatcher. Bristow looked around before turning back to Megevand.

‘She doesn’t come close to the mighty Bank and Monument Complex,’ he smiled faintly, ‘but with three lines, it’s still a rabbit warren of tunnels.’

And then there’s this weird shit about the heat. It makes it all for a place that’s high on the spook factor.’

Megevand wiped the sweat from his forehead and could

sense the feeling deep in the pit of his stomach. It always meant only one thing. He couldn't wait to get the hell out of there.

'Haunted?' Megevand inquired.

Bristow stared at him for a moment, before that grin slid into place across his mouth.

'Thousands of dead lepers buried a few hundred feet that away,' he stuck his thumb out pointing to his right, 'what do you think Detective!' It was purely rhetorical.

'Kid ghosts selling newspapers?' Megevand shrugged before looking down the entrance to the west platform before turning his gaze back to Bristow. Bristow turned away and looked down the empty eastbound platform.

Turning back, he smiled at Megevand.

'I'd put a tenner on it Detective, what about you?' he said.

Megevand fanned his sweaty face with his hand. Christ, he was sick of the heat down here already. When this was all over, he'd catch a train to Scotland and bloody well cool off in the Highlands somewhere. He was tired of constantly sweating.

Megevand smiled, genuine in his admiration for the man, who deserved a pat on the back from time to time.

'But I'm still wondering why we are here,' Megevand added.



The two policemen literally walked through every pedestrian tunnel and platform at Green Park Station. They bumped into a couple of patrolling BTP officers who told them the weird stuff had increased tenfold. Especially at night.

They loathed being here after midnight, they said. All

the staff did. The howls heard deep in the station were off the charts between midnight and sunrise. Even well into peak hour. They said passenger numbers were way down, but some still persevered and put up with the heat and the spook show.

‘Seen a young boy carrying around newspapers?’ Bristow said, almost joking but when one of the patrolmen went stiff Bristow looked to Megevand.

‘Matter of fact,’ the bloke turned to his partner and raised his eyebrows.

‘—yes,’ the other officer said, wiping his brow and looking forward to a cold shower when he got home tonight.

‘All jokes and myths aside, I’ve seen him so often I started to wonder if I was losing my mind.’

The two policemen shared an awkward glance. Megevand couldn’t read it. They both fidgeted at the same time.

‘I chased after him one night,’ the older one said, looking down behind Megevand and Bristow, just in case he saw the kid, ‘but when I rounded the corner he’d vanished into thin air.’

The heat was draining the life out of Megevand. He’d been on his feet all day. He was spent. That beer at the Boleyn after work was calling him. He could almost taste it.

‘He was at the Bank and Monument Complex. Handed my partner a physical paper,’ Megevand said.

The two officers looked at each other but their faces remained set. Megevand could sense they knew something of the young lad.

‘—dated March seventh 1969,’ Megevand added.

‘I know why that date is tied to this place,’ one of the officers said. Megevand noted once more, it was the older one doing the talking. Both he and Bristow could see the bloke getting more restless as the conversation went on.

'You okay mate?' Bristow asked him.

The officer stared at Bristow, before looking at Megevand and then to his partner. Something passed between his partner and himself.

'It's okay Jack. Tell them.'

Bristow and Megevand shared a look before turning back to the officer. Both remained silent. The officer stared at the ground for a moment. When he turned his gaze upwards Megevand could see his eyes glazing over.

The officer swallowed, shifting his feet before taking one final glance at his partner, who nodded at him one final time.

He stared at Bristow and Megevand, and said:

'Was the boy quite short—well rounded, brown hair, big smile, even bigger ears?'

Megevand closed his eyes for a moment and recalled the description Thatcher had given him.

When he opened his eyes, his intuition clicked. It was the older police officer's ears. They were up there with his Royal Highness, Prince Charles' lobes. The bloke stared at Megevand, almost as if he knew the detective had put two and two together.

'That date is etched in my memory for eternity. And not because it was the first time our beloved Queen rode in the driver's carriage which left this very station.'

Megevand glanced over to Bristow, who stood there ramrod straight. He stared at the officer but remained silent.

'Something else happened that day. It never made the newspaper.'

Megevand could feel the sweat on his head increasing.

'—the newspaper boy, the one we see down here. The one who your partner saw at Bank Station. He died there. The Seventh Day of March 1969.'

Megevand closed his eyes and shook his head. When he opened them, Bristow was staring at the bloke with sincerity.

‘He’s here because of you, right?’ Bristow said, carefully.

The policeman nodded, the muscles in his face tightening as his chest rose and fell.

‘Twenty-Seven years ago, I was stationed at the Bank and Monument Complex. He was up at one of the entrances selling papers for some pocket money. I was on patrol inside, but I had friends looking out for him.’

A whooshing sound and a gust of insanely warm wind picked up and blew through the station where the four of us were standing.

The two policemen ignored it as if it were an everyday thing.

‘Something happened. We think a creep offered him a bag of lollipops to go with him. The blokes watching him had to deal with something and had only taken their eyes off him for a second.

‘We think there was more than one of them. Sadly, ‘ the policeman shook his head and wiped his nose, ‘—I was tending to a punch up on the District and Circle Line, it’s way on the other side of the complex to Bank, as you may or may not be aware.’

Bristow nodded.

‘A couple of passengers witnessed him being led down onto the Northern Line platform. But, for whatever reason, that was the last anyone saw—’

Megevand stepped forward, putting a hand on the man’s shoulder.

‘He was your son, Jack. We are dreadfully sorry for your loss,’ he said.

The bloke nodded, an attempt at a sincere smile appeared and then slid away.

‘His name was Arthur. Light of our lives, he was,’ the policemen said. ‘His mother and sister never really got over it. Eight years old. Hit by a train. Twelve papers still held tight under his left arm.’

Bristow took a deep breath and exhaled slowly.

‘When did he come here?’ he said.

Sergeant Jack Brown, The British Transport Police officer, gave the other three men a slightly twisted grin.

‘Bout the same time I did, believe it or not,’ he said.

‘—not long after I started here. One day, on patrol, there he was. The ghost of little Arthur, standing at the end of the pedestrian tunnel, staring at me. Papers under his arm. When I approached him, he smiled, then walked away. As if he wanted me to follow him.’

Sergeant Brown wiped his eyes; his emotions were boiling over.

‘My legs ached in the end. So did my heart, to be honest. I told Arthur he needed to find his way to, you know—’

‘The light?’ Megevand said, his tone as compassionate as he could muster. Jack gave him a look of resignation and nodded.

‘But he didn’t go to the light, did he?’ Megevand said, half mumbling to himself. ‘In fact,’ he said, a little louder, ‘I believe Arthur led us here for a reason. He wanted us to come to Green Park Station.’

He searched Jack’s eyes and asked a delicate question.

‘Jack, I know this must still be traumatising for you, but have you ever heard of Arthur’s ghost handing out newspaper to anyone before?’

‘Not even me,’ he said, adding, ‘for the dozens upon

dozens of times I had seen him. Even the previous times he was reported being seen at the complex. No one has ever been handed a newspaper like your partner Thatcher.'

The other BTP officer weighed in to the conversation, '—seriously. How is it physically possible the ghost of his boy can do that?'

Megevand shrugged, 'you wouldn't believe the things I told you, but after this, maybe you will.'

Bristow tapped his foot idly. He was ready to get on with it.

'Something here is connected to the bigger picture. I can feel it in my bones. We just have to figure out what that is.'



TWENTY-EIGHT HOURS AFTER Megevand and Bristow's visit to Green Park Station, the place descended into paranormal chaos. Howling sounds in the tunnels began around the lonely hour of three in the morning. The night staff couldn't figure out where the skin-crawling sound originated.

One of the patrolmen decided there was no wage high enough for him and his partner to go venturing down into the bowels of the station. This, they needed not worry about in the end.

The two men stood at the top of the escalators leading to the Victoria Line platforms.

This was as far as they intended to go, especially when hundreds of people were assembled at the bottom of the escalators. All of them fixated on the two patrolmen. Both said later that the ghosts were so lifelike they had to look twice. And then they realised the simple truth.

With the enormous amount of people standing there, they could not be the living. Trains were not currently running at this time of the night. To make matters more unnerving, the people standing there looked very ill. Their faces were disfigured and most had badly ulcerated skin, or pigmentation with coppery dome-shaped nodules.

And then, there was the clothing. Old. Very, old. From another time. The consensus between the two frightened policemen was unanimous. They were the ghosts of the dead who were buried right next door at Green Park.

Most, if not all the dead buried there, had succumbed to leprosy. They'd heard the myths. The ghost stories told over a few pints. Now they knew. It was all true. Suddenly, the escalator began to move of its own accord.

The two cops looked at each other and wondered what the hell to do next. Their first thought was not surprising. Run in the opposite direction. But without a further second to consider it, one of the policemen spotted a small figure coming up the escalator.

'Shit, we've got company,' he muttered.

He noted that the rest of the ghosts at the bottom of the escalators remained exactly where they were. Halfway up the escalator, they knew who it was. Everyone who worked at Green Park Station knew Sergeant Brown. And his tragic past.

So, by connection, most, if not all the staff at Green Park Station, had one time or the other, come upon Arthur. The ghost, thereof. He rode in silence. As he drew closer the smile on his face was unnerving. Whilst one policeman wished for a bottle of whisky the other wondered if he were going to faint.

When he reached the top, the men stepped back a few feet, having no idea what else to do.

'I need to show Da something,' the boy said.

The two policemen shared a frazzled look.

'Your father is not working tonight, Arthur. Why don't you come back tomorrow?' one of the men responded. The boy shook his head, his eyes narrowing.

Eventually, he spoke; 'It cannot wait. They say it is important.'

The two cops froze. This was way out of their bandwidth of procedure and protocol. They were in uncharted territory. A young woman's voice pierced the awkward standoff. It came from the bottom of the escalators.

It was so clear; the men felt her voice invade their ears as if she was standing right there between them.

'It's okay Arthur. They will do,' the voice said calmly.

One of the policemen took a few steps forward. He peeked over the edge of the escalator and gasped. It was the ghost of Alexandra Young. There wasn't a policeman in London who had not seen her photo. One of the policemen turned to the other.

'Fuck it. I'm not going down there!' he barked.

His partner had slightly bigger balls than the one who'd just spoken. Something deep inside told him this could be a big deal. He swallowed his own feelings of fear, unease and the desire to piss in his police issue trousers right there and then. He took a deep breath and rallied himself to step forward.

'Stay here. I'll go down,' he said.

His partner couldn't believe it.

'You are?' he responded.

The bloke shot him a sharp look and said, gallantly, 'you know what to do if I don't come back.'



The brave policeman's name was Constable Stephen Blackstone. Blackstone could feel the sweat dripping from his arm pits. A feeling he'd rather do without. With the escalator

now idle once more, he was forced to walk down the steps of his own accord.

The heat was off the charts. He'd never been this hot. Arthur the paperboy walked in front of him, six feet ahead. At the bottom was Alexandra, standing there staring up towards the constable.

The leper ghosts hadn't moved an inch. There were so many of them. Wall to wall. Absolutely impossible to ignore. Constable Blackstone knew this would go down as the gutsiest thing he'd ever done in his life.

Part of him buzzed with nervous excitement. The other part: he was scared out of his wits. Reaching the bottom of the long escalator, his breathing slowed. One from the heat, and two, from the feeling his lungs had just turned to concrete. The freaky, lifelike ghosts stared at him void of emotion.

There was not one he saw who looked anything but sombre. Sad. Downtrodden. It did nothing but send an inordinate amount of adrenaline coursing through every inch of his body. Alexandra studied him but said nothing.

Without a word spoken, or indication of what she was going to do next, she turned around and began to walk away from the constable. The mass of leper ghosts parted as if she were a member of the royal family. He grunted and did his best to ignore the foulest smell his nostrils had ever encountered, before realising he should follow her.

It was the silence that spooked him. Neither Alexandra nor Arthur nor the hundreds of ghosts said a word or made a sound. In the dim light, he fought the urge to cry out. He couldn't quite comprehend what he was seeing.

The leper ghosts occupied every square inch of pedestrian tunnels, concourse and platforms. Blackstone trailed behind Alexandra and Arthur, and the thick mass of lepers parted to

let them through. The stench was nauseating but Blackstone followed on, walking through the tightly packed leper ghosts for what seemed like an eternity.

After five arduous minutes, Alexandra led him through to a train platform. She continued until she reached the end. Alexandra stood right on the edge. Arthur stood next to her, staring up at the constable.

‘Follow me,’ Alexandra said.

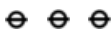
Faces of the dead lepers stared up at him from the tracks. They moved as Alexandra made her way down to where they were standing. Blackstone wondered where on earth he was being led.

For the first time since coming down here, he now wished his partner had grown some balls and come with him.

He unclipped his torch and was about to switch it on, when Alexandra turned to him, shaking her head. He then realised — the torch was dead. Great, he thought.

‘It’s not far. You won’t need it,’ Alexandra said.

He closed his eyes. He’d never been more frightened in his life. He wondered if he’d made a big mistake.



Alexandra led him into the pitch-black train tunnel. Arthur remained standing at the end of the platform. Blackstone sadly noted the boy had his papers tucked securely under his left arm, guarding them with his — life.

The constable realised the tunnel was also full to the brim with leper ghosts. He involuntarily let out a low-pitched whimper. Alexandra only walked a few more feet before she stopped. Turning around she said, ‘this is it.’

Blackstone stopped walking. His heart was beating so hard he felt lightheaded. He wondered if anyone would

be offended if he threw up. Blackstone could just make Alexandra out in the dim light. The lepers had moved back a little and were, oddly enough, giving him space.

He stood there and took in his surroundings. The train tracks stretched out into the darkness. The smell of rotting meat coupled with oil and grime was a stench he would never forget.

Although the lighting was poor, he could see well enough now that his eyes had adjusted, but the constable had been wondering why he was there.

Knowing how long it would take for him to walk back up top, frustration kicked in. Blackstone realised he was about to do the unthinkable. As if sensing his mood, Alexandra spoke, her voice eerily clear. It cut through the smell, grime and thick air like a razor blade.

‘When they found me yesterday,’ she said, looking around at the thousands of leper ghosts and back to Blackstone, ‘they told me about what you are about to see. They are from the monsters that did this to me. Remember that. You tell Megevand what I said to you.’

Blackstone had no idea what she was referring to. But he memorised her words and would jot them down the second he was able to get his hands on his notepad, his pen, and decent light.

‘Okay,’ he had no idea what else to say.

He could just make out her face in the dim light. She was pretty and far too young to have had her life tragically cut short. The sight of her filled him with sorrow. He had a girlfriend, and two sisters, all probably around the same age as her.

Seeing their faces in his mind, Blackstone knew he’d

come here tonight for a reason. He hoped his lone actions would make a difference.

‘I can’t touch them,’ Alexandra said.

He became conscious that she was looking just behind him to his left. On instinct, he turned around, adjusting his eyes to the darkness. Blackstone wondered what he was supposed to be looking at. There was nothing.

Later, he’d thank his lucky stars he made the decision to do what he was about to do. He crouched down. He stretched his hands out into darkness. It only took a few moments before he felt something. Flimsy. Wet. Some sort of fabric.

When both his hands reached the sides of whatever this was, he realised it was a bunch of something bound up in a rough ball. When he reached down and then picked it up, he could feel the weight of whatever the material was.

‘What is—’

The awareness of suddenly being alone was more of a fright than a train station previously full to the brim of leper ghosts. Even the ghost of Alexandra had vanished. But when he looked up at the corner of the platform, he then spotted Arthur. The kid’s smile was infectious, and the patrolman couldn’t help but find it in him to manage a slight grin.

He held Arthur’s gaze for a moment before turning away, except, when he looked back, Arthur, too, had now disappeared. Blackstone walked back to the platform, and as he reached the edge, the light had grown brighter, he could see clearly what he had in his hands.

He placed the object on the platform floor but, to his credit, he knew to cease handling it from that point on. He pulled a pen from his breast pocket and examined it more closely. When he prodded and pulled one piece of the

material backwards, it dawned on him why they had led him down here to find.

‘Two of them,’ he said to the now empty platform.

Before he ventured off to call it in, he could see clearly that the two items were of one and the same. Different in design, but both the same item. He took one last look up and over at the platform.

He caught his breath when he spotted Arthur now standing just inside the pedestrian tunnel, grinning at him. Two expensive raincoats. Scrunched together into a ball. Dumped, just out of view.



I STOOD NEXT to Thatcher. We stared at the two raincoats laid out on the forensic lab's table directly in front of us. I almost dared not breathe for fear of contaminating them. I noticed Thatcher was in the same frame of mind.

Thatcher then reached over to the side table closest to him and once again flicked through the pile of photos, all blown up to A4 size. I heard low murmurs coming from deep within the big guy as he flicked from one photo to another.

"Thoughts?" he said, before handing one of the photos over to me.

Grainy, hell yes. I wondered if the Closed-Circuit Television Cameras would ever improve in quality in the not-too-distant future. It certainly would help. But for now, what we had was what we had.

And I could not help but be unequivocal in my belief that these coats were worn by two of the Bank and Monument Four. And that one of the coats was worn by the man I came face to face with when I was '*in the zone.*' Alexandra's death, zone.

Two lab technicians scrutinised each coat separately, both with large magnifying glasses. Head to toe in protective jumpsuits, glasses, and latex gloves, you'd think the raincoats were radioactive.

'Looks like it,' I said.

'And there was what Constable Blackstone said in his report. Alexandra's words—'

Thatcher pulled out his notepad and flicked a couple of pages before finding what he was looking for.

"*They are from the monsters that did this to me. Remember that. You tell Megevand what I said to you.*", Thatcher quoted.

I nodded in silence.

'I take Alexandra's word for it, but—' I felt like I didn't really want to finish the sentence.

Thatcher put the photos back down on the open folder next to him.

'I hear you mate,' he stared at the two raincoats, heaving a sigh.

'—we need a bone-a-fide connection. And then the question will be what to do—'

Whilst we'd been watching the lab technicians examine the coats, the guy to the right of the table had carefully opened the one he'd been combing through. He then turned his attention to the inside and then looked at it more closely with his magnifying glass.

I'm not sure whether it was me or him who noticed it first. I thought I spotted a lump in the inside coat pocket, but before I could speak up, he was already pulling the pocket open with a pair of large tweezers.

'Hmm,' the technician uttered as I watched the tweezers sink into the pocket before withdrawing them slowly with the utmost care.

'Gentlemen,' I could hear the measured excitement in his voice as he looked over to us.

'Something?' I muttered.

The bloke looked over to his co-worker and grinned, before turning back to both Thatcher and myself.

‘Gerry, behind you, give me that expensive looking metallic object logged as evidence found in the access tunnel where she was found, will you please,’ he said quietly.

His co-worker stepped over to the table behind him and scanned the table. Small, sealed and catalogued evidence bags sat laid out in front of him.

‘Here it is,’ he said.

When he turned back and saw what his co-worker was holding with the tweezers, he frowned for a second. But as he put the evidence bag closer to the object in his co-worker’s hands, he realised what he was seeing.

He carefully took the pair of tweezers from his co-worker and with the evidence bag in his hand, walked over to where Thatcher and I were standing.

‘This,’ he held the object in the little bag up to us. I recognized it, and I’m sure Thatcher did too. It was found in a crack in the floor close to where we’d found Alexandra’s body.

Something told me at the time, a decorative part of it was missing. Broken off.

And now here it was, the piece of evidence. A very small gold object that the lab technician had pulled out of the inside pocket. We all shifted over to another table, where I donned latex gloves at the same time as Thatcher.

I took the two pieces of metal, the first one out of the evidence bag and the other, still being held with tweezers, and sat them close to each other.

‘Without doubt,’ the technician said the words the three of us were all thinking.

‘Real gold?’ I asked, curious as to what the other men thought, although I was reasonably certain it was.

