

A person wearing a dark hoodie is walking away from the camera down a narrow, dimly lit alleyway at night. The alleyway is flanked by brick walls and has several streetlights that cast a yellowish glow. The person is centered in the frame, and the perspective is from behind them, looking down the path.

DEAD MAN'S GIFT

A DI Carsten Meyer Short Story

B.C. BAMBER

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Dead Man's Gift.
A DI Carsten Meyer Short Story.

Chapter One.

They lived in a mansion and was at the top of a hill on the outskirts of the borough. It had been built by millionaire James Tofey who had a successful mobile phone retail business. It had dark red bricks and black window frames and a large sweeping drive, where he parked his three expensive luxury cars. A black Range Rover, a yellow Lamborghini and a Lexus hybrid SUV. It was just gone 2 a.m. James had set the house alarm as usual before going to bed at eleven. His wife Carrie, slept soundly beside him. It was foggy outside, particularly as they were on top of a hill. A shadow of a figure lingered on the front lawn, staring up at the master bedroom window, looking for signs of life. By the morning they were dead. Slaughtered in their own home. He was spread out on the cold marble floor in the big wide-open entrance hall. She was still in her bed, drenched in her own blood.

Harry Case climbed the hill road