The lab technician reached for his magnifying glass and took a closer look.

‘Has the hallmarks, Detective. I’m not a gambling man, but if I were, I would put money on it.’ He looked up to me and glanced over at Thatcher, before his eyes came back to me. ‘Why you ask?’ I carefully placed the little gold object against the larger silver one.

‘Custom made is what I’m thinking,’ and as I said those words the pieces locked together. Now they appeared as one, and it was beyond a shadow of a doubt they originally were one object.

‘There’s something vaguely familiar with it,’ I added, turning to Thatcher.

‘Like it reminds me of a big corporate — its logo. You know—,’ I frowned at Thatcher’s blank face, annoyed he wasn’t on the same page, ‘come on Maggie, work with me here!’ I pleaded.

Thatcher stepped right in to my personal space. It wasn’t the first time and wouldn’t be the last. Most humans would feel intimidated if the man mountain was this close to him, but not me. I knew that he was all shithouse on the outside and a miniature bloody Pomeranian on the inside.

‘I can tell you, Megevand, that what you have in your possession here is one hell of a wanker-snob’s overpriced tiepin.’

The lab technician let out a huff of restrained laughter.

‘Don’t encourage him!’ I snapped at the young bloke but the grin on my face told him I was taking the piss.

‘This is a custom-made sterling silver and solid gold tiepin. This little box shaped gold object attached to the main stem will give us at least one, maybe two hundred pints at

the Boleyn, I reckon,' I said to both Thatcher and the lab technician.

'We need to find out where it was made.'

The lab technician stepped forward and said to me, 'hold on, can I take that for a moment?'

He reached over and carefully examined the stem of the tiepin. Thick, with two arms, which held the tie in place firmly. He walked over to his microscope, quickly adjusting it before peering into the eye hole whilst holding the stem underneath.

I watched him pull the two arms apart as carefully as he could. When he let out a muttered, 'ah hah,' I felt the hairs on the back of my neck flutter with anticipation.

'Manufactured right here in London. Brentford, to be exact,' he said.

'You have the name of the company?' I said, glancing at Thatcher who looked as excited as I was.

'That I have,' the bloke's grin was from ear to ear, 'got a pen handy?'



Armed with the latest information, we left the forensics department and were heading back to the office to meet with the GOTT taskforce. In the car, Thatcher turned to me, and I could tell by his expression that the big wheels in his head were turning. I could almost hear the cogs.

I knew all the expressions the big guy used. There weren't many.

'Something on your mind, Maggie?' I asked.

He shrugged and then gave me a rather curious grin. 'This is not on you, my friend—,' he began. Scratching his head he then tapped his fingers on the passenger side window.

‘—Don’t you find it hard to believe that the little chunk of tiepin had made its way into the inside pocket of one of those raincoats, only to be dumped in a train tunnel at another station not far away from the crime scene?’

I was about to respond but recognised Thatcher had more to say.

‘And the tiepin itself falls into a crack in the concrete not far from her?’

I ran an amber light that I could have comfortably stopped at. We were the bloody police after all. ‘What is your point?’ I said, feeling I had an inkling of what was coming next.

‘Big bloody coincidences wouldn’t you say, Albert?’

Thatcher turned and watched the cab next to us. The driver was so close he was about to sideswipe our car. Thatcher fell into silence. But not for long.

‘If this were a bloody story and I was reading it, I’d be thinking what a load of absolute fucking bollocks!’ he followed his words with a shake of the head and a huff. My partner had a point. I drove on for another few minutes as we sailed through another busy intersection.

I had never seen the roads in Central London this chaotic. I prayed this would come to an end soon. I stole a glance at Thatcher, who was now looking straight ahead. Something had shifted in him.

I feared it may have had something to do with his near-death experience, whereby, it seemed to me, he’d lost his innocence. He was never this cynical. Thatcher wouldn’t normally be this negative.

But I couldn’t argue his point. *It was a stretch.*

However, from my experiences over the last six or so years, the world we live in has ways of doing things you could

spend the rest of your life trying to figure out why. As I saw our building come into view, I kept my thoughts to myself. I didn't want to mistakenly offend Thatcher by telling him.

That, in the end, it didn't matter.

A lead this strong was worth its weight in gold.



‘PERFECT BLOODY TIMING!’ Windebank almost hugged Megevand when he entered the office.

‘I’ve never seen you this happy to see me, boss!’ Megevand countered with an awkward smile.

‘The bartender from the pub at Highgate has made contact with his mother, thirty minutes ago. Said he was out of money, already. Needed more. I literally just got off the phone to her.’

Megevand turned to Thatcher, who appeared to have shaken off his less-than-positive mood on the way back to the office. His smile was back, and he was almost jittery, staring at Windebank as if he was going to give him one hell of a mighty bear-hug.

‘What now?’ he said to Windebank.

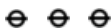
‘She told him what was going on. How serious it was that we get hold of him as quickly as possible. He was very responsive. Said if we wanted to go to him, that was fine. But,’ Windebank shook his head in wonderment, ‘—said that if we preferred that he come home for this and was prepared to consider a return ticket home and then back to Bali on us, he’d be on the next flight.’

‘What’s the plan then?’ Megevand just got in before Thatcher.

Windebank nodded, taking a deep breath and turning in the direction of his office.

‘Personally, I want him here, yesterday. I don’t think I need to clear it with Commander Freeman,’ he began to make his way towards the phone on his desk, ‘but will anyway. Return flights to hopefully bring an end to all this are a no-brainer to me, right?’

Windebank didn’t wait for Megevand and Thatcher’s answer. But they were nodding regardless.



At the same time, the bartender’s airline ticket was being booked, Megevand presented Windebank with what he was calling a breakthrough in the identification of the tiepin manufacturer.

‘There’s something familiar about it,’ Windebank remarked, running his eyes over the tiepin that Megevand had just brought in.

‘Expensive looking, I’ll give you that,’ Windebank added.

‘You agree with Thatcher and me, this looks handmade, right?’ Megevand said.

Windebank peered at the object sitting on his desk closely. He poked at it with his pen but dared not pick it up.

He grumbled to himself before fishing through his drawers and eventually finding a pair of latex gloves. Once they were on his hands, he let out a clear sigh of relief at being able to pick the tiepin up.

‘The tech got the name of the manufacturer?’ Windebank looked up to Thatcher and then Megevand.

‘Located in Brentford. High St,’ Thatcher responded.

Windebank turned the object around. He touched the

gold box that was originally attached to the front of the sterling silver tiepin, his face frowning.

‘What is this little gold box?’ he said more to himself than the two policemen standing in front of him.

‘One of you lot got a magnifying glass handy?’ he said, without making eye contact with Megevand and Thatcher.

‘Hold on,’ Megevand said, knowing that sometime in the last few years he had sworn he spotted one in the bottom drawer of his desk.

‘Ah ha,’ he said jubilantly, handing it over to Windebank.

The detective chief inspector studied the object closely. He turned it over several times. He let out a low whistle before placing the object back into the evidence bag carefully. He handed the bag back to Thatcher with him being closer.

‘Did you look closely at it?’ he asked.

Megevand nodded, but Thatcher remained still.

‘Tell me what you think it is,’ Windebank said to Megevand.

‘Just a blind guess, boss,’ Megevand said, shrugging before adding, ‘but it was designed to look like a stack of pound notes, if you ask me.’

Windebank stepped around from his desk and walked over to Megevand.

‘You know why I bloody well like you so much, Detective Inspector?’ he asked with a smile.

‘Got a thing for bald bastards who can communicate with the deceased?’ Thatcher quipped.

Windebank thought Thatcher’s line was hilarious, but let it whoosh over his head. He patted Megevand on the arm and grinned.

‘That. And you think like I do. You’ll go far one day, old

chap,' he added. Megevand nodded, 'you think the same?' even though he could clearly see Windebank did.

'One hundred percent. Now,' he stepped back and sat against his desk, '—I assume you two will be waiting for the doors to open over at—'

'—Greenwood House, Tiepins of Distinction,' Thatcher said.

Windebank stared at Thatcher and raised his eyebrows.

'Quite the mouthful there, Sergeant,' he said.

'Lucky I've got a big mouth,' Thatcher responded in perfect comedic timing.

'Don't I bloody know it,' Megevand threw in.



‘WHAT ARE YOU doing here?’ Simon said to Tony, staring at him with nothing but disdain in his eyes.

Tony had entered the Simon’s office and was standing there, staring at him. He hadn’t been invited. Nor had he knocked when he’d entered either. The uninvited guest closed the door carefully behind him.

Tony stared at Simon for a time. The rings around the man’s eyes had grown darker. His face was pastier these days. He’d lost weight. He stood but had a jittery vibe about him.

The fingers on his left hand moved as if he were scrunching up a small piece of paper, although there was nothing in his hand. A nervous tic. With his right hand, he slipped it into his pants pocket and pulled something out.

Simon was about to ask him what the fuck was going on, but Tony opened his hand and Simon realised what he was holding. He threw the object across the desk and Simon caught it in mid-air. Simon then opened his hand, staring at it momentarily before the corners of his mouth formed a barely visible smile.

‘Where’d you get this?’ he asked.

‘Doesn’t matter,’ Tony said flatly, not offering any further explanation, but then added; ‘—let’s just say someone on the

fourth floor left it on his desk last night. The place was a ghost-town. I saw it. You lost yours. Happy?’

Simon nodded. He studied the tiepin. It was a gift from the higher-ups last Christmas. Only given to those who had met their yearly budgets. Simon was only one of about fifty employees who were lucky enough to get one.

Plus, the hefty bonus they’d all liked way more than this stupid token. But he knew the tiepins had cost a mint. Someone in the company reckoned they cost over one thousand pounds each. Simon scoffed when he heard that.

He believed there was no way they had cost that much. Probably half, he believed.

He was wearing it *that* day. Simon had lost countless nights’ sleep since. He’d hoped it had gotten caught up in his raincoat. With that disposed of, Simon tried to tell himself it would be gone forever.

‘Thanks,’ Simon said to Tony.

When he realised Tony was standing there with a grave expression, he sat forward.

‘What’s wrong?’ Simon was losing his patience.

Tony stood rigid, eyeballing him.

‘Something’s going on with my wife, Sime. And that fucking disastrous dinner the other night. If you’re telling me, we are living on borrowed bloody time.’

Simon stared at Tony for a time. He thought about the documents sitting one inch away on his desk. Travel plans. He cursed himself for not making the decision sooner. The one thing he wasn’t going to tell Tony about, was his plans to fly the coop and get the hell out of this shit-hole London had become.

Divulging that information would be just plain stupid. He didn’t trust Tony as far as he could throw him. His only

regret of *that* morning was involving the man standing on the other side of his desk. He took a long, deep breath and managed a faint smile.

‘You need to just slow down, Tony. Stop overthinking. It will all blow over. We just need to give it a few more weeks. They will get bored with it and move on to the next crime.’

Simon peered down to the tiepin and in his mind decided right there and then that this had always been his own tiepin. He’d never lost it. This was it right here. Either he was getting cocky, or more delusional by the day.

When he left his office, and this god-forsaken building for the last time soon, he would ensure the tiepin was left on prominent display on his desk, under the computer screen.

‘Unless you have other matters to discuss,’ Simon said carefully to his uninvited guest, raising his eyebrows.

Tony took one last look at the tiepin. He’d stolen it for Simon, whom he thought was his friend. Without another word, he exited the office. Simon grunted as he watched Tony shuffle down the hallway. ‘Grow some,’ Simon sneered under his breath.



‘CHANGE OF PLAN,’ I told Thatcher over the phone at six thirty in the morning.

‘—Bartender Doogood touched down at Heathrow one hour ago. Windebank wants you and me on it as soon as we can.’

‘What about the tiepin maker?’ Thatcher responded.

‘—other members of the taskforce will take care of that. We do have other team members if you recall shithouse,’ I quipped. I could hear Thatcher breathing but not for long.

‘Really, who?’ he said. I could picture the grin on his face.

‘I’ll pick you up in how long?’ I asked, ignoring his jokes. It was too early for them. And I hadn’t had my two pieces of toast, or my pint-sized cup of coffee yet. My brain wouldn’t start working properly until I’d had breakfast.

‘Thirty works for you?’ Thatcher asked.

I wished he’d said forty-five minutes, like he normally quoted. I guessed he was keen to chat to Doogood.

‘See you then, shit,’ I rarely abbreviated my partner’s rugby nickname, but I was now in too much of a hurry. I had to shower and have breakfast before I left.



The traffic. Fucking hell. It was a bloody nightmare. Even getting to Thatcher's place, a stone's throw from my house, took three times as long. And that was before we had to get across town and up to Highgate. We were meeting Doogood at his home.

Thatcher had made a fantastic suggestion as soon as he'd jumped into the car. He wondered if, since we were meeting Doogood, we should consider taking him back to the pub where he used to work. Maybe this may help jog his memory.

'You must have slept like a princess,' I responded after Thatcher had told me about the idea.

'Sometimes having a bigger head can quite often mean that the stuff inside is a bit bigger too,' he responded, deadpan.

'More like more room for—,' I cut off my satirical response as a bus coming down the road in the opposite direction decided to test my wits and swerve onto our side of the road, because, God forbid, a car in his lane had slowed to turn left.

'Jesus,' I shouted, not being able to get my driver's window down quick enough — to hurl abuse at the driver, before the bus flew past us with literally half an inch between us.

'Now-now, Albert,' Thatcher whispered, '—keep those lacey knickers of yours untwisted, please.'



'Detective Inspector Ian Megevand,' I announced, extending my hand towards the young man standing at the front door. I pegged him for around twenty or so. On certain angles he could be mistaken for even younger.

‘And this is my partner—,’ I was forced to step back and out from the cosy patio of the old cottage so that Thatcher could get around me.

‘Sergeant James Thatcher,’ he thrust out his hand and judging by the young man’s sudden bulging eyes, he was probably wondering if he’d ever seen a bigger policeman in all his life.

‘Nicholas Doogood,’ he said, flexing his fingers.

‘Oh, and this is my mum,’ he shuffled to one side of the open door to reveal a friendly and petite middle-aged woman standing in the doorway. Her eyes went as wide as her son’s when she laid eyes on Thatcher.

‘Pleased to meet you both.’ She wondered how Thatcher was going to fit through their small front door. ‘Why don’t you both come in for a cup of tea,’ she said.



Since our arrival, the aroma of something freshly baked had been wafting up the hall from the kitchen. Within minutes, a tray of hot teas and coffees arrived accompanied by a plate full of homemade shortbread. Thatcher’s eyes went wide. He had a soft spot for shortbread biscuits. He was not alone. Once he’d almost inhaled his first, we got down to business.

I pulled out the folder containing our entire file of sketches and not-so-good quality closed circuit television camera photos. I then found the pictures I was most keen to present to the backpacking-ex-bartender.

The ones produced from Constable Latson’s description of the sighting that fateful day in the pub. I watched Doogood with keen eyes as I presented the sketches to him.

Thatcher then laid the rest out alongside these, in

between the cups, side plates, and the rapidly diminishing pile of mouth-watering short bread biscuits.

‘Take your time,’ Thatcher said, before, to my internal amusement, reached for his third biscuit. I saw the hint of a smile flutter across Miss Doogood’s face before she turned back to her son.

The longer the bartender sat there staring at the sketch of the man we were keen to speak to, the more anxious I grew. Normally, a delay such as this was not a good sign. If he’d recognised him, he would have said it by now.

He frowned and slowly shook his head. My heart dropped. I heard Thatcher sigh in between eating his biscuit and sipping his tea.

‘Damn it,’ he muttered, taking a deep breath and turning his attention to the rest of the photos and other images laid out in front of him. I was about to push back my chair and tell Thatcher it was time to leave.

‘Did you sleep on the plane?’ Thatcher asked.

Doogood looked over at Thatcher and nodded.

‘One of my super-powers,’ he grinned, ‘I could sleep on a plane during a thunderstorm. Why?’

Thatcher began gathering all the documents on the table and smiled at Doogood.

‘So, you’re feeling, okay?’ Thatcher asked.

‘Right now, feeling pretty good,’ Doogood said, adding, ‘I’m sure it will come, jet lag. But for now, fine.’

‘I’ve got an idea,’ Thatcher smiled.



Doogood told Thatcher he’d be happy to drop over to the pub and see if being there jogged his memory. We talked

about trivial things on the fifteen-minute drive that Doogood said normally took no more than five.

He said he couldn't wait to get on the next plane back to Bali. London like this was too much to bear, he said. I had to agree with him. When we arrived at the pub, I explained why we were here to the manager. He said it was fine with him.

He grinned at Doogood and said that he wanted him back on the books as soon as he was done backpacking. Something about being one of his best Bartenders. That made me feel good. If he was that reliable an employee, it meant he could potentially be a reliable source of information.

'Why don't you stand behind the bar,' Thatcher told Doogood, before adding;

'Now I may be too well built,' he smirked and then looked over to me.

'—but my partner, he's a little more, well you know,' Thatcher was having a good time and I let him. I wanted to see more of the old Thatcher, like this.

'—So, he can hold this.' He handed me an A4-sized sketch of the face described by Constable Latson.

'Megevand,' Thatcher looked at me and now his face was set in a frown, 'go to the front door. When you walk in, hold that sketch to your face. And then come right over to Doogood here and order a drink.'

From the corner of my eye, I could see a smirk on Doogood's face. But what he didn't know was the first time I'd seen Thatcher suggest this little charade; it had worked back then. It was the turning point of that previous case.

'Ready?' I looked over to Doogood who nodded before I went to the front door. I decided to go the extra step. Literally. I walked right out of the pub and counted to ten.

I held the sketch of the bloke's face up to my own and

proceeded to walk into the pub. Save for the daytime manager, there was no one else in the bar.

'Morning Bartender,' I announced as I approached the bar.

When I saw the trough of the ancient bar at my feet, I reached out with my free hand and touched the bar's surface. With the sketch still being held to my face with the other, I turned sideways and peered over to Thatcher.

'What the bloody hell are you looking at, chubs?' I sneered.

Thatcher blinked and his eyes narrowed, obviously not appreciating my attempt at a feeble joke, despite the role play. I stood there and wondered what was going through Doogood's head.

I dared not ask him.

'Say that again,' Doogood said, surprising me. I was about to put the sketch down, but he added, '—don't. Repeat what you just said to Sergeant Thatcher. Maybe with less of a cockney accent this time. Like a normal Londoner.'

I could see the lights in Thatcher's eyes brightening.

'What the bloody hell you are looking at, fat?' I said.

The sketch I was holding was then pulled from my hands, and I knew it had to be Doogood.

He took the sketch from me and stood back against the opposite side of the bar.

'Fuck,' he said, hitting his forehead with the palm of his hand. 'When you said what you said, and I looked at the sketch of his face, I think I remember. I'm sure I've served this bloke.'

He placed the sketch on the bar, resting his hands on either side. He studied the sketch further, then looked at both of us.

‘Damn it,’ he muttered and then for some reason his attention was drawn to something on the far wall, and it didn’t take me long to realise it was the clock.



‘Derek, you mind?’ he said to the daytime manager standing at the other end of the bar, who watched Doogood pull a serving bottle of whisky from behind him.

By the time the manager had responded, Doogood already had a shot glass in his hand.

‘If it helps the cause,’ the manager responded.

Doogood poured himself a decent dram of whisky and before I could even blink had already downed it in one fast, fluid motion. He shook his body and closed his eyes for a moment.

I peered over to Thatcher who had his arm out indicating to me.

‘Wait.’

I was about to nod but Doogood, for the love of God, gave me a fucking heart-attack.

‘YES!’ he jumped in the air.

Thatcher stepped forward. We stared at Doogood and wondered if joining him in a shot of whisky may be in order. I needed to calm my electrocuted nerves down.

‘You remember him?’ Thatcher asked.

Doogood grinned. ‘I think I do,’ he said.

‘Got a name for this chap?’ Thatcher asked.

Doogood stared at Thatcher. I could tell by the shadow passing over his face the answer was possibly no. He must have seen the collective reaction on our faces.

‘It’s okay, it’s okay,’ he stepped forward and smiled. ‘I’m ninety-nine percent sure a delightful female patron, who

insisted that she take me home not two months ago, lives in the same block of flats as your friend.' Doogood flicked his eyes down to the sketch.

'He'd been in here the same night as her. I'm sure of it. When we were leaving, he was out the front, just sitting there.'

Doogood reached for another shot. No wonder he'd checked what time it was. Ten thirty in the morning. Then again, he was still probably operating on Bali time. He sure as hell was acting as if he was still on holiday.

This time he sipped it slowly, ignoring the daytime manager's frown from the other end of the bar. We'd cover his shots. In the end the manager would wave our offer away anyway.

'The girl saw him outside; said he was a bit of a creep. Said he lived in her block of flats,' Doogood said.

Thatcher reached for the sketch and smiled. 'Tell me you remember where this "*lovely*" female patron of yours lives,' he said.

Doogood's eyes were fixed on Thatcher. People liked to keep the big man happy. I'd seen it dozens of times before. It was one of the side-effects of being that intimidating. The ex-bartender then turned to me. He nodded before downing the rest of his shot.



DOOGOOD STOOD BETWEEN Megevand and Thatcher. As he'd predicted, jet lag was starting to seep in. He could feel it working its magic, regardless of sleeping on the trip home. Soon, he'd be aching for his bed.

The trio stood in silence on the footpath adjacent to Dartmouth Park Hill, in the very posh and leafy suburb of Highgate.

'Reminds me of Battle-Star-Galactica,' Thatcher said, his gaze fixed on the monstrosity before him.

'Futuristic, for sure,' Doogood said. He was not sure what else to say. The last thing he wanted to do was offend the big policeman even though, in his opinion, they seemed to have hit it off.

'Shall we?' Megevand said, thinking he too was no fan of the design of the Lulot Gardens Quarter, of the sprawling Whittington estate. Row upon row of sameness, a so-called modernistic testament to progressive architecture.

He could see what Thatcher meant. The old terrace houses, established across Britain since the seventeenth century, were far more appealing. At least they had character.

The men proceeded into the estate. Megevand could see Doogood's movements alter the further they walked. If he was reading the ex-bartender's body language correctly, the

young man appeared to be getting more agitated the further they went in.

‘Alright?’ the detective asked him.

Doogood wiped his brow. He suddenly looked a little sweaty.

‘Err,’ he said, stopping in his tracks, ‘you’re not going to like what I’m about to tell you.’

Megevand and Thatcher shared a look and instinctively turned back to Doogood. He stood awkwardly; teeth clenched.

‘She definitely lives here, it’s just—’

Megevand looked up to the sky before he closed his eyes, ‘you don’t remember which flat she lives in?’ he said.

When Doogood didn’t answer, Thatcher let out a chuckle. He glanced at Megevand who wasn’t sharing his partner’s comical response.

‘How drunk were you mate?’ Megevand said, knowing it didn’t matter what the answer was.

Doogood stammered, his face turning crimson. He turned to Thatcher, but he just shook his head. No need to answer Megevand’s question.

‘Fuck!’ Megevand muttered, noticing the worn-out map of the estate on a nearby wall. He walked over to get a closer look and could have screamed when he found the information he was looking for.

‘Ninety-seven bloody flats!’ he hissed, turning and wanting to clobber Doogood over the head.

‘You know what we need to do, Maggie,’ Megevand said.



At approximately seven thirty the next morning, two dozen policemen along with every available member of the GOTT

taskforce descended on Lulot Gardens. Windebank resisted the undeniable urge to converge on the estate any earlier.

With less manpower, it would take longer. And this could alert the man they wanted to talk to, if by chance they'd approached his neighbours first. It had happened before.

Windebank didn't want to fuck this up. He was, so he believed, close friends with his superior, Commander Freeman. Nevertheless, with stakes as high as they were, Windebank knew his friendship with him had a limited amount of bandwidth. And if this went south, no amount of a relationship would be enough for Windebank to have the same job in the police force by month's end.

Megevand knocked on doors right alongside his partner.

So far, they had managed to royally piss off some of the residents. Those who answered the door were in various forms of underwear and gaudy dressing gowns. Visions, Megevand hoped, he would soon forget. Some did not hide their disgust at being woken this early in the morning.

'Fuck's sake,' Thatcher growled, 'it's a bloody workday. What time do all these people start work?' Megevand stared at Thatcher and rolled his eyes.

'—I think a few of them may have hung up the workboots, pal. There's no crime in being retired!' he bit back. Thatcher shook his head at Megevand and steadied the clipboard in his hand, which contained a sketch of their suspect and another of the woman with whom Doogood had spent the night.

'They're not all old, you stupid git,' Thatcher whispered at Megevand.

'Shut up shit-for-brains and do your bloody job,' Megevand retaliated.

Megevand was the only living human being on planet

earth who could ever talk to Sergeant Thatcher that way, aside from their boss. The two men stared off for a moment, before a sheepish grin appeared on one and then the other.

Thatcher was about to say something to Megevand about the state of the doorway the detective was about to knock on. But in the corner of his eye, right at the very end of the long open corridor, he thought he saw someone appear.

As quickly as the figure of a man had appeared, he was gone.

‘Did you just see—,’ Thatcher said.

He turned to Megevand who was looking at the door in front of him. He hadn’t seen what

Thatcher had seen. It didn’t matter. Thatcher broke into a run.



FUCK. FUCK. FUCK!

Somehow, I had managed to get all the way into our estate without seeing any of them. The fucking police. But after I walked up the one flight of stairs to the level my flat was situated, I noticed at least four policemen walking up along the other side of the block of flats across the way.

By the time I'd walked another thirty feet, I saw two separate groups of at least four, possibly five policemen. They were walking along the small access laneway between the blocks of flats.

I heard doors being knocked. Something was going on. I'd left my flat just after seven twenty, as I normally do on a workday. Cursing myself five or so minutes later en route to the bus stop, I realised I'd left my access card at home.

Fuck knows where. I had a habit of losing the damn thing all the time. But that, so it seems, was the least of my concerns. When I rounded the corner on my way back to the flat, I spotted who surely were two policemen at the other end of my corridor.

One was standing in front of a door. The other was speaking to him. The bloke was fucking huge. Both had that look about them. Cops, for sure. It was the way they stood there.

What they wore. Their haircuts. You could almost smell it on them from miles away.

As I stepped back towards the corner of the wall, I'm sure the big one may have seen me. It was time to get the fuck out of here. Above all else, I needed to get to work. I'd stopped traveling on the Tube the day after I saw one of the others. Fucking Creep.

Since then, I'd been using the buses. Not ideal. I didn't want to bump into any of others, and besides, the train network was shagged. But right now, taking a bus was too risky. Too easy to get caught waiting for the bloody thing. I'd have to bite the bullet and get on the train.

Damn it. I wish I didn't have to go to work, but now, I needed to properly get out of here. Today was the day I was resigning, anyway. I needed the entitlements I was owed.

It was the only way I would be able to afford to get the hell out of England and live for a little while on my savings. Dublin would be my first stop. Or maybe Paris. Then onto somewhere else. Far away.

I hadn't worked my shit job that long. I knew I couldn't come back here now. I could crash at my cousin's house in Lacham. Make up some bullshit story. He was as dumb as a jar of Marmite. He'd believe anything I said. I'd ensure his television would mysteriously stop working.

Just as I made it to the bottom of the stairs, my heart dropped. I heard the shouts. That bastard of a cop the size of a Red Telephone Box.

He'd seen me.



‘RUNNER!’ THATCHER SHOUTED. With lungs the size of those normally found in a Clydesdale horse, his words were heard by many of his fellow officers filtering through the estate. Megevand was on his tail.

‘You sure, Thatcher?’ Megevand shouted.

Thatcher pointed in the direction of where he was going as his way of confirming yes. He bolted down the stairs and came upon a group of uniformed policemen.

‘Average height, dark haired, long dark blue jacket, medium build, he’s our man, any of you seen him?’ he panted. Two of the policemen shared the same expression and turned back to Thatcher.

‘Yes, he was walking at a brisk pace, in that direction,’ one officer said, pointing to the rear of the estate. Thatcher saw Megevand arrive and said to the group of policemen, ‘what’s on the other side of that bloody wall over there?’

‘That’s the grounds of Highgate Cemetery,’ one responded.

Megevand was already two feet in front of him. ‘Come on!’ he shouted.

Megevand ran like the wind towards the wall. He had no idea where the suspect could have gone but had a feeling he was heading in the right direction. He hoped so. By now

other policemen had dropped the door knocking and were running in the same direction.

Megevand darted through trees on the Lulot Gardens side of the wall separating the housing estate from arguably London's most famous cemetery. All fifteen hectares of it.

He spotted what he thought was a gap in the wall about one hundred feet further down. His heart raced as he directed the many policemen on his tail towards it.

When he came upon it, he cursed out loud. What he thought was an entryway into the cemetery was a hole in the wall that had been secured with chain-link fencing.

'Damn it!' he cursed, as Thatcher arrive at his side.

His partner was about to pat him on the shoulder and tell him it was okay, when he spotted the man running through the cemetery at breakneck speed. It was most certainly the man he had seen at the end of the hallway.

'It's him!' Thatcher roared, his eyes darting from one side of the wall to the other.

'We need to get in there, now!' Thatcher told the rest of his fellow officers.



Oliver 'Ollie' Cray ran like the wind. Stealing only the odd glance behind him, he was certain he'd made a clean break. By the time he'd run through the open entrance of Highgate Cemetery at Chester Road, he saw there was not one policeman in sight.

This boosted his confidence and enabled him to continue at a steady pace down the road until he came to Dartmouth Park. Here, he slowed to a decent walking pace, knowing running would only bring attention upon himself.

By the time he'd cut through the back of Dartmouth

Park, he knew Archway Underground Station was less than a brisk five minutes' walk away. He'd have to put up with the inconvenience of losing his access card. At least he'd outrun the police. He couldn't believe his good fortune.

Entering Archway Station, he firmly believed things were going his way. Standing a few moments later on the platform, the gust of air he felt was as if an angel had blown warm air around his face and neck. It was a joyous feeling. A train was coming.

The platform was devoid of any policeman. When the train arrived, he allowed an elderly couple to enter the carriage first.

He knew it was the right thing to do. Obviously, Mr Cray had forgotten all about his actions a few weeks earlier. Stepping onto the train, he could feel a sense of relief as he watched the main entrance to the platform from the station above. No one was coming.

Ollie closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He listened to the doors close. It was a wonderful thing to hear this morning. Then, his eyes shot open.

'There!' came the shout from the platform.

Two policemen were standing a good thirty feet further up the platform. He could have kicked his own arse for choosing a seat with a clear view of the men.

Another three policemen came tumbling out of the pedestrian tunnel. How the hell had they found him? His mind went into a free fall. When Cray spotted the massive policeman standing there with the others, his heart stopped.

What that policeman would do to him if he had the chance. He felt ill. The big policeman was pointing at Cray. The others were now, all doing the same. The train began to move. He couldn't believe his luck.

Cray was about to put his head down and quietly savour the moment, but things turned to shit. The policemen were shouting at the top of their lungs.

‘STOP this TRAIN!’

But the train kept moving. Either the train driver was away with the fairies, or he was as deaf as a brick. Cray couldn’t breathe. He ducked his head down below the window line as if this would make all his problems go away.

By now, the older couple whom he’d let on first were staring at each other with concern. Cray shot them both a dirty look. They immediately turned their attention away from him. As Cray’s position on the train had him coming up closer to where all the policemen stood, he knew he had them.

He was getting away. Cray lifted his hand just above the window line and decided to give the policemen a little gift. He held up his middle finger.

‘STOP THIS FUCKING TRAIN,’ Cray was certain the man who had shouted the four words was the big policeman. But it didn’t matter. It kept moving. He let out a sigh of relief. It was the best feeling he’d felt for a while.

But it was short-lived.



THATCHER DESERVED ALL the credit. And I would give it to him. He ran for the nearest police car and told a couple of the uniformed men to come with him. By the time I caught up to him he told me where he was going.

He said it was a gut feeling, and, with Thatcher, there's a lot of gut. When I arrived at the station, I cursed the fact that the stairs would be the quickest route to the platform.

By the time I arrived down at the concourse to the platforms, it was on. Thatcher and the other policemen had managed to stop a train that was about to pull out of the station. There was only one reason why they'd done this. Our suspect was on board.

Slightly out of breath, I arrived at Thatcher's side. Spotting me in his peripheral vision, he said, pointing, 'there.' In the next carriage down, I saw him. The man we wanted. The train had now come to a complete stop.

The spattering of train passengers were all looking at each other, and then at the policemen standing there on the platform.

'OPEN THE DOORS DRIVER!' Thatcher roared.

Nothing happened. We all stood there staring up towards the driver's end of the train, which was literally one foot into the train tunnel at the end of the platform. We heard noises,

but still nothing was happening. The doors remained steadfastly closed.

'Fuck's sake!' Thatcher cursed, marching off in the direction of the driver's cabin.

When he was ten feet away, a man's head appeared through a window.

'They won't open Governor!' he cursed.

I ran up to Thatcher and by the time we made it to the last carriage, the other policemen on the platform were doing everything they could to prise the doors of the train carriage nearest to them open. The driver appeared, almost falling out of his cabin's access door and stumbling onto the platform.

'They won't open!' he repeated. Thatcher walked up to him and got straight in his face.

'What do you mean they won't open! We need to get on that bloody train, right now.'

The driver gave him a blank look, clearly not intimidated by Thatcher's bulk.

'Be my guest Guv. Go and try yourself!' the man said. Thatcher grunted. He stepped towards the driver's door. He'd only shuffled a couple of feet or so when it happened.

The driver's door slammed shut with a thud. I had only a second to realise what had happened, but Thatcher turned back to the driver as if he'd provide an explanation.

'What the fuck!' the driver muttered.

A strong gust of wind shot out of the train tunnel. This felt wrong. Thatcher was at the driver's door, pulling with all his considerable might at the handle. It was locked tight. Frustrated, Thatcher bent down to the window and put both his hands against the glass to see inside the cabin.

'Jesus!' he pushed himself back away from the window. When he turned and made eye contact with me, I knew he

wanted me to take a look myself. I raced up to the window and peered inside.

‘Mother of God,’ I muttered.

Someone was standing at the controls of the train, dressed as neat as a pin in a train driver’s uniform. But different to the one being worn by the now shaken driver standing on the platform.

The man standing at the controls of the train looked straight ahead, staring into the abyss of the darkness partially illuminated by the train’s headlights. I went to bash on the window with my clenched fist.

The train was starting to move. I felt my blood turn to ice.

‘STOP! NEWSON!’ I shouted in vain.

He didn’t flinch. He stared straight ahead. Just like he’d done back in 1975. Back then, when he was alive. Moorgate Station. We watched helplessly as the train gained speed, disappearing into the darkness.

As the suspect’s carriage moved past us on the platform, I caught a glimpse of the man we were after. We made eye contact, if only for a second. And if I were not mistaken, he, and the other passengers, looked scared shitless.



THE TRAIN DRIVER stood there, speechless. He watched the taillights of his train grow smaller and smaller. Then, when they were pin pricks of light, they vanished. Megevand, Thatcher and the other policemen stood in a stunned silence nearby.

‘What now?’ one of the uniformed policemen said. The comment was to no one in particular.

Megevand snapped out of the shock of what had just happened. ‘Where’s that train headed, driver?’ he said.

The man turned to Megevand, his bottom lip quivering. He was struggling to process what had just gone down.

‘Morden. Via Charing Cross. Waterloo. All-stations-train,’ he said.

‘Ever had a train hijacked?’ Thatcher asked him.

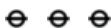
The driver scoffed, as if it were the most ridiculous question he’d ever been asked.

Thatcher’s eyes narrowed. The driver, realising his overstep, took a gulp of air. He straightened his posture and cleared his throat.

‘No, never before,’ he said to Thatcher.

Megevand turned to the other policemen. ‘We need to get on the phone right now,’ he said, clearly frustrated with this turn of events. ‘—to everyone. The Underground’s Main

Control Centre. Our command. Call Buckingham Palace if that will help. That suspect of ours. He's still on board that bloody train. Let's move!



Megevand, Thatcher and the other policemen put their collective fitness levels to the test. With the escalators at the station out of action and the stairs the only way up, they all arrived at ground level in various forms of exhaustion. The train driver was in no mood or shape to test anything.

By the time Megevand spotted the portly driver arrive from the stairwell, they'd been on the phone to the Underground Train network's Main Control Room. The other policemen were in touch with officers who were still at Lulot Gardens.

'Plan?' Thatcher said to Megevand.

Megevand looked around the station as if the answer would be written on one of the walls.

'We need to get on that train,' he responded. Thatcher shrugged.

'And how do we do—' his words were cut off by Megevand's radio.

'—Megevand,' he said into the microphone. Thatcher watched his partner's eyes grow wide.

'Seriously?' Megevand said, before he made eye contact with Thatcher.

'Shit, shit, shit!' Megevand said into the mic, before he added, 'I'll be on standby in the car. Tell me as soon as you hear of anything, okay?' He dropped his radio and shook his head in despair.

'What is it?' Thatcher said.

Megevand ignore his partner and turned to the driver.

‘Stay here, driver. One of the other policemen will take care of you,’ he said, then giving Thatcher the familiar nod. *Time to go.* When the two policemen arrived outside, Megevand said to Thatcher; ‘Train forty-nine is no longer an all-stations train.’

‘Oh shit,’ Thatcher responded. He knew, if it were no longer an all-stations train, it meant it could only be something else. An express train.

Megevand walked briskly towards their car. ‘It gets worse than that,’ he said.

Thatcher struggled to keep up with him. ‘What do you mean?’ he said, between breaths.

Megevand jumped into the driver’s seat and threw on his seatbelt. He sat there staring out the windscreen for a moment.

Only when Thatcher was strapped in did Megevand answer his question.

‘The driver said the train was heading for Charing Cross. Then Waterloo and onto Kennington.’

Thatcher sucked in a breath and held it for a few seconds while watching Megevand. That familiar feeling of dread was back. ‘Don’t fucking tell me,’ Thatcher gasped.

Megevand turned to him, nodding.

‘Yep,’ he said, closing his eyes as the enormity of the situation grew. And they could not do a bloody thing about it.

‘He’s heading for Moorgate,’ Thatcher said under his breath.



Megevand had never felt more helpless. He could not get the sickening thought out of his head. The tragedy at Moorgate Station on the 28 February 1975. Megevand breathed in, and

gripping the steering wheel, did his best to retain a sense of control.

Not just the vehicle he was in control of, but of the impending doom rising from the pit of his stomach. Thatcher sat alongside Megevand, silent. There was nothing to be said. He too, felt powerless. Megevand's radio squawked.

'Megevand,' he said.

'Megevand, Bristow,' Sergeant Bristow's voice sounded tense.

'—Train forty-nine. It just sped through Moorgate Station. Breakneck speed.'

Thatcher gasped. No. Not again. He closed his eyes and was about to say something to Megevand, but Bristow beat him to it.

'No. Not that route. No dead end this time round,' he said. Megevand turned to Thatcher, his eyes widening. 'You don't think,' he muttered into the microphone to Bristow.

'Next stop,' Bristow said, his tone cautious. The radio fell silent for a couple of minutes and then it crackled with Bristow's panicked voice, 'No fucking way!' he yelled, his words chilling Megevand to the core.

'Bristow?' he said.

'Get there now,' Bristow yelled.



THE NEXT STOP after Moorgate on the Northern line was none other than the one that had taken centre stage since the commencement of this nightmare. Now, I drove en route like Mad Max through the streets of London, wishing this car had wings.

The Bank and Monument Complex was our destination. And it wasn't just around the corner either. Thatcher held on tight. He knew I was good at many things. Driving was one of them.

He once said I should have been a stunt-driver. The thought of a career change to that profession had crossed my mind. But only for a moment. We both gasped in unison as the car I was driving swerved around a double-decker bus on what felt like two wheels with literally no room at all to spare. This thing with buses always getting in my way was starting to annoy the shit out of me.

I've never gotten that close to a double decker before, without leaving a signature all the way down the side. But back to the matter at hand. Bristow and I shared the same hunch. It was a wild shot. Completely bonkers. Time would tell.



I was riding a van's rear end like I wanted to mount it. Thatcher, the last time I looked sideways, was paler than usual.

'You breathing over there, Maggie?' I asked.

He cracked his passenger side window an inch and turned to me.

'The way you're driving today, I'm struggling to!'

My radio then squawked. Thatcher picked up my radio, 'Sergeant Thatcher.'

We were making headway but were still at least another fifteen tortuous minutes away from Bank and Monument. I knew what this call was going to be. It would confirm the hunch or smash it to smithereens. Knowing the travel time of train forty-nine from Archway, through Moorgate, to Monument, this was going to be the pivotal moment I'd been secretly dreading for the last five minutes.

'Thatcher, Bristow. Megevand is with you I gather?' Bristow asked.

'Yes, he's driving as we speak Bristow, what do you have?' Thatcher said.

I gave Thatcher a quick sidelong glance. His face was set like concrete; his usual pallor had turned a darker shade of crimson. He snapped his head and when he made eye contact with me, I knew the answer.

'Yes?' I hissed.

Thatcher nodded. With a head his size, you knew when he was answering in the affirmative.

'Fuck off,' I shouted, and concentrated on causing more havoc on the remainder of the journey.



BRISTOW WAITED FOR Megevand and Thatcher on the main concourse level at Monument Station. The place was descending into mayhem. People were running in all directions. Most were running towards the exits.

British Transport Police were trying their best to keep a handle on whatever the hell was going on. But it appeared that they were losing an uphill battle. And then it hit Megevand and Thatcher like a sledgehammer. The smell. Death.

‘This again?’ Thatcher groaned.

Bristow nodded and flicked his head in the direction of where he wanted Megevand and Thatcher to follow him. As they ran in the opposite direction of bewildered passengers, he turned and said to Megevand,

‘Train forty-nine. We were right.’

‘It’s here?’ Megevand responded.

‘The train arrived at the station at high speed. Overshot the platform by at least half the train length.’

But, ‘he closed his eyes and Megevand and Thatcher could tell he was amazed our hunch was bang on, ‘—it stopped here at Monument. This is no coincidence, right?’

The men moved towards the escalators.

As they stepped on, Megevand answered Bristow’s question.

‘No coincidence in my books,’ Megevand said.



Megevand could feel the temperature rising whilst the awful smell remained the same. When the three policemen arrived at the Northern Line platform, things were spiralling out of control. The train had overshot the platform by almost its entire length. Only one and a half carriages remained visible.

The rest, Megevand, Thatcher, and Bristow knew, was now inside the train tunnel at the other end. People were still scurrying out of the open doors of the carriages when Megevand arrived. Thatcher held back and was literally cutting anyone off who tried to get past him until he was sure the person was not the suspect they were looking for.

Luckily for them, they weren't. Bristow entered the rear carriage and with Megevand hot on his tail, they wasted no time commencing a frenzied search for their suspect. Megevand had studied the sketch of the man they wanted so many times, he knew he'd recognise him in an instant.

The detective pulled a piece of paper from his pocket and realised it was the actual sketch of the man. He unfolded it and began to approach the steady stream of passengers filtering through the adjoining doors to the carriages.

‘Seen this man on this train?’ he asked.

When they entered the next carriage, Megevand stopped in the aisle and observed an older woman sitting in a seat. Her eyes were glazed over, looking straight ahead, frozen in shock.

‘Seen this man on this train, Madam. Like right now?’ he asked, hoping for a response.

‘Madam?’

Slowly she turned and glanced at the sketch but shook

her head. He leant down and whispered, '—it's okay. Why don't you follow the others and make your way off the train.' When he and Bristow arrived at the doors to the next carriage, Megevand turned and looked back down the carriage they were about to exit.

The woman remained glued to her seat. He found another ten people making their way out of this carriage, and by the time he'd gotten to the ninth person, his hopes were starting to fade. No one had seen the suspect.

Holding out the flimsy piece of paper to the tenth bloke, a young man whose suit looked as if it were two sizes too big for him, he startled Megevand with his casual response.

'He was in my carriage,' he said.

Megevand grabbed him by the arm.

'Which carriage were you on mate?' he said.

The bloke didn't seem to mind that Megevand had him by the arm. The detective wondered if he'd taken a little relaxer of some kind before heading off to work. He didn't care.

'Second carriage I think, from the front,' the young bloke said.

'Wait on the platform with my colleague. You can't miss him,' Megevand said. The bloke thought nothing of it. He nodded and walked on.

Megevand turned to Bristow.

'You ready for this?' he said. Bristow nodded.

'Never more in my life, Detective,' he said.



MEGEVAND CONTINUED TO scan the disembarking passengers; none matched the suspect's sketch. He didn't even bother showing them. His gut told him the man in question was still on the train.

Megevand's heart began to race as they entered the next carriage. He took an educated guess that this one had to be the third or second last. He was getting close. He could feel it. The carriage was empty.

He and Bristow exchanged glances as they moved quickly to the door adjoining the next compartment, the second last one to search. Bursting through the door, Megevand thought he saw movement in the doorway to the next carriage, the last one.

He picked up his pace. When he was halfway down the second last carriage, he saw him.

'Got him. He's running towards the front of the train!' Megevand shouted.

'He's ours now,' Bristow responded.

Megevand collided with the edge of the door into the last carriage and tried to ignore the searing pain that shot up his arm. But as he looked at the other end of the carriage, he realised there wasn't a single person to be seen. And then his eyes were drawn to the first door, open halfway.

‘He’s out, he’s out!’ Megevand turned to Bristow.

‘He’s on the bloody tracks?’ Bristow said incredulously.

Without another word, Bristow ran for the door and leapt into the inky darkness of the train tunnel. When Megevand stuck his head out, he could barely see a thing. He leapt onto the train tracks.

Bristow was nearby; Megevand could hear him breathing. And then a blade of light seemed to explode from Bristow’s hand. It was a torch-lightsabre. Its beam, Megevand thought, was so powerful it could take on Darth Vader if required.

The light sliced through the inky darkness, revealing a heavy fog swirling around and enveloping them. Bristow turned and aimed the light directly into the tunnel. Megevand caught his breath. There. Ahead. A lone figure, running away.

Bristow’s torch hit him like a laser beam.

‘Stop. Police!’ Bristow shouted.



Ollie knew he was three-ways fucked. Regardless, he pushed on, thinking there might be a chance he’d outrun the cops. He took a quick look backwards.

‘Stop running!’ one of them shouted at him.

Megevand ran alongside Bristow. Their suspect appeared to be gaining distance. Frustrated, and his lungs burning, Megevand wondered if they’d catch him. Bristow’s pace slowed until he came to a complete stop. Panting and gulping air, he looked behind him and almost did a double take.

‘What the...’ Megevand, too, had slowed to a snail’s pace. Turning around he saw what Bristow’s eyes were fixed on.

In the dark, a ball of white light was moving quickly towards them. Megevand roared in disbelief, ‘a train? No! It can’t be!’

'It must be, it can't be anything else! Can it?' Bristow yelled, frantically grabbing Megevand's arm.

'Get off the fucking tracks!'

They pushed their bodies hard against the wall waiting for the train to pass. Five seconds later, the light was blinding, and when they heard screams and shouting, they knew this had to be something inexplicably bizarre that defied description.

The powerful gust of wind was gale force, causing the two policemen to topple to the ground like ninepins, and as the icy whirlwind of collective entities swept through, the high-pitched shrieks were so unbearable that they both slammed their hands against their ears.

In a matter of seconds, just like that, it was over. The darkness of the tunnel returned.

'Are you okay?' Bristow whispered.

Megevand groaned, his chest heaving.

'Yeah. Some show huh? Never seen anything like it in my life.'

'Me neither!' Bristow said, slowly rising to his feet.

'How do we explain that?' he added.

Megevand opened his mouth to speak but was distracted by a moaning sound further down the line. Bristow shone the torch into the far distance, and what lay ahead was what looked like someone slumped on the tracks. Standing behind him, Megevand did a double take.

The Black Nun looked at the detective, and then over to Bristow. As was the norm, she looked pissed off. Standing by her side was Richard Head, the painter and decorator, his clothing as clean as a whistle. White as white. For all of that, Megevand noted his demeanour was slightly more agreeable than the old bag.

Megevand twisted around to face them, nodded, and was about to say 'thank you' when the two ghosts looked at each other and vanished into thin air. In their place, appearing in that instant, she stood. Alexandra.

She looked down at the man lying on the tracks in front of her, but said nothing.

When Megevand walked closer, she eventually turned to him, nodding. He knew what it meant.

Bristow walked to his side and shone the torch in his eyes.

The creep squinted and covered his sooty, greasy face with a trembling hand. Then his body began to shake uncontrollably.

'Shock?' Bristow asked.

Megevand bent down to get a better look at the creep's face.

'With what just went down, is it little wonder?' he said.

Yep. One hundred percent, Megevand decided there and then.

They had caught one of the Bank and Monument Four.



OUR SUSPECT SAID little. I could see that he was in a state of flux. He showed the telltale signs of shock. His last movements before being caught probably had something to do with it. By the time we'd escorted him through the pedestrian tunnels of the Bank and Monument Complex to the ground level, he was mumbling through tears and sobs.

I, for one, had little sympathy for him. If he was, as I firmly believed, to be one of the Bank and Monument Four, the last thing he deserved was this. I guzzled a cup of lukewarm liquid that I was told was coffee (but tasted like anything but) as our suspect was led to the police van that would take him to our office for questioning.

I was not sure who made the call, but I was happy that no fewer than four uniformed policemen ensured he would not be going anywhere else any time soon.

'Alright?' Thatcher stood next to me thinking we were both drinking something that might have originated from the depths of the Thames. When I looked at his cup and to the smirk on his face, he grinned.

'Sugar helps but not by much,' he said.

'Megevand!' I heard Bristow shouting my name.

I turned and looked over to one of the many entrances to the Bank and Monument Complex.

Bristow was standing there beckoning us over. Time to move.



When we arrived at the Bank and Monument Complex Control Room, we were greeted by an excitable Detective Chief Inspector Windebank. And accompanying him was an equally charged Commander Freeman. I was starting to wonder if the two were now joined at the hip.

‘Well done,’ Commander Freeman said to us both, though when we were within shaking hands distance the big boss made his way over to Thatcher.

‘Sergeant,’ he shook Thatcher’s hand and at the same time put his other hand on the man’s shoulder. ‘Word on the street is I need to say thank you to you and Megevand. And well done,’ Freeman said.

Thatcher shook his head, attempting to deflect the compliment.

‘Don’t give us that “you were only doing your job bit,”’ our boss grinned.

‘—You did well today. Your actions will not go unnoticed,’ he added.

I could see Thatcher’s face turn a light shade of red. He wasn’t one for being the centre of attention, or big lavish comments. I watched him squirm briefly before Freeman and Windebank’s tone indicated it was back to business.

‘Gentlemen, aside from your exceedingly good work today, we have some promising news,’ Windebank enthused. Thatcher and I shared the same quizzical look.

‘Officers from our taskforce interviewed the people from the tiepin maker first thing this morning,’ Windebank said.

I could see by the look in his eyes that we may have just

landed what we had hoped for when we'd discovered the custom-made tiepin. Instantly, my heart felt like a jackhammer.

Windebank stared at me for a time before he started to nod.

'You've found who it was made for,' I said what was clearly the answer.

The expression on Windebank's face was encouraging, as was Freeman's.

'That we have, Detective Inspector,' he grinned.



I stood behind the window and looked intently through the one-way mirror. Oliver Cray, thirty-seven years old, of Highgate, sat at the table in the room staring down at his lap.

He looked pitiful. Dishevelled, hair matted, and his dirty, sooty face was like a chimney sweep.

But the man had regained some of his composure in the last few hours. Enough to request legal representation before he said another word. It just delayed the process and that annoyed the shit out of me.

In the meantime, we'd received the green-light to enter his flat after obtaining a search-warrant. Commander Freeman didn't fuck around when he was on a mission. And he was on one today.

Thatcher was currently en route back to Lulot Gardens with a team to see what they could garner from the man's flat. Ninety painfully long minutes later, a smug-looking twat in a cheap suit arrived.

He spent a good amount of time talking to Oliver in whispers, our suspect nodding throughout the mostly one-way conversation. When the solicitor appeared to be done, he turned and looked directly into the mirror as if he could

see me standing on the other side. Either that, or he had done this many times before.

Windebank, standing next to me, turned and smiled. 'You're up, son,' he said.

'Sebastian Bridge,' the solicitor thrust out his hand towards me. Cocky, over-confident, were my initial thoughts.

'Detective Inspector Ian Megevand,' I responded and ensured I won the 'who's got the stronger grip' in the handshake competition. When I sat down on the chair and opened my file, I had the strangest sensation. I wondered if the two men sitting in front of me noticed.

A flush of every nerve ending in my body being poked by a tiny pin. It was quickly followed by a flush of heat, that felt as if it had started at my knees and had just shot out of my bald head. The solicitor shot me a strange look, but as quickly as I saw the expression, it was gone. I took a deep breath and unbuttoned my suit jacket.



I was starting to get annoyed, and I knew it was getting the better of me. The last few minutes of conversation had been fruitless. Frustrated, I left the room to find Windebank exactly where I thought he'd be, in the observation room glaring at our suspect and his solicitor.

'Are you off your game today, Detective?' he said without turning to me and then added, 'or have you met your match in there?' I gritted my teeth and shook my head in frustration.

'No to both, boss,' I responded, though I knew it had to be at least one.

Windebank eventually turned and faced me. I could tell he was as pissed as I was. Cray's solicitor talked the talk. He

told me that we had nothing on his client. Aside from the potential coincidence that his client looked like one of the suspects known as the Bank and Monument Four.

He really got under my skin when he intimated that we had decent descriptions of three of the four suspects. The fourth was vague as hell. I could feel my anger rising. Because I knew, the fucker was right. Bastard.

But I regained my composure and went, or so I thought, toe to toe with the asshole. But I knew I was mentally and physically exhausted. This case had drained me. And this had become personal a long, long time ago.

Windebank stared at me for a time before he turned his attention back to the interview room.

‘We’ve got twenty-four, maybe stretched up to thirty-six hours,’ he said.

I could feel my stomach lurch at his comment. He didn’t have to say anymore. I knew what he meant. As if he could hear our words, Cray’s solicitor gave a sideways glance towards the mirror on his side of the wall.

A grin came and went before he started to whisper to Cray, who nodded at whatever the turd of a man was saying.



WINDEBANK ORDERED MEGEVAND to go home and rest. Megevand knew his boss well enough to know what that meant. Get enough sleep to get back on game.

But Windebank needed him back as soon as possible. He would send the same message to Thatcher. The two men returned to the office later that day. It was just past seven in the evening.

Windebank was waiting for them. So was the rest of the GOTT Taskforce. Megevand scanned the room. The dozen or so people looked tired, but the detective could feel the electricity in the room.

It was a collective feeling of being close. Or at least the positive thought that they had to be getting there. Windebank called everyone to attention with a grunt and a wave of his hand.

'There is light at the end of this very long tunnel ladies and gentlemen,' Windebank announced.

He picked up the tiepin and waved it in the air until he was sure everyone had seen it.

'This tiepin was made exclusively, it's one of a kind,' he said. He looked closely at it as if it were the first time he'd ever laid his hands on it.

'It was made eighteen months ago for one of London's

top accountancy firms. I'm sure most of you may have heard of the company. Derby Crow Thomson, or D.C.T. as it is often called.'

I heard a murmur filter through the room. I eyed Thatcher who was staring at the object in Windebank's hand as if it was responsible for what had happened to Alexandra.

'How many employees?' one of the task force members asked from the other side of the room.

Windebank frowned before studying his notes. 'Last count, here in London,' Windebank shook his head and I knew what he was thinking, 'eight hundred and sixty.' Thatcher hissed. I grunted, but Windebank regained his composure.

When I saw what I was sure was a fleeting grin, I wondered if he had a rabbit in his hat.

'Don't worry about that number,' Windebank said, 'because this tiepin was made only for the top fifty best performing senior managers. Part of an incentive to reach targets, or so we have been told.' Windebank put the tiepin down and looked at all of us.

'We could get our hands on the list of these top fifty senior managers, and go knock on their doors.' Windebank shook his head before turning his gaze out through the windows on the right side of the room. I knew what he was about to say, because I was thinking the same thing.

'But we,' he took a deep breath, '—are under immense pressure to end this as soon as possible. So, there is no time for that.' He looked back towards us all and I could see a deep creased frown pass over his face.

'Tomorrow morning. Nine o'clock. We will pay this accountancy firm a visit. Let's see who matches the descriptions of one of the other men we want to speak to, who happen to work there and were in the top fifty.'



SLEEP EVADED ME. I did my best not to ruin Yukiko's night, but I tossed and turned incessantly. To give my wife the opportunity to get a decent night's sleep, I ventured into the spare room around one o'clock in the morning.

When the alarm went off, I was certain I might have only got a few hours of actual sleep in the end. But I felt human enough to tackle the big day that lay ahead of us. Little did I realise just how big a day it was going to be. Thatcher was waiting at his front door when I pulled up.

'Alright?' he said as he sat in the car.

The suspension on his side of the vehicle groaned and subsequently collapsed at the sheer weight of the man. Somehow, the car levelled out.

'You do realize if I had a pound for every time I'd heard that word come out of your mouth first thing in the morning, I could buy the country estate next to Elton's?'

My partner strapped on his seatbelt as if he hadn't heard a word I'd just said.

'How about "*fuck off*" instead, first thing in the morning?' He said it so casually that it hit the mark with perfect precision. I burst into laughter.

'Sleep well Maggie?' I asked, as I took off down the road.

Thatcher nodded. 'Spent half the night staring at the ceiling. You?' he asked.

'Spare room's ceiling needs repainting,' I responded.

When I pulled up at the end of his street, the radio squawked. Thatcher grabbed the radio and in a matter of seconds told me to pull over.

'Repeat that?' he said as I could hear garbled words being fired off in quick succession on the other end.

Thirty seconds later, Thatcher put the radio down and turned to me.

'Something's going down at Holborn Station and you and I need to be there right now,' he said.

'What about the Derby, Bird and Toms?' I said, surprised.

Thatcher shook his head but remained steadfast, staring through the windscreen.

'Holborn Station, Detective,' he said with a slight grin that turned serious in a flash.

As I quickly figured out which way to go, I placed the blue light on the roof of our car and sped off. As we drove into the nightmare that was the traffic in London, Thatcher sniggered.

'*Derby. Crow. Thomson,*' he said, adding, 'got a feeling I may have got a hell of a lot more sleep than you did, Albert.'

I grinned but had no comeback. I think he was on the money.



THE TRAFFIC WAS beyond insane. At the thirty-minute mark Megevand was certain he'd just about worn a hole in the middle of the steering wheel from honking at anyone who dared get in their way. Buses. Cars. Vans. Bicycles. Pedestrians, who seriously deserved to be run over.

Even an old lady pushing what surely was the most heavily filled shopping trolley the detective had ever seen in his life. How it moved was anyone's guess. Even Thatcher let out a whistle.

'Bugger me dead,' he said, as they sped past the woman. She gave Thatcher what he thought was the middle finger. He smirked.

'Jesus Christ,' Megevand said, as they were almost upon the station. Holburn road was gridlocked. He darted up the middle of the road to the dismay of drivers coming in the opposite direction. There was barely enough room for a single lane each way, let alone a car barrelling up the middle.

Megevand now honked his horn every few seconds, not giving a shit what anyone thought of his driving. The blue light helped. One hundred meters from the station entrance, Thatcher was the first to spot the crowd around the entrance.

'Looks like another party going on Megs,' he said.

'Sure does,' Megevand grunted, before swinging a hard

left and pulling up in Kingsway, literally twenty feet from the station entrance.

As he jumped out of the car, he was given a welcoming of sorts. A double decker bus pulled up behind him about two car lengths away. The driver obviously didn't want to live to see the next day. He planted his hand on his horn and didn't take it off.

Megevand looked at Thatcher, then to the ground below. He realised he'd just double parked in a bus lane.

With the driver with his hand still on his horn, Thatcher's fuse blew first. He took one last look at Megevand who said, 'don't kill him, Maggie.'

Thatcher marched over to the driver's window and almost put his fist through it.

'See this?' he barked, thrusting his warrant card at the window.

The bloke turned white. Even through the windscreen, I could see his sudden change of pallor. He put both hands up into the air as if Thatcher had just pointed a gun at him. Thatcher was already heading with me towards the station entrance before the bloke quietly put his right indicator on and waited patiently for someone to let him in to the traffic.



'Megevand and Thatcher,' Thatcher shouted to the two uniformed policemen standing amongst the throng of people loitering around the entrance to Holborn Station. He'd already held up his warrant card, and the two men knew instantly they were there from the higher-ups.

'—Passengers claimed a group of people came from somewhere down there dressed in old clothes. One person

told me a couple of them were dressed in, what were his words?' he turned to his partner who shrugged.

'Egyptian costumes, that sort of thing.'

Megevand and Thatcher looked at each other as if the constable was on acid.

'Egyptian costumes?' Thatcher moved closer to the young copper, his nostrils flaring.

'You sure that's what was said?' Thatcher roared over the crowd.

The bloke nodded. His partner stepped forward.

'You've heard the old wives' tales about this station, right?'

Megevand and Thatcher shared the usual 'what are you talking about' glance at each other.

The policeman took that as a clear sign. No.

'The ghost of the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh called Amen-ra?' he said in earnest.

The crowd around them was getting on Thatcher's nerves. He shifted his stance and with his eyes narrowing, the constable pushed on.

'—she's been haunting this station since the thirties. Two women back then vanished at this very station. It all started with the inner lid of her coffin arriving at the British Museum. Legend has it there were tunnels connecting the museum to the long-closed Museum Station and a tunnel coming through to this station as well.'

There would have been a time when Thatcher would have roared with laughter at the sheer lunacy of what he'd just been told. But Megevand could see it in his partner's eyes. Now, anything was possible.

'All right then, what else can you tell us?' Thatcher said.

The two British Transport Policemen looked around the

entrance to the station before sharing a glance towards each other.

‘To be honest,’ the other constable who’d barely said a word stepped forward, ‘all these people are acting as if it’s some sort of stunt. Like a set up. Have you noticed how many of the people around you are all milling about, look like university students? Well, you know, young if you get my drift.’

Thatcher stood back and looked around. He realised in a matter of seconds the constable was on to something. He turned to Megevand. The detective could see the anger rising in his partner’s face. If they had been called out here because people were taking the piss, God help them, Megevand thought.

‘Right. Well, I think it’s about time we took a little trip downstairs to remind these idiots what is really going on at the moment,’ Thatcher announced. Megevand could see the apprehension in the two young constables. Thatcher was already marching across to the escalators.



AS WE DESCENDED the long escalator, I couldn't help but wonder if this would end up being an ill-timed practical joke. But Thatcher was on a mission, that was for sure. He stood in front of me, his shoulders somehow looking bigger than they already were.

He was in no mood for games. When we arrived, there were way more people milling around, for reasons I couldn't fathom. We'd been standing there trying to gauge what was going on, when, out of the corner of my eye I saw what I thought was a group of people dressed in Egyptian clothing.

What. The. Fuck.

Before I could say a word, I realised that, to immediate left, Thatcher had seen them too.

At the same time we felt at least one train approaching the station. Doing our best to cut through the crowds, Thatcher shouted 'Police! Get out of the way!' Reluctantly, the mob parted to let us through, but it wasn't without protest and barbed comments.



People were starting to mumble words of distaste towards Thatcher, myself and the other BTP officers. 'Chill out man!' someone shouted. Thatcher went to cut through more people

who gave him a piece of their mind. 'Fuck's sake, relax, what is your problem?' one of them said. Thatcher stopped dead in his tracks.

He eyeballed the git and I was about to jump in between them when, yet again, things went haywire. Bloody Hell. Lights began faltering all around the station. People began murmuring. Some thought it was funny. Others weren't so sure. Thatcher then spotted the ones he wanted to speak to. The Egyptians.

'Megevand!' he said without turning in my direction.

As the train pulled into the station, the shit hit the fan.

The lights went out. The people who were previously laughing were now wailing. Only when I'd stepped another few feet did I realise they were doing it on purpose. They thought this was all a piss-take. The Emergency lighting then kicked in. As the train slowed, the crowd thinned out, some ready to get on the train, whilst the onlookers now made their way towards the escalators, suddenly keen to get out of the station.

The train pulled to a stop. Thatcher was ten feet or more away from four people dressed as ancient Egyptians. One of them held up a flat piece of wood. I instantly recognised it as what had to be a crude representation of the lid to a very old coffin. Oh, I get it.

Standing near the entrance to the platform were the four funny guys in costume. When the tallest one saw Thatcher coming towards them, he stepped backwards as if he was trying to figure out which way to run.

The lights then came back on. As I reached the platform, I could see people still exiting the train. I paid no attention to them. Thatcher was now only six feet away from the bloke

in costume with the coffin lid. He looked as if his life was about to end.

‘Thatcher!’ I shouted, pushing through people.

He walked up to the bloke and punched the coffin lid with such force that it and the git holding onto it went flying backwards. The other three in costume gasped, wondering if jumping on the train sitting only eight feet away may be their best escape route.

A second later, they did, just as the doors of the train were closing. The veins in Thatcher’s neck stuck out like ridges and his eyes were cold, sharp and unforgiving. Standing over the imbecile, sprawled beneath him, Sergeant Thatcher’s fist was still clenched in a tight ball.

Most of the remaining people on the platform were looking in our direction and I wondered how the hell the man mountain was going to talk his way out of this.

And then I spotted him. A man in a dark suit, standing there, watching. Grinning.

He turned his attention to me, acting as if he’d just witnessed something about to bring him good fortune. By then I knew where I’d seen this smarmy operator before, and a feeling of dread hit my chest like a sledgehammer.

It was Oliver Cray’s solicitor.



SEBASTIAN BRIDGE GRINNED at Megevand. But two seconds later, the lights at Holburn Station went out yet again. This was not before the solicitor had suddenly spotted dozens of people standing behind the detective, their dead eyes fixed in a stare. Staring straight at him.

And then there she was. She was one of them. Thatcher caught a breath as the emergency lights burst to life. Megevand knew something was amiss. The smell had come from nowhere. He gasped as a surge of people pushed past him as if he wasn't there.

Thatcher grabbed the idiot in the costume and pulled him to the side of the platform. He told him to keep his mouth shut and close his eyes. The other people on the platform ran for the wall and pushed themselves against it.

Sebastian Bridge now stood alone on the platform. He wondered why, after all this time, when catching a train to and from Holburn Station, nothing like this had happened before.

As if things couldn't get any stranger, the train then pulled out of the station as if what was going on was nothing unusual.

Megevand walked up to Thatcher.

‘Oliver Cray’s Solicitor,’ he flicked his head at the other end of the platform.

Megevand and Thatcher watched with a mix of apprehension and curiosity the horde of dead people walking towards the Cray, led by Alexandra.

When she was level with the two policemen, she paused and turned her head to look at them, her face exhibiting strength and determination. Words weren’t necessary, she simply pointed to Sebastian Bridge and moved in his direction.

A whoosh of air came through the tunnel, almost knocking Megevand to the ground. He steadied himself, and then a thought came to mind.

‘Jesus Christ!’ he shouted, grabbing Thatcher and preparing to run. ‘He’s one of them!’



IT ALL HAPPENED in a flash. I ran, but my legs seemed to be working at fifty percent capacity. It was the weirdest feeling. It was as if a forcefield was pushing me back. Only later would I understand this was true.

I watched helplessly as the mob moved towards the solicitor and could tell by Bridge's oddball movements — that he was shitting himself.

Another train was approaching the station.

I could hear it rumbling in the distance, the sound getting closer as the seconds ticked by.

I stuck close to the wall, edging myself further along the platform. The smell was putrid.

I knew, after all these weeks, exactly what *that* meant. Bad news.

'Alexandra!' I shouted, but she ignored me and walked silently towards him.

Panic-stricken, Sebastian Bridge screamed at the top of his lungs.

'You're dead! You're dead!'

He continued walking backwards, but with the platform about to end, he knew he had nowhere else to go.

'Detective Megevand!' he moaned, 'you need to help me here!'

At the mention of my name, the entire mob literally stopped dead in their tracks. Alexandra turned around in slow motion and stared at me. When our eyes met, she said nothing.

‘If you want my help, Mr Bridge, you need to tell me why they are after you,’ I shouted.

The emergency lights went off, but thankfully the main lights took back over. Now, I could see the scene as clear as day.

The crowd of dead people numbered at least one hundred. Alexandra remained as if frozen in time, standing there, staring at me. But then, she turned around and I heard her murmur words to those around her. They all nodded and began to walk closer to the solicitor.

‘You want my help, Mr Bridge? You’d better give me something right now!’ I said.

The screeches of the train grew louder. Out of the corner of my eye, I glimpsed a flicker of light in the train tunnel, though I kept my eyes fixed on Bridge.

I wondered how the next few seconds would pan out. As if hearing the oncoming train for the first time himself, I noticed that he was now darting his glances between the mob and the train track.

Oh no. He wasn’t.

The mob of ghosts inched forward. I could see panic on Sebastian Bridge’s face. He was trying to figure out what to do next.

‘Tell me what to do Sebastian!’ I shouted, hoping my voice would carry above the sound of the oncoming train. He either heard me, or ignored me.

Sebastian looked to the floor of the platform, before

turning his gaze back upwards, his chin straightening, as if he was about to make an announcement.

'Lord Jesus Christ forgive me for my sin,' he said calmly, and as the train's lights now shone brightly from the tunnel, he shook his head and turned to Alexandra.

'You didn't deserve it. I am sorry for what I did,' he said.

As the last word left his mouth, I gasped. Sebastian Bridge lunged for the edge of the platform. In the last second before I instinctively shut my eyes, I saw him mid-air, the shape of his body and the lights of the train fusing as one, before the sickening crunch of the sound of his death.



MEGEVAND HAD LITERALLY just arrived back up at the ground level of Holborn Station when Thatcher tapped him on the shoulder. 'We need to get moving,' he said.

'Where?' Megevand asked.

'Offices of, fuck, what was the bloody name again?' Thatcher frowned.

Megevand nodded. With what they'd just seen, he couldn't remember the name of the accountancy firm they were supposed to go to this morning either, but he knew where the building was. The two policemen ran to their car.

As the detective did a hair-raising U-turn, cutting off at least three cars and not caring in the slightest, Thatcher took a deep breath.

'Sebastian Bridge was Oliver Cray's solicitor. What are the odds of that, Detective?' he said.

Megevand grunted, taking a deeper breath to calm his nerves. He ran a red light and thanked his lucky stars there were no double decker buses or trucks coming the other way. Just a Mini-minor that miraculously swerved around him but incredibly, the driver didn't sound his horn in protest.

'You've got to be thinking that when our good friend Mr Cray finds out that Sebastian Bridge is no longer his solicitor, and why, he'd be hitting the big-red-panic button,' Megevand said.

Thatcher agreed, shifting his considerably sized frame in the passenger seat that was clearly two sizes too small for him.

‘How long until we get to you know where?’ Thatcher said to Megevand.

The detective took a quick glance at the dashboard to check the time. A bicycle rider nearly met God almighty one second later, but Megevand expertly swerved around him and let him live to see another day. The rider didn’t bat an eyelid. He was obviously used to near-death riding on the streets of London.

‘Fifteen minutes, give or take Maggie. You ready to end this?’ Megevand asked his partner without taking his eyes off the road. He’d ensure he didn’t kill anyone else on the way to their destination. Today, anyway.

‘Never more ready,’ Thatcher said in a low voice, patting the dashboard with his baseball-mitt sized fist. Megevand was sure he saw the entire dashboard bend in a direction it was never meant to.



Megevand came to a stop out the front of the sleek-looking building. A couple of squad cars were already there. Lights flashing. People were streaming out of the building and Megevand put two and two together as he heard the distant sounds of multiple sirens.

‘Don’t fucking tell me,’ Megevand said to one of the policemen standing near the squad car. The bloke looked at Megevand and nodded. ‘Someone pulled it about five minutes ago Detective,’ the constable said.

‘Back door, Loading Bay, do you know?’ Megevand asked him.

‘Officers on both. Who do these dickheads think they’re

dealing with?' the uniformed policeman asked. Megevand ignored the question, focusing on the building where dozens of people were pouring out onto the street.

'Come on!' Megevand growled, ushering Thatcher towards the main entrance.

'Why can't we just lock the bloody doors!' Thatcher said, knowing Megevand would be thinking the same thing. Megevand knew, however, that despite the need to catch the suspect, if there had been a real fire in the building, and the doors were locked, their careers would come to a swift end.

At least, for the moment, the incessant blaring of fire alarms was doing its job; all he could do was hope and pray the man they sought was found. If not tomorrow, they'd have to sift through the employee list. And that was going to take more time.



The scene was chaotic. The lifts were now out of service and people were flooding into the foyer from the stairwells, their faces telling a story of panic, and then profound relief, thinking they had narrowly escaped a potential disaster. Of course, there was no fire, or disaster.

Uniformed police stood at all three entrances scanning the faces in the crowd as people made a mad dash for the doors. Adding to the drama, four fire trucks arrived with ear-splitting sirens, flashing lights, and screeches of brakes and tyres.

Megevand shrugged. This wasn't his problem. He dispensed Thatcher to the furthest entrance on the right while he watched people leaving from the middle and the left. Particularly the men. They weren't here to find a woman.

He continuously flashed images of the suspects through his mind, especially the man known as 'Sime.' He scanned the crowd frantically hoping for a match.

Megevand hadn't heard from any of the task force members, who, he assumed, were somewhere in the building. And if this wasn't irritating enough, people had started to gather on the street, crowding the area, making their job even more difficult.

'Fuck!' He hissed, his stress levels reaching new heights.

Thatcher shouted over to him; it was as if he sensed his tension.

'You all right over there, Albert?' he asked.

Megevand gave his partner an expressionless thumbs up. And then Megevand heard it. A shout, from inside the building. He stood on his tiptoes and looked through the massive windows into the marble foyer. Another shout. Something was happening.

Megevand spotted Sergeant Bristow. There were people everywhere.

And then there was a commotion. Uniformed police were shouting at someone and Megevand could see jostling within the mass of people moving across the floor to the left entrance.

He watched the goings on in the foyer with a keen eye. There.

Two men were pushing their way through the crowd, shoving people out of the way.

A policeman yelled, 'STOP!' Thatcher caught up to Megevand.

'Runners!' Megevand yelled, grabbing Thatcher's arm. Without a second glance, both sprinted towards the farthest entrance. And then it happened. Two men suddenly burst through the door and onto the street, running like wind.



‘POLICE! STOP! RIGHT NOW!’ I shouted.

With just two hundred feet separating us, two men were running for their lives down Gracechurch Street. I couldn’t see their faces to be certain, but one of them looked like the one I most dearly wanted to get my hands on.

Sime.

I glanced behind me in time to see Thatcher collide with two firemen. Worse for them, I thought. Thatcher had as much adrenaline as me to push on, even though he was now behind the four uniformed police running as hard as I was.

Approaching the intersection, the two men ran across Lombard Street, narrowly missing being hit by a taxi. The driver had screeched to a halt, sounded the horn, and was now yelling obscenities.

Damn! Two seconds earlier, my job would have been much easier. I was just about to step out onto the road when a truck, delivering fuck knows what, pulled up alongside the cab.

‘Why fucking now!’ I raged, weaving my way around the two vehicles.

By this time the two men had gained ground, heading towards the intersection of King William and Eastcheap.

‘You’ve got them Albert!’ Thatcher roared.

My lungs burned, but I managed a grin at Thatcher's words of encouragement. Police cars suddenly flew past me, and before I had time to register the scene, another squad car burst through the intersection up ahead on my left from Eastcheap.

Phew, thankfully nothing was coming down King William. As I ran on, I saw another police car appear from the other side on King William and hoped that the desire to have my hands firmly around Sime's neck would soon be realised.

Pedestrians struggled to get out of their way. Some were pushed. Others sideswiped. Police appeared from all vantage points, converging on the two men. And then things got crazy. With their paths blocked up ahead at the intersection of King William, Eastcheap, Fish Street Hill and Gracechurch Street, the two assailants knew their options were limited.

Before my eyes the two men disappeared into the first set of stairs going down below the street. Jesus Christ. Of all the places they chose to try and evade what would, in minutes, be overrun with half the police force of London.

The subterranean labyrinth.

It was known to millions of Londoners and now etched in my memory for a lifetime.

The Bank and Monument Complex.

The scene of the crime.



SIMON THOMAS AND Tony Wright, ladies and gentlemen.

The two men who had managed to escape the shenanigans at the offices of Derby Crow Thomson this morning. Simon overheard someone in the hallway mention that the police were at reception asking to speak to the person in charge.

Something about entering the premises to speak to all the senior staff about a recent incident at the Bank and Monument Complex. Simon found Tony in the lunchroom making coffee. Keeping his voice low, he conveyed, with a sense of urgency, the need to get out of the building immediately.

Simon gestured for Tony to follow him, and checking that no one was in the corridor, he ushered Tony into his office. Turning around, Simon walked five feet and promptly activated the fire alarm. He then made a bolt for his office and closed the door behind him. There, they waited five minutes.

The loud three-beep pattern of the alarm did its job. As the two men reached the bottom of the staircase moments later, hordes of people from multiple floors were spilling into the foyer, Simon was certain his plan was going to succeed.

They would get out of the building. As soon as he was on

the street, he would ditch Tony and be on his way. Spain, via Paris, via the Eurostar. Simple, really. But just as they passed the rows of elevators, he heard a man not fifteen feet away call out to him.

He turned, unsure if the policeman was referring to him. He was. The copper was staring directly at him. Simon knew he had no choice.

He burst into a run. Tony, alongside him, didn't know what was going on. As soon as he saw Simon pushing his way through the crowd, he thought it would be in his best interest to do the same.



When the two men stumbled down the stairs at Bank Station, Tony's belief in their being a united front in escaping capture by the police was blown to smithereens.

'See ya Tony, South America is your best bet. Mexico even,' Simon muttered, and before Tony could respond, Simon pushed him away, nearly sending his co-worker to the floor.

'What? Hold on, wait!' Tony pleaded.

Simon was ten feet away when he stopped and turned around to face the other man.

'I never, ever liked you, Wright. Now fuck off and sort out your own shit,' Simon hissed.

Wright stood there for a second, shocked.

When he heard shouting from somewhere, he knew he had to move. Now, on his own.

He took one last glance at the man. Simon Thomas was running as if he were trying to break the world record for the one-hundred-meter sprint.

Tony realised in that moment that he had no choice but

to do the same. He turned to run in the opposite direction and collided head-on with a frail old man with a walking stick, knocking him to the ground. To the disgust of onlookers, Wright evidently had no intention of stopping and seeing if the old man was okay.



When Megevand reached the stairs that descended below ground into the Bank Station side of the complex, he stopped, deciding to see how far off Thatcher was behind him. The big guy was running like a man possessed. Megevand managed a grin.

He'd never seen his partner run this hard. It helped when the big man had lungs the size of clothes dryers. He knew why Thatcher was doing this. Like him, he wanted to get his hands on the same man as he did. Megevand had never seen Thatcher become this emotionally involved in a case before.

'Alright?' Megevand patted Thatcher on the shoulder when his partner arrived at the entrance. Thatcher was panting as if he'd just run the London Marathon but had hardly broken out in a sweat.

Thatcher managed a nod, so he didn't have to speak.

Megevand reached the bottom of the escalators with Thatcher hot on his tail. He would head straight to the control room and hope they would find out in which direction the two men had gone.

Uniformed police came from all directions and the situation escalated rapidly. Passengers and staff in the pedestrian tunnels, and on the platforms, sniffed the air. Most were overcome by the undeniable stench of death that hung heavy on a wave of heat, radiating from the bowels of the complex.

They'd either heard of or experienced this phenomenon

before. The papers had been full of it. And yet, here it was again. Putrid, disgusting. And then came the sound that stopped everyone in their tracks. Gut-wrenching screams of maybe a hundred, or even a thousand people, reverberated not only from the train tunnels but from, what felt like, every square inch of the Bank and Monument Complex.

The noise was one hundred decibels above ear-splitting, and people were holding their hands to their ears in complete and utter agony, some of them on their knees. Megevand stopped running. He felt as if the sound had cut his inner ear open with a piece of wire.

Thatcher was six feet behind him, his face contorted, fingers in his ears. He looked to Megevand for answers, but he had none. And then, like turning off a tap, the screaming stopped.

Not intending to waste another moment, passengers rushed past them, pushing and shoving their way back up to the main concourse.

After the crowd had departed, Megevand heard something resembling the clanging of gates amid shouts and screams. Both he and Thatcher legged it back up the stairs in time to see two wrought iron gates closing, screening off half of the main entrance.

A handful of people managed to slip through the gap before the gates began shaking violently and finally slamming shut. People standing on the outer side of the gates realised it was their lucky day and fled up the stairs to freedom, but many were left behind.

Two BTP officers had the idea that if they tugged at the gates, they would open. But as soon as their hands came into contact with the wrought iron, they instantly leapt back, frantically shaking their hands.

‘Don’t touch the gates!’ One of the policemen hollered, in obvious pain.

‘—They’ve got an electric current running through them!’

‘Shit!’ said Thatcher in a low voice, ‘this can’t be good.’

His words were barely out of his mouth before Megevand heard the rattle of other gates across three other areas do the same thing.

‘Jesus, no!’ a passenger near one of the other gates realised they would not be able to get out. When a man touched the gate nearest to him, which was now slammed closed, he was thrown back and landed six feet away.

He appeared to be out cold. Megevand shouted to anyone in earshot,

‘Don’t touch the gates! Just stay where you are!’ But people ignored him, and the result was as expected.

Megevand turned to Thatcher. He was about to tell him they needed to get to the control room, when they heard the sounds of deep rumbling, shaking and rattling of what must have been more entrance gates slamming to a close.

People were now in a full state of panic, running in circles, hoping there would be an entrance-exit point where they could safely get out. But all the entrances on the Bank side were now shut of their own accord.

‘Monument!’ one of them shouted to the crowd, ‘we’ll get out that side, come on!’

Megevand made his way towards the control room with Thatcher in tow. They knew there wasn’t a damn thing they could do to help the public. Some were huddling against walls and in corners and Megevand knew that was the best place for them to be.

‘Fucking hell, what is going—’ Thatcher’s words to

Megevand were interrupted. Megevand thought they should be used to this now. But deep down he knew he never would.

The lights went haywire.

With fifty feet between him and the control room door, he broke into a run. He knew what was about to happen and twenty feet from the door, it did.

The lights in the complex went out.



THE LIGHTS IN the control room were out as well. Twenty seconds later, the backup power source thankfully kicked in. I stood close to Bristow. He looked shell-shocked.

‘Mother of God,’ he whispered.

Kitcher burst through the door at the other end of the control room as if one thousand zombies were hot on his tail.

‘Fucking hell!’ he muttered.

He closed the door and, to my surprise, proceeded to lock it.

‘You, okay?’ Bristow asked him.

‘The weird shit is off the charts out there. And we have hundreds passengers trapped within the complex just for the fun of it,’ Kitcher said.

‘Bristow, were you about to say something?’ I asked the British Transport Policeman.

‘I’ve just received word from staff at the Monument side of the complex. The entry-exit points, all of them, are all closed, and you can’t get near them. Somehow, they’ve got what appears to be some sort of electrical current running through them. What the hell is this?’ he said, his eyes darting around the room.

I sat back and had barely enough time to take a deep breath when a phone rang on a nearby desk. A bloke picked

it up and identified himself. He was one of the London Underground staffers who monitored the goings on of anything that moved in the Bank and Monument Complex.

Bristow and Kitcher looked at each other and then turned in the bloke's direction. Whoever was talking to him had a fair bit to say. The bloke sneaked in a few 'uh-huhs,' but that was it.

'We are completely cut off here as far as pedestrian entry-exit points in and out of the complex,' he said. A few seconds later he added, '—I understand.'

He turned and stared at Kitcher, then at Bristow, and cast fleeting glances towards Thatcher and me.

'Yes, yes. I will let them know immediately. I'll talk to you soon, no doubt. Okay. Bye-bye.'

The staffer took a deep breath. He swung his chair around and faced the four of us. I'm not sure about the others, but I was holding my breath.

'We have a problem,' he said to us all. Bristow and Kitcher looked at each other and then back to the man.

'Spit it out, Barry,' Kitcher said. I could see his agitation was getting the better of him.

Barry shook his head and bit his bottom lip.

He hesitated. 'Um,' he said, as the gravity of what he'd just been told seemed to sink in.

'—That was the London Underground Main Control Centre — as I said. We have a situation.'



We all found somewhere to sit. I fell into a chair. Thatcher nearly crushed a desk. Bristow and Kitcher wobbled on their feet until they'd both found chairs into which they had fallen heavily. Barry, the 'Control Room Bloke,' had told us that all

lines that ran into the Bank and Monument Complex were completely down.

When I pressed him to explain to us non-underground people (Thatcher and me), he said that the six separate lines had lost all power. All stations on those lines were non-operational.

Trains running on any of the lines had stopped wherever they were five minutes ago. Some had pulled into a station. Others were halfway between stations, now stuck with nowhere to go.

‘What’s more,’ Barry said, adding, ‘if there could be any further bad news, reports of masses of what they originally thought were people but now believed were ghosts were spotted walking through the train tunnels.’

‘Where were they headed?’ Thatcher asked.

Barry turned to Thatcher and was about to give him a ‘how the bloody hell should I know’ look, but upon doing a double take and seeing his size, wisely chose to respond, ‘no one knows.’ Bristow turned to Kitcher.

‘We are talking the Central, Circle, District, DLR, Northern and Waterloo and City lines.’

Kitcher shifted his gaze to the floor. Eventually, he took a deep breath, swung his head up and stared at the large map of the Bank and Monument Complex for a moment.

‘The two men who fled the offices of Derby Crow Thomson are here,’ he said, turning to me, his eyes narrowing, and pointing at the map. I nodded.

‘Are we done once and for all in believing in coincidences, gentlemen?’ he asked, looking intently at us all.

Thatcher grunted in the affirmative. Bristow shook his head and said, ‘I’m with you, Kitcher.’ They were all waiting for me to answer, but, for some reason, I just sat there.

After a few moments, I rose to my feet and rolled my head around my shoulders. I stretched my arms and my chest rose as I took one hell of a big breath. I knew what needed to be done.

It was all pointing in that direction. Coincidences are never this big.

‘Those two men. They have to be the last two. And we’d better get our hands on them before our friends from the other world do. Coincidences of this magnitude — fucking bullshit.’ There was my answer. Bristow jumped from his chair and headed for the rack of torches and equipment. ‘Let’s gear up, gentlemen, and find these two scumbags.’



MEGEVAND REMEMBERED THE first time they'd searched the complex. This place was the stuff of nightmares, particularly when trying to locate a person. It stretched for miles in all directions.

The place was in complete darkness, which made it all the more harrowing. Even the emergency lighting was out. Bristow had taken charge and had directed uniformed police to torch-up and track down all the passengers trapped in the dozens of nooks and crannies located throughout the complex and to bring them up to the main concourse areas of both the Bank and Monument Stations.

So far, that side of the operation was going as well as it could be. Megevand could still hear the cries and moans of people lost in the darkness. What made his skin crawl was that often he felt as if it weren't the living he could hear.

The heat and that awful smell made it all the more difficult. They'd received word from Windebank that things above ground were also descending into absolute chaos in Central London.

With the six lines down and the dozens upon dozens of stations on the same lines themselves in darkness, things were going from bad to worse. Reports of trains stuck in various

Underground Lines were coming in, and the police rescue branch was being stretched to breaking point.

Megevand was advised Oliver Cray had been informed of the death of his solicitor, Sebastian Bridge. Initially, he was restrained, but when he realised the game was over, he broke down and confessed to being one of the men involved in the sexual assault of Alexandra Young. With nothing else to lose, he confirmed Sebastian Bridge had also been present.

Megevand also learned that Oliver Cray had sworn on his mother's life that, when he and his solicitor fled the scene, Alexandra was still alive. When Windebank pressed him to divulge how he knew this, Cray said that he knew for sure she was alive because she was screaming for the other two men to stop. Windebank also told Megevand that he'd never wanted to punch another man's face as much as he wanted punch Oliver's after he made that comment.



Four long, arduous hours passed. Thatcher was sweating from head to toe. His shirt was drenched. Megevand looked no better. His throat ached from all the shouting. He found a water fountain somewhere in an eerie pedestrian tunnel and ignored his own trepidations for germs and diseases and guzzled from the weak trickle.

They'd come across approximately sixty terrified passengers who surely would suffer from nightmares for weeks to come. The mysterious winds persisted. Megevand was now almost used to the putrid smell that permeated every square inch of the complex.

The two policemen bumped into a lone uniformed British Transport officer, who appeared as if he'd run across the desert in his full uniform. Sweat poured off him.

‘Alright?’ Thatcher asked.

‘Found another dozen passengers, sent them up to the Monument end,’ he reported.

‘Good work son,’ Thatcher patted him on the shoulder and the bloke winced slightly in pain. This was the norm when Thatcher patted anyone.

‘How many do you think are up there now?’ Megevand asked. The constable looked over Megevand’s shoulder.

‘I’d take a stab and say about eighty, could even be one hundred of them,’ he said.

‘Thanks, we’ll let you go. Good work Constable,’ Megevand said, but as the bloke walked away into the darkness, a thought struck Megevand like a hammer.

‘Jesus Christ,’ he muttered.

‘Talk to me Albert,’ Thatcher mused, turning and pointing his torch into Megevand’s sweaty face.

‘Come with me,’ Megevand replied, squinting against the blinding light. He turned sharply and, with a brisk pace, headed towards the Monument side of the complex.

He wondered if it could be too good to be true.

He would find out soon enough.



WE WALKED ON down the pedestrian tunnel, and in the distance, I could see the main concourse of Monument Station coming into view. At least six policemen were standing around in certain vantage points with torches, attempting to shine as much light as possible in the area. I saw scores of people sitting on the ground in between them.

Most stared at each other stone-faced. Surely, my hunch would be too good to be true. I hadn't bothered to tell Thatcher. I didn't want to jinx it.

So, I told him I wanted to check out how things were going at this end of the complex. He was exhausted, I could tell, so he chose to tag along. As we got closer to the crowd, I slowed. I wasn't sure if anyone had noticed me or Thatcher in the near darkness, but I was hesitant to get any closer.

Thatcher slowed by my side, and it was at this point that I wondered if bringing him along was a good idea. He stood out — like a pair of you-know-what's. But it was too late for that now. We were here. I told Thatcher to wait while I snuck off and approached the nearest policeman.

I whispered in his ear. Nodding, he quietly walked over to another policeman and did the same, repeating my request. I avoided looking at the crowd of people sitting in the area in front of me. I didn't want to give myself away.

I went back to where Thatcher was standing. I told him there and then. Without any delay, he grabbed my shoulder and pulled me in so close I felt the heat of his breath in my ear. In other circumstances I would tell him I was a happily married man but he whispered;

‘—far right, two, maybe three people from the waste bin. He’s got his head down, but I’m certain he’s been trying to steal a glance since we got here,’ Thatcher said.

I scanned the area Thatcher mentioned. When I saw him, I quickly checked if the policemen standing in a circle knew why I was here. All of them were looking at me. Thatcher moved forward, and then said ‘left, you take right.’

‘Got it,’ I said.

I kept my eyes glued on him. It wasn’t Sime, but the other one. Adrenaline coursed through my veins. One of them was hiding in plain sight. Hoping to escape with the trapped passengers. It was a noble idea, but now it was blown. I moved closer.

Twenty feet and I was upon him. The man bobbed his head up, and made the mistake of making eye contact with me. His eyes widened. He sprang to his feet. When he realised Thatcher and the other policemen were staring at him, he muttered something and then made a run for it.

He had barely enough time to get ten feet away when he tripped. By now, Thatcher was after him. The moron picked himself up and ran when Thatcher suddenly hit the brakes.

‘What the fuck!’ he shouted.

He looked down to his feet and then over to me.

‘Something’s—’

At the same time, it happened to me. I swung around and spotted the other policemen.

‘We’re bloody stuck!’ one of them shouted to me.

Tony Wright struggled to his feet and in turn, glared at all of us. He scratched his head and wondered what the hell was going on before running for the nearest exit. I looked over to Thatcher and cracked it.

‘Fuck!’ I hissed, throwing my hands up in the air. ‘What the fuck is going on?’

Thatcher fell to his knees. ‘My feet are fucking glued to the floor!’ he shouted.

If I thought things couldn’t possibly get worse, I was wrong. When Wright was twenty feet away from the wrought iron gate that blocked the entry-exit point, the gate began shaking violently as my hand flew up to my mouth. I watched in horror as it slowly opened.

‘You’ve got to be fucking kidding me!’ Thatcher groaned, seeing what I was seeing.

Wright heard Thatcher’s protests. He turned around and grinned, and for good measure, gave us all the bird. Immediately, a gust of putrid wind blasted from the tunnel behind us, swirling through the main concourse with such force that most of those standing had been knocked to the floor.

When I recounted the next few seconds to Windebank later on, I don’t think I’d ever seen a more surprised expression on his face. Within six feet of the gate, Wright suddenly lurched forward and fell to the ground.

When he got up, to his and everyone’s surprise, his trousers and underwear were now around his ankles. In a confused state, he shuffled towards the gate. And then it happened. The gates, once more, slammed shut, and Wright’s ear-splitting scream pierced the air like a knife.

Having been released from whatever it was that had prevented us from moving, Thatcher and I ran to the gate. My

hand flew to my mouth and I gasped, astonished at what I was looking at.

Wright was trapped.

His middle leg was wedged firmly between the two gates, and it defied belief that it hadn't been cut off completely.

As men, and protective of our respective manhood, Thatcher and I shared a look of dread and dismay as Wright clung to the bars, his eyes darting wildly while the primal scream of terror continued. After I had recovered somewhat, I patted him rather forcibly on the shoulder and took a moment to have a good look at his face. I was sure. We had our third man.



WITH ENTRY-EXIT POINTS effectively shut, there was no way out of the complex. The men took the opportunity to try and get some rest. They needed it.

Megevand took his turn on one of the fold-up beds in the back room of the Bank and Monument Complex Control Room. He struggled to find sleep. The detective's mind was racing a thousand miles an hour.

Initially, he couldn't stop thinking of the man who identified himself as Tony Wright. They'd somehow been able to pull the gates open just a mere half an inch or so, so they could get his injured appendage out. Ouch.

He cried and shrieked in pain until Bristow managed to find some painkillers for him. It was more about giving them all a rest from his groaning and cries of despair rather than giving him pain relief.

When they'd established Wright worked for Derby, Crow Thomson, Megevand was fairly certain he was the third suspect. And he matched the descriptions of one of the suspects also.

Although he refused to talk, aside from admitting where he worked, the most important piece of information he let slip was the identity of the man whom he had run out of

the building with. All Megevand had ask Wright was if the bloke's name was Simon; he nodded.

Megevand couldn't help but stifle a big grin when he opened my eyes to find Thatcher lying on another fold up bed on the other side of the room. How one of such diminutive size could have survived a man of Thatcher's weight sprawled on top would go down as yet another mystery derived from the case.

The big man groaned and shifted slightly, and to Megevand's initial horror, followed almost instantly by amusement, the fold-up bed collapsed to the floor.

'Fuck off,' Thatcher hissed as he lay on the ground amid wreckage.

'Coming out of your pay Maggie,' the detective smirked as Thatcher scrambled to his feet.

Thatcher was about to retaliate when they heard raised voices coming from the control room. Upon opening the door, the men found Kitcher and Bristow standing there.

'Take a seat, gentlemen,' Kitcher said.

Megevand sat on the last available chair, while Thatcher found a desk to lean on, as carefully as he could manage. Kitcher indicated to one of the other BTP officers to patch the call he had on hold through to the phone on the desk where he, Bristow, Megevand and Thatcher were nearby.

'Detective Chief Inspector Windebank,' Kitcher announced after taking the call on speaker, 'Megevand, Thatcher, and Bristow are here with me,' he added.

'Thank you, Detective,' Windebank's voice came through the speaker.

'I have Commander Freeman here with me along with other representatives of the Government, and also the London Underground,' Windebank said.

‘Now that you are all present, I wanted to give you the latest updates from up here,’ Windebank said. Megevand nodded then realised he hadn’t responded to his boss.

‘Detective Chief Inspector,’ knowing now was the time to use his official title, ‘we are all ears,’ Megevand said. There was a pause, but only momentarily.

‘Gentlemen, the six lines leading into the Bank and Monument Complex are still down. We’ve managed to get most of the public out of all stations, which is positive. Search and Rescue have done a fine job and located and evacuated most, if not all the trains that were en-route on these lines.’

Megevand murmured on the other end before his boss went on.

‘But this is where I now have to tell you the other news,’ Windebank said with a degree of conviction.

Megevand sat up straighter in his chair. He caught a whiff of himself. It wasn’t good. He longed for some cool air and a long shower. It would have to wait.

‘First,’ Windebank sounded pained, ‘there are reports of the train tunnels,’ Megevand heard the hesitation in his boss’s voice, ‘all leading into the complex.’ Megevand looked over to Thatcher, Bristow and Kitcher. Megevand could feel the air in the room evaporating.

‘I know it’s hard for me to say it, but I will just come out with it,’ Windebank said, hesitantly, his voice trailing away. Windebank seemed to be mumbling to himself and then, clearing his throat, he finally spoke.

‘Hundreds of them, gentlemen. Actually,’ he conferred with whom Megevand thought could have been Commander Freeman.

‘—thousands. All right; I’ll just damn well say it then.

Reports from dozens of eye witnesses put the number at many thousands of them.'

'Them?' Megevand said. He looked over to Thatcher whose eyes had widened.

'Them, Megevand — the ones from the afterlife. The lifelike ghosts you've all seen at one time or another.'

'Are you saying they're coming here?' Megevand asked incredulously.

The silence on the other end of the speaker answered his question.

'Jesus,' Megevand said under his breath, before the room fell silent.

'But there's one more thing,' Windebank added. Megevand just sat, dumbstruck.

'Detective Megevand, if you would prefer picking up the phone,' Windebank asked.

Megevand looked over to Thatcher, and shook his head.

'No, it's okay, we're all in this together, Detective Chief Inspector.'

There was a pause on the other end, but it didn't last long.

'Detective Megevand, this one is a little closer to home,' Windebank disclosed, lowering his tone.

'Go ahead,' Megevand said, just wanting Windebank to get on with it.

Windebank let out a sigh, Megevand heard it loud and clear.

'Witnesses at Clapham South Station, Detective. Two British Transport Police Officers. They claim to have seen at least three men on the platform just before the lights went out.'

Megevand felt the exposed skin on his body flush. He

wondered if he would have been better off picking up the handset. Too late now, he knew.

‘One of the three men matches the description of Richard Bailey, or you know,’ Windebank hesitated, then pressed on.

‘The second one matches the description of—’

‘William West,’ Megevand cut in, his throat tightening at the mention of the name.

‘Correct Detective,’ Windebank said, adding, ‘we don’t know who the third person is.’

Again, the room fell silent. Megevand wondered if this was it, but deep down knew it couldn’t have been. He swallowed and felt a sickening feeling deep in his stomach as if he knew what Windebank was about to say next.

‘You still with us Detective?’

‘I am,’ Megevand acknowledged, bracing himself for what was to come.

‘It pains me to tell you this Detective Megevand, but you need to know. I’m sorry, but there was someone else who was with Bailey, West and the third man.’

Thatcher stared at Megevand as he watched his partner’s face turn pale.

Megevand closed his eyes and felt something in his throat push against his Adam’s apple.

‘It was her, Detective. The description was one hundred percent accurate,’ Windebank said.

Megevand shook his head and wished he hadn’t heard the next two words come out of the speaker.

‘Heather Brookes.’



I TOOK THE rest of the call with Windebank in a private office adjacent to the complex's control room. He told me Quentin and Mary had been informed of the sighting of their daughter. Naturally, they were both distraught.

I understood this perfectly. I was dealing with my own anxiety over Heather's disappearance, but they were her parents, who adored their little girl. Windebank went on to tell me that Mary's release from hospital only yesterday was nothing short of a miracle, considering her injuries. I spoke to Quentin and Mary a few minutes later. The fear in their voices made me squirm.

But they were resolute and unwavering in the hope that, as they put it, the 'forces of good' would somehow prevail. I filled them in with all the available updates from our end and told them we were about to pull out all stops and track down the one I believed was the ringleader of the Bank and Monument Four.

I didn't hold back. I didn't have to with Quentin and Mary. I told them I believed that when this scum was found, something big was going to happen. I also mentioned that Alexandra was the linchpin of the turmoil and of the unrest among thousands of spirits trapped in the Underground.

I couldn't tell whether Mary had taken in the last part,

because she was crying so much. I had a lump in my throat at the sound of her anguish, so I pledged right then to do whatever it took to return Heather to them.



MEGEVAND WIPED THE sweat from his face, wishing there was a quick fix for getting the smell out of his nostrils. The stench of rotting meat and garbage filled the air. He sipped on lukewarm water from a bottle and turned to Thatcher.

‘How you holding up, Maggie?’

Thatcher pulled his shirt from each of his armpits and recoiled at the smell of his own sweat.

‘Ever wondered what the first pint is going to taste like when we get out of here Albert?’ he said. Thatcher was a man who always thought ahead. In times of crisis, Megevand thought, it was all about beer.

‘The sweetest tasting liquid in the world I believe,’ Megevand replied.

It was coming up to six hours since they’d hashed out the plan back at the control room after Megevand had gotten off the phone to Windebank. They pulled together every available policeman in the Bank and Monument Complex and laid out a search grid they hoped would flush out their last suspect.

Megevand and Thatcher were starting to wonder if he’d escaped the complex through one of the many train tunnels that entered the sprawling labyrinth. Although, with reports

of hordes of ghosts appearing from the darkness in all the train tunnels, Megevand wondered if these escape points were viable.

The last reports from Windebank and the Underground Main Control Centre were that the tunnels of all six lines entering the complex were completely blocked with the dead. Megevand found it hard to believe.

But it was Thatcher who 'reminded' the exhausted detective of what he, himself, had witnessed and lived through, six years earlier. Megevand knew he was right. The policemen's search area ended at one of the platforms — in this case, the Docklands Light Railway. And then, Megevand ate his words, like never before.

There they stood, shoulder to shoulder on the train tracks, from one end of the platform, all the way back to the other. Ghosts from days gone by. So many, counting them was impossible. If things weren't creepy enough, their lifeless eyes were fixed on Megevand and Thatcher. None made any attempt to communicate.

All looked miserable. Varying ages. Different people. Tall and short. Young and old. Men and women. He spotted the odd child. Thatcher made the mistake of speaking to an old man who looked as if he lived two hundred years ago. He walked up to within a few feet of him.

'Why are you here?' Thatcher asked him.

As Megevand bent down to get a closer look through the train tunnels, he swore the old man answered Thatcher's question with just one word.

'Alexandra.'

However, one second later, it happened.

Suddenly, they all closed their eyes simultaneously.

Thatcher stepped back, and before he could retreat further, they all screamed at the top of their lungs.

Thatcher recoiled. He shuffled backwards and collided with the wall of the platform.

Megevand grabbed Thatcher by the arm and yanked him into the pedestrian tunnel.

'Maybe it's not a good idea to do that again, huh?' Megevand whispered. Thatcher was shaking like a leaf. And then the screaming abruptly ceased.

Without moving, the two policemen looked back out to the platform, and what made Megevand's skin crawl was the fact that, once more, their eyes were open and staring back at him. Quickly, they backpeddled another thirty feet up the pedestrian tunnel, where their radios squawked.

Megevand heard his name. It was Bristow. Thatcher turned as Megevand responded to the call.

'Megevand,' he said.

It was the news the detective had been hoping to hear for the last six excruciating hours.

'One of the Constables believes we have him cornered, Detective,' Bristow said. The look on Thatcher's face matched that of his partner.

'You have my complete attention Bristow,' Megevand and Thatcher's eyes remained locked on each other's.

'We're all heading there now, as I am sure you will be in two seconds flat.'

Megevand nodded and said calmly, 'on our way.' The look said it all. Thatcher knew where they needed to go.

Where it all began.



WE BOTH FOUND a brand-new source of untapped energy. Thatcher ran alongside me as if he could run to Scotland and back in a day. My lungs burned and my legs felt as if they were going to snap off my torso, but I had no intention of slowing my pace.

When I spotted the sign pointing us to the Northern Line platform, my senses went into overdrive. If it were possible for the smell of death to double in potency, it was doing it right here, right now.

The air temperature was as hot as it was back at Moorgate Station. It slowed me down.

I felt a new wave of sweat trickling from every pore. Thatcher grunted and I watched him press his hand to his nose in a futile attempt to block out the nauseating odour.

I then heard shouting and commotion, but this time it came in waves — insanely loud, then quiet a second later. It was the strangest thing. When I spotted the Northern Line Platform up ahead, I could see the light from the torches panning everywhere.

More ghosts. I realised, as we approached the source of the smell, that it could be emanating from the lepers of Green Park. Thatcher was the first to go down. He coughed, then vomited uncontrollably.

I dodged the projectile as it splashed all around the concrete floor. Ten feet from the entrance to the platform, they all saw me. Like before, they sought my eyes, staring directly at me.

And now, it just came. Fucking hell. I tried to spread my stance to avoid the vomit hitting my legs and shoes, but it happened too quickly. I wiped my mouth and nose and turned to Thatcher, who was as pale as a sheet of paper.

‘Alright?’ he muttered.

I shook my head and made a mental note to hug the big bloke at the next opportunity. Even when the shit is hitting the fan, there he is. *Alright?* I nodded weakly and we both stumbled onto the platform. The train tracks were covered by a mass of the sickest people I had ever seen in my life.

With the curve of the platform quite pronounced, I shone my torch along the platform and spotted six uniformed policemen milling about halfway up. As we walked towards them, one of them threw up into a waste bin, while two others stepped back into a nearby pedestrian tunnel, probably doing the same thing.

When we got closer, I spotted Bristow and Kitcher.

They turned to us and nodded.

‘Gentlemen,’ Bristow said.

‘Where is he?’ I responded.

Kitcher and Bristow looked at each other before turning their torches to the other side of the platform. Right at the very end, pushed up against the corner of the wall at the end of the platform, was a long, dark shape.

A man.

I walked up to where the other men were standing, they parted so I could walk through. I stopped just on the other side of the small group and watched the beam of my torch

slowly follow the floor of the platform. It then found the corner.

He huddled in there as if we couldn't see him. I walked another ten feet. To my right were hundreds of dead people watching my every move. I couldn't believe the irony in that moment when it came to me. The man was standing five, maybe six feet away from the very door that entered the access tunnel where he, I believe, sexually assaulted and then killed Alexandra.

'It's over, Sime,' I said, rasping, my voice guttural after vomiting my guts out a few minutes ago.

The man shifted in his position but largely just remained there.

'I'm not sure what your next move is going to be, but there is no way out,' I informed him.

Thatcher appeared at my side. He didn't say a word. I could hear his breathing. We both stood there and knew this was it.

'I don't know what you are talking about,' the man responded.

I stepped closer, just a few feet. Thatcher did the same.

'I got lost down here and all these ghosts scared the day-lights out of me,' he said.

Thatcher grunted. I saw him shift his stance as if he were about to break into a run, direct for this man in the corner.

'You work at Derby Crow Thomson. Your name is Simon. We have Wright, Cray and Bridge — except he is dead. It's over. We know who you are and what you did.' Thatcher stepped forward. I saw Sime shift again but this time he moved away from the corner.

What happened next was a blur.



SIME SUDDENLY MOVED away from the corner and lunged awkwardly for the door handle. If he thought he was going to escape through the access tunnel, he obviously had no idea that it was a dead end. But as he turned the handle, things went to hell. The door itself — burst open with force.

Sime was thrown in the air — as if he were a rag doll. Megevand gasped in disbelief. He'd never seen a man of the suspect's size thrown so far. He landed on the train tracks with a groan, having flown right through the leper ghosts. Many of them made it known what they thought of the unwanted intrusion. The detective then spotted a lone figure standing in the doorway. Her silhouette was unmistakable.

Alexandra.

Bristow, after a hurried conversation on his radio, suddenly bellowed, 'we've got company!'

Megevand and Thatcher turned around and both looked at him.

'—That was the Control Room. We've got a train coming at high speed directly towards us. Detective, it originated from Clapham South Station. An eyewitness said Bailey, West and the third man were in the cabin,' Bristow said.

Megevand turned around, trying to locate their suspect. With all the ghosts standing there, he couldn't see him. At

this point he realised they were all no longer staring at him; their eyes focused on the access door at the end of the platform where Alexandra was standing.

‘Where the fuck is he?’ Thatcher said.

‘I don’t know, but we need to bloody find him!’ Megevand responded.

They peered down onto the tracks but all they could see were the lepers ghosts. Too many to count. They were shoulder to shoulder. Megevand was the first to feel the gush of wind. He knew he needed to find their suspect — now.

He wanted him alive. He wanted to put him behind bars for the rest of his life. Having him killed by a train was not an option. It would be the easy way out. He turned to Thatcher.

‘I will find him,’ Megevand said, and before Thatcher could protest, he jumped off the edge of the platform, and onto the tracks. The ghost lepers glared at him. The ones who were nearest just evaporated when Megevand walked into them. But when he turned back, they had reappeared.

He felt another gush of wind. The train was coming. Megevand walked another ten feet and had still yet to locate their suspect. Frustrated, he yelled out.

‘Sime! Show yourself you gutless bastard!’

With Thatcher attempting to shine as much light as possible down onto the tracks, Megevand pushed through the ghosts just as a new set of lights appeared in the distance.

‘Fuck,’ he muttered.

The train.

‘Get off those tracks Megevand!’ Bristow shouted.

The detective had no intention of being on the tracks when the train arrived but needed to catch their suspect first. It was all that mattered. As the train’s lights grew larger,

Megevand heard the ubiquitous sounds of the locomotive approaching.

Suddenly, movement to his side. Before he had a chance to react, Sime had pivoted and was now running back past Megevand in the opposite direction.

‘Megevand!’ Thatcher roared, ‘Off the tracks now!’

The detective ignored his partner, turned around, and started chasing after Sime through the sea of leper ghosts. When he looked up, he noticed dozens of other people had suddenly appeared on the platform. Strangers, mostly, but he was sure he spotted the Black Nun, Richard the Head.

When Megevand suddenly saw lights in the train tunnel approaching from the opposite direction, his life flashed before him.

It was another train.



MOTHER. OF. GOD. I thought.

Two trains. Same track. I knew the one behind me had been coming. I had plenty of warning.

But where the hell had this random second train come from? It didn't matter. I spotted Sime in front of me. He too had seen the other train and realised the same thing. He was about to die.

I wondered what he was thinking in that moment. If he had his time again, would he do anything differently? I didn't care. Screams, shouting. Ghost lepers being sucked into thin air as the train coming from the other direction ploughed through them.

I could feel the tracks shuddering with two trains travelling at speed directly towards each other. With seconds to go before impact, I thought of Yukiko. I hoped she would be okay without me.

I did what I often do in moments like this. I spoke the words aloud. 'I love you, Yukiko.' At least it might be a less painful way to go, this way. The roar of the trains grew louder and more haunting by the second.

The smell of dirt, grit and oil, coupled with sweat and death, coursed through my nose and down my throat. I

would have preferred the scent of my wife's perfume on her skin to be the last thing I smell. Not all this.

But I guess I can only blame myself for this current predicament I find myself in. I knew I wanted to get my hands on him but didn't realize it would cost me my life in the process. Seconds later, I felt my body fall hard to the tunnel floor after tripping on something.

It was only a matter of maybe one, maybe two seconds before the blinding light exploded in my vision. My life as Detective Inspector Megevand, husband of Yukiko and partner of Sergeant James Thatcher, was over.



THATCHER STARED AT his pint and wondered how he was going to get his head around all that had happened. It was Saturday afternoon at the Boleyn Tavern and thankfully, the pub was quiet. It gave him time to reflect in peace.

There was a long list of things to work through. The train that had appeared from the other end of the tunnel on the Northern Line platform was the same model as the train that collided with the wall at Moorgate Station back in 1975.

Kitcher said he would go on record stating that, as was the case at Moorgate, the train driver behind the controls was none other than Motorman Newson. Kitcher then opened up about his personal experience with Newson.

He said that he believed that Newson had some sort of flashback that fateful day back in 1975. A Dunkirk survivor, in the moment he approached Moorgate Station he saw German soldiers standing on the tracks right in front of him, aiming their rifles at his train.

Something overtook his senses, and the next thing he knew he was — so he believed — running them all down. In reality, he was heading for a brick wall. Kitcher said that he believed that Newson, in death, deeply regretted his actions.

Kitcher surmised that in this latest event, the man was

trying to make amends for his actions minutes before he took himself and forty-three people to their deaths in 1975.

But when the two trains came together and the most powerful blinding white light exploded in the tunnel, multiple mind-bending things occurred. Right in front of Thatcher's eyes.

The red train driven by the ghost of Newsom simply vanished into thin air.

The other train, the 'real' one, literally stopped moving at the same moment. How a train travelling at that speed stopped within a few inches would go into that book of 'what the fuck,' in Thatcher's mind.

When the train came to a sudden stop, a man was thrown through the windscreen, landing heavily and awkwardly on the tracks, right next to a bewildered Simon Thomas.

The man, lying crumpled on the train tracks, died from head injuries he had sustained. He was later identified as the living brother of the late Richard Bailey. Quentin Brookes later identified him as the bloke that worked at the bar at the Mount Pond Arms Hotel all those years ago. A frightened and shaken six-year-old Heather Brookes emerged from the driver's cabin, her injuries limited to a few scratches.

And then the weird shit went all in. The ghosts of Richard Bailey and William West burst out of the cabin of the train. A middle-aged woman, a young bloke not much older than a teenager, the Black Nun, and the Painter and Decorator, all ran towards the Bailey and West. Flashes of light, sounds of shouting, Thatcher found himself turning away from more blinding light.

A few seconds later, silence. When he opened his eyes, his heart nearly gave out. The middle-aged woman, the teenage boy, the Black Nun and Richard the Head all stood there,

staring directly at him. All but the Black Nun had a smile on their face. Then, in a blink of an eye, they vanished.

Simon Thomas was in custody. So was Oliver Cray and Tony Wright. All three of them had pleaded not guilty to the charges of sexual assault and murder of Alexandra Young.

To the police, the London Underground and British government's utter relief, when Simon Thomas was hauled out of the Bank and Monument Complex, it was as if a curse had been lifted. One, that had been like a vale covering just about every square inch of the London Underground.

As Thatcher stared out the window, he shook his head in amazement. The entire Underground Train Network had returned to normalcy.

As Thatcher reflected on his thoughts, he took a sip of his beer. Out of the corner of his eye, he thought he saw someone who looked exactly like his partner, walking past the pub window. He took another drink of his beer, this time, a much bigger one.



PART ONE

‘ALRIGHT?’ I SAID to Thatcher when I arrived at his booth. He grinned and took a swipe with his free hand, brushing my arm before I grabbed it in the world’s most awkward idea of a handshake.

‘I see the Lone Ranger’s ridden back into town today,’ I grinned, staring directly at Thatcher’s pint. It was the only one on the table.

‘You may need to buy a new watch, Albert,’ Thatcher said with his usual dose of sarcasm as he glanced at the clock on the far wall. I laughed.

‘Point taken Maggie. I trust you are right — or do you want me to get you another?’ I said.

‘Another,’ Thatcher said, downing the remainder of his beer before depositing his glass on the table with a thud.

He was probably as keen as I was to feel the effects of a few beers after everything that had happened. When I sat back down, we stared out the window in silence for a few moments. I turned to Thatcher and held out my pint for a toast.

‘Here’s to just being here,’ I said. It was a toast we repeated

often. It was straightforward. Thatcher took a couple of extra guzzles, and I was keen to do the same.

‘The reason I was late,’ I spoke more quietly — with a couple of people just entering the booth behind Thatcher, ‘—was that Windebank called.’ My partner nodded.

‘Ready for me to lay it all out for you?’ I asked him. Thatcher closed his eyes and took a deep breath. ‘Never more ready, my friend,’ he said. There were few times when I saw Thatcher at a loss for words. This was one of them.

I began.

The four men — known as the Bank and Monument Four (or now three) — all stated that they had not known one another. Oliver Cray claimed that he had looked Bridge up for legal advice at the time of his arrest. All said that one of the other suspects had grabbed Alexandra and that they had decided to see what was going on themselves. Megevand wasn’t sure what was worse. All three men were in protective custody, and for good reason.

When the press went to print with that claim, the public were ready to break down the walls of the place where they were being held and rip the men apart with their bare hands. However, after Oliver Cray’s apartment was thoroughly searched, evidence came to light through some files and scrapbooks found in his flat that contradicted these claims.

It led our investigation team to believe the four men had at one time, attended the same secondary school. Further digging through records of the school showed the men had in fact attended many of the same classes together. *Classmates*.

It was at this point that something else came to light. A name on the list of attendees for that year at the same secondary school piqued the interest of one of our task force team members.

Frederick Fletcher.

He was in the same year level and had many of the same classes as the other men. I could see the look of surprise on Thatcher's face. He was one of the British Transport Police officers who worked alongside Bristow at the Bank and Monument Complex.

We'd long dropped the notion of making fun of coincidences. Windebank was currently awaiting access to the three suspects before he decided what to do about Constable Fletcher.

We recalled the bloke's attitude and contempt when we first met him in the control room.

But there was more.

'I knew I'd seen him before. But only after a long shower and a half-decent night's sleep, did I remember.' Thatcher raised his eyebrows. I continued:

'Sebastian Bridge. The solicitor. The one who took the easy way out.'

Getting the gist of what I was talking about, Thatcher nodded. Sebastian was the suspect who admitted to his participation in the crime seconds before jumping into the path of the oncoming train.

'I decided I needed to know, so I visited her yesterday afternoon. I wanted to tell you in person rather than over the phone,' I said.

Thatcher nodded, again. He would be doing this a lot today.

'She was surprised to see me. I knew she'd forgotten me at first, but then she remembered. I got the impression she was sober. She must have run out of booze, or money, or both — she was probably waiting for the next welfare payment.'

'Alexandra's mother,' Thatcher said rhetorically.

‘That’s the one,’ I responded before taking a sip of my beer.

‘She screwed her face up when I asked her if she could show me her photo albums again. I reminded her that she had shown them to me the last time I visited her. When I flicked through the pages and saw the photos of Alexandra, it unsettled me. I was close to tears, you know, because this vibrant young girl once had a whole life ahead of her. What a loss.’

I took another drink of beer and momentarily looked out the window, picturing her. It was going to take me some time to forget her face. If ever. I sighed and continued;

‘And then, as I flicked through more pages, an uneasy feeling swept over me. There he was — right where I thought I’d remembered him: in photographs of a house party her mother had thrown some time ago, standing there with one arm around Petula Young and the other around Alexandra.’

‘Fucking prick,’ Thatcher hissed. ‘He knew her. Fuck, fuck, fuck!’ he said, drawing the attention of the people in the booth behind him. They turned back and wondered if moving would be a good idea.

‘It gets worse, mate,’ I whispered, recalling the face on him in the photo and feeling a rush of anger pass through me. Thatcher leaned closer and gave me a look as if he wanted to go toe-to-toe with a rhino.

‘The kid in the department store, remember, that day at the start of all this?’

Thatcher’s eyes narrowed, and then, like a light bulb, his eyes lit up.

‘You’re not telling me,’ he said, his voice trailing off.

‘Windebank confirmed the information today — same last name: “Bridge.” Staring at the photo yesterday, I could

clearly see the resemblance. I thought it had to be his little brother until Windebank corrected me.' Thatcher's face went pale.

'His son?' he whispered.

I nodded. Thatcher sat back, shaking his head.

'What about him?' Thatcher said. I studied my pint; I just needed a second to catch my breath.

'John Bridge was the first man who assaulted Alexandra. After leaving her concussed and injured in that access tunnel, he walked across the road to where his girlfriend worked, The House of Fraser. There, he overdosed in the changing room. His girlfriend was the one who ran away from us, if you recall.

Thatcher shook his head. 'Jesus,' he muttered.

I smiled faintly. 'She worked two jobs, Maggie: one at the department store and the other as a low-level drug dealer.'

Thatcher locked eyes on me, and I already knew what his question would be.

'Yes, they eventually caught her. Behind bars as we speak,' I said. I watched my partner as I could see his thoughts casting a shadow over his face and demeanour. I had a feeling I knew what he was thinking.

I turned away and stared out the window before eventually meeting his pained expression. His eyes had glazed over. I couldn't count on one hand the number of times I had seen Sergeant James Thatcher close to tears.

Today was one of them.

'Father and son planned it. Had to—' was all I managed to say while tracing my finger around a glass I dearly wished was full of whisky.

'Pre-bloody-meditated. You believe Bridge contacted his old school friends, knowing they all transited through the

Bank and Monument Complex every morning?’ Thatcher struggled to keep his emotions in check.

I fell silent. Attempting to keep my feelings under control, I let a stray tear trickle down my cheek. After a few moments, I wiped my face and cleared my throat.

‘Windebank thinks so. They pulled Bridge’s phone records. The boss believes he found it,’ I replied. Thatcher took a long, deep breath.

‘Bridge senior and junior should count themselves lucky that they are dead,’ Thatcher hissed, taking a gulp of beer that emptied his glass.



PART TWO

MEGEVAND HAD ONLY been home one hour from the Boleyn when the phone rang. Yukiko told her husband it was Quentin.

‘Quentin,’ Megevand said, adding, ‘all good?’

‘Relieved, as you would expect,’ Quentin said.

‘How are Mary and Heather holding up?’ Megevand asked.

‘They’re both fine and send their love,’ Quentin said.

‘Yukiko and I are so relieved to hear it. And that Heather is back home,’ Megevand said.

There was a longer than normal pause. ‘Err, Ian,’ Quentin said, hesitating, ‘What are you up to in the next few hours?’ Megevand looked over to Yukiko who was staring at him.

‘No plans tonight, why do you ask?’ he said.

‘Would it be okay if we met you in the city?’ Quentin asked.

Megevand frowned. He had no idea what was going on.

‘Where?’ Megevand asked.

‘The Bank and Monument Complex. Main entrance, Monument,’ Quentin said, nervously.

‘Sure, okay if I bring the posse?’ Megevand asked.

‘The more the merrier,’ Quentin replied, before ringing off.



When Megevand, Yukiko and a sleepy looking Thatcher arrived at the main entrance to Monument Station, they were greeted by Quentin, Mary, Heather and Finley. To his surprise, standing there with them were Windebank, Bristow, and Kitcher.

If that wasn't enough, by the time Megevand had greeted everyone with a firm handshake and hug for Mary, Heather and her little brother, Commander Freeman appeared from a parked car and approached.

‘Commander.’ Megevand held out his hand before Freeman shook it firmly.

They stood for a moment and then Megevand realised members of the press, and random onlookers, had gathered at vantage points on both sides of the intersection. He wouldn't bother asking what was going on just yet, or who had called the press.

Megevand went off to speak with Windebank. He would inform the detective that they'd questioned and arrested Constable Frederick Fletcher earlier this afternoon. They suspected he was the one who had dumped the two jackets worn by the wanted men at Green Park Station. They were aware that he had previously worked at the station and still lived close by.

After the brief chat with the boss, Megevand returned and stood next to Quentin. ‘What's going on?’ he asked.

‘We're all about to find out. Oh, and another thing I wanted to mention,’ Quentin said to him. He pulled him away from the others and whispered in his ear.

‘Do you remember that lady standing on the platform, seconds before the train came to a screeching halt?’ Megevand nodded. He could see her face as clear as day. Quentin produced a folded photo from his jacket pocket and opened it for the detective.

‘This her?’ Quentin asked. Megevand held his breath.

‘Your mother,’ Megevand said, shaking his head in disbelief.

‘Yes. She died on that very platform. Bailey pushed her. It appeared that she had decided to right the wrongs.’

‘But enough of that, you need to head off,’ Quentin ushered him back to the main group, who were watching him closely.

‘Where am I going?’ Megevand asked. No one responded. But then, he realised Heather was standing there with a grin on her face. She reached out her hand to him.

‘Come with me,’ she said, and after a brief glance at the group, he gently took Heather’s small hand in his.



Heather told him that she needed to take him down to the Northern Line Platform. Megevand wondered why but just went with it. Heather chatted aimlessly on the way down, about anything and everything she could think of. Megevand smiled. The girl was a chatterbox, and he enjoyed talking to her. She was a sweetheart.

As they approached the platform, Megevand realised they were completely alone. There was no one else around. And although the temperature was cooler, there wasn’t a hint of the smells the detective had come to expect in the complex.

‘Are you feeling nervous?’ Heather asked.

Megevand smiled. 'More curious than nervous, my bonny Heather.'

'I know you love surprises,' she whispered, and before Megevand could register, let alone ask her what she was referring to, they arrived at the Northern Line platform.

Megevand stopped dead in his tracks. He suppressed a gasp and instinctively felt the need to pull his hand away from Heather.

'It's okay Uncle Ian, it's okay,' she gripped his hand tighter.

There they all were. Standing shoulder to shoulder. For some reason, Megevand felt as if there were more than he'd ever seen before. He wasn't sure. Hundreds, upon hundreds of ghosts, packed to the rafters. He stood on the tips of his toes and saw that the platform was also packed tightly with more.

But something was different. It made it creepier. They were all smiling at him. Megevand saw movement, halfway down the platform. The masses parted in the middle, opening up a space for two people to pass through.

As the seconds ticked by, Megevand's heartbeat increased, and his hands felt clammy. Still Heather refused to let go. When the ghosts closest to him parted, he could not speak. Standing in front of him was Alexandra Young, smiling. He looked approvingly at her tidy hair and nice clothes, but it was the person she was holding hands with that brought a tear to his eye.

Finley Sproule. Behind them were another two familiar faces, the Black Nun, and Richard Head, the painter and decorator.



PART THREE

‘FINLEY,’ THE NAME fell out of my mouth, but it was all I could say.

‘You have no idea how good it is to see you,’ Finley said. Still the same. Calm as ever.

‘But I thought you’d—’ I muttered, unable to finish the sentence. Finley knew what I was about to say. He shook his head and smiled at Alexandra.

‘I crossed over when I last saw you,’ he said, moving closer to me. ‘You see, I can transition from one to the other with relative ease.’

My head was reeling. I was speechless.

‘I returned because I knew you were in trouble. And I also knew that with Quentin’s mother’s help, we had the power to stop the train and banish the spirits of Bailey, his then dead brother, and West from here, to where they belong.’

Finley’s eyes searched mine. All I could do was shake my head, stunned by his admission. My heart swelled. I caught Heather grinning at Finley. Little did I know her part in this.

‘How’s the finest bonny Heather doing in this world?’ Finley asked.

Heather let go of my hand, ran to Finley and hugged

him tightly. He kissed the top of her head and bent down to whisper something in her ear.

I choked back a tear and then Heather, all business-like, returned to my side. I turned my attention to Alexandra.

‘Finley found me a few moments after he and Janet Brookes stopped the train. I suppose it’s no crime to fall for someone as kind and noble as Finley, right?’ she said. My head was still spinning.

How was he ever going to explain this to the others? The afterlife matchmaking service, for one. But before I had another moment to think about it, they asked me.

‘Come for a walk?’ Finley asked.

‘Walk, where?’ I asked.

Finley looked down to Heather. ‘Show him, bonny Heather,’ he said.

Heather grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the pedestrian tunnel. As I started to walk back towards ground level, I had only walked twenty feet before I realised the mass of ghosts were following us.

‘What is going on?’ I asked.

Heather giggled, though said nothing. It took Finley a good fifty feet further on to eventually answer.

‘Alexandra is what you would call special. In more ways than one.’ Finley’s voice was full of praise. I kept walking. I knew the answer would come eventually.

‘You remember, Detective,’ — Alexandra’s voice was as clear as day — ‘all the people who died in the Underground, once they knew I was one of them, all wanted to find me.’ I ventured a glance behind him as we entered the larger landing of the Monument Station. I caught my breath.

Never in my life had I seen such a large assembly of people: all sizes, all shapes, all sorts of different attire — from

now and back all through the ages — men, women, children. And the lepers, they were here, too. All following Alexandra's every footstep.

I wondered how many there were in total. When I caught a glimpse of the pedestrian tunnel we'd just walked up, all I could see were more. I was speechless.

I turned to Alexandra. 'Why?' I asked.

She stared at me for a time but kept walking. No answer. I then heard the murmurs and gasps up ahead. We'd reached the main entrance to the station.

There, with faces frozen in various states of shock, were Windebank, Thatcher, Freeman, Kitcher, Bristow, Yukiko, Quentin and Mary.

'You can't be serious,' I heard Freeman say.

I turned to Heather, who was grinning from ear to ear. When she saw Mary, she waved enthusiastically.

'My darling,' Mary said, dropping to her knees and holding out her arms. Heather went to her.

'What happens now?' I asked.

They stared at me for a time, before Alexandra pointed to a line marked clearly on the tiles of the station entrance floor.

'See that line?' she said.

'Yes,' I said.

'In a moment, go stand with the others out there,' she said.

I turned and saw that Freeman, Windebank, Thatcher and the others were still in a state of utter shock. The sight of the hundreds of life-like ghosts standing directly behind Alexandra and Finley was mind-boggling.

I walked across the threshold of the station and stood with them. Nothing happened for a moment. Eventually,

Finley spoke to Alexandra. I was too far away to hear what he said to her.

Alexandra let go of Finley's hand and walked towards us.

She slowly turned around to face the hundreds of ghosts standing there staring at her.

Alexandra, taking as long as she wanted, then turned around again to face us.

She walked up to the line in the tiles she had pointed out to me a few moments ago. Alexandra stared at me for a moment. I would never forget that face of hers. Eventually, a faint smile appeared.

'Thank you, Detective Inspector Ian Megevand,' she said with admiration.

She turned her gaze to Heather and winked at her with a mischievous grin. Alexandra looked down and took a big step onto the line. The threshold of Monument Station. The flash of the brightest light blinded me.

I heard my co-workers all mutter various profanities. With my eyes closed, I waited until it diminished.

'Oh, my lord,' I heard Commander Freeman say, standing next to me.

I opened my eyes and blinked twice to check this wasn't a dream.

The ghosts were all walking forward, on either side of Alexandra. But the second they crossed the line; they evaporated into whirls of white dust. Almost immediately, the whirls were transformed into orbs of light the size of a tennis ball. They moved with ease up into the air, swirling around each other.

I stood back and watched in awe as thousands of orbs rose into the air right in front of us. I then realised they were also rising from the other entrances of the station at the same

time. They twirled in masses of perfectly choreographed waves of light, twisting and turning around each other before they vanished into the darkening sky far above.

It went on for what felt like hours. I found myself turning back to her.

Alexandra.

She had set the spirits free. All of them. She stood on the line and held her arms up in the air. I heard the spirits thanking her just before they crossed the threshold. My co-workers, Yukiko, Mary, Heather, and Finley stood there with me and remained lost for words.

An eternity later, the last of the orbs disappeared into the fading light. I took a deep breath knowing I would never forget this moment. It was at this point I felt a little hand reach into mine.

Heather.

She tugged on my hand and brought my attention back to the entrance of Monument Station. Alexandra, like before, stared directly at me. A faint smile appeared, before she slowly stepped back off the line.

Finley walked up to her side and reached for her hand. When she met his eyes, they turned around and began to walk back into Monument Station. Ten feet in, I could not help but laugh a little as I realised that the Black Nun and Richard Head had appeared from somewhere out of view.

They fell into step behind the young couple and walked side by side. So, Alexandra had set free thousands of spirits who had died in or close to the Underground. But there would be, at least two, who chose to remain. I'm sure Bristow would think it rather humorous.

I looked down at the same time Heather looked up to me. Tears were trickling down her face. I picked her up and

held her tight. With her still in my grasp, we turned our eyes back into the entrance of Monument Station. The Black Nun and Richard the Head were gone.

So were Alexandra and Finley.

I could not help but feel the urge to ask Heather to pinch me. But a new, more confronting thought came. The most indescribable feeling of relief followed.

It's over.

Then, another thought:

Time for a well-earned pint.

I'll see you at the Boleyn.

THE END

REVIEW THIS BOOK

You would be helping me greatly as an independent author by taking a few moments to review *The Girl on the Tube*.

For Kindle Users – this should come up automatically.

For Paperback users, go to Amazon where you purchased the novel.

I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to do this.

Grant Finnegan, 2025

ERRORS

We did our very best to omit any errors, but if you see one, and want to drop me a line and let me know where it is, I would really appreciate it.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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DISCLAIMER

All characters in this book are fictitious. Although the names used for some of these characters are of actual people (fans of my novels) there is no other connection whatsoever between the characters and these people. The Ravenstone House for the Less Privileged is also a fictitious place, as is the town of Lacham in South London. The Mount Pond Arms Hotel also never existed.

Part of this story was created based on the true and the horrific incident that took place in the Tube System many years ago. A young girl was assaulted by a man and was later then assaulted again by up to four men who led her to believe they were going to help her.

AUTHOR COMMENTS

When I began researching the history of the Tube and paranormal activities, I fell down a rabbit hole that I did not see coming. Most, if not all of the events I wove into this fictitious novel are well-documented occurrences that have, or continue to take place in the Underground.

The Black Nun allegedly still roams Bank Station. The poor girl at Farringdon Station that apparently hates hats too. Richard 'the' Head is probably the only character who is pure fiction, though he was created when I read of the case of an underground worker who allegedly would arrive for his shift most days, and be found walking up and down the tunnels. They believed that he wasn't aware of his death by accidental electrocution years earlier.

The stories that stayed with me the most were the following; the tragedy at Bethnal Green Station where one hundred and seventy-three men, women, and children lost their lives. This tragedy started when the people heard an air-raid siren starting, and had decided they needed to get underground, after hearing what they thought were enemy bombs detonating. To make this tragedy even worse, the sounds they heard were not enemy planes dropping bombs on London.

They lost their lives in the stairwell leading into the station after a middle-aged woman and child fell over halfway

down the stairs, causing those behind them to get tangled up in a mass that resulted in a crush of people and the high number of deaths. The ghosts of those who lost their lives there are allegedly still heard in the bowels of Bethnal Green Station.

The next one was the legend of the 'Dead Body Train,' some claim that there is a buried set of carriages somewhere in the vast underground network that contains the bodies of hundreds of people who had succumbed to typhoid or some other disease at the time.

I also found the legend of the coffin lid from the Egyptian Pharaoh particularly interesting—a great ghost story if ever there was one. There were many more, some less intriguing and not worthy of mentioning, but interesting none the less.

The one that I will admit that really affected me more than any other was the tragedy at Moorgate Station. When I started researching this tragic event, I found myself digging deeper and deeper into all that was documented about the case. At one stage I was downloading court transcripts from the inquest and found that I was so drawn in by the tragedy that I realized I needed to stop.

To this day, they still don't know why Motorman (this is what they called a train driver in 1975) Newson decided to drive the train at high speed into that dead end wall at Moorgate Station. There are countless theories, some you would consider, others I'm not so sure. I would like to express my sincere condolences to anyone reading this story that lost anyone in this tragedy, or any other tragedies woven into this novel.

For those who have read my previous novels, you will know that you were first introduced to Detective Ian Megevand in *The Luxury Orphanage*. I made the decision

a while back that I would like to bring him back to solve a new mystery, so hence *The Girl on the Tube* marks his return. The plan (I had already started writing his next story) was to create a series called 'The Megevand Files,' but eventually decided to write a new stand-alone mystery instead. This will be released all things going well late 2026. Maybe the next Megevand story will come after that. Let me know if you are interested in more 'Megevand Files' stories.

Countless readers expressed their love of *The Luxury Orphanage* and its characters, so I decided it was natural to bring some of them back in *The Girl on the Tube*, alongside Ian Megevand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Christine and David Windebank, Christine for your countless hours of meticulous editing and both of you for your ongoing support, thank you. Ben Hourigan, Andrew Parsons and Robert Freeman, thank you. A quick shout out to John Bristow and Derek Kitcher. Oh, and the pesky Ian Megevand, who never stops reminding me of the fact that I named the protagonist of this novel after him!

Fans from all corners of the world, who support my writing with positive messages and encourage me to write the next novel—too many to mention—thank you for all your support. (I'm currently writing my seventh novel as we speak, and the eighth is also in the works.)

Thanks also to the team at Damonza for the cover design, formatting and other items they produced for this novel. It was a pleasure working with them again and could not recommend them any higher than I do.

I'd also like to thank all those literary agents that I sent this novel to who chose to pass on it. Thank you, the resilience and determination that resulted from all those rejections became my greatest weapon. I now realize that success doesn't come from becoming the next Lee Child or Stephen King (although I am a fan of both) It comes from the satisfaction

of backing yourself, picking yourself up when you hit the lowest points and most importantly - never giving up.

If you have read my previous novels, you will know that in this last section of the acknowledgments section, the last thing I do is thank the one person who never stops believing in me. Though, she will scream at me when the manuscript is below par, and high-five me when I get it all together. I am thankful she has been a part of this writing journey and I could not imagine it being any other way. Sharon, thank you. I love you.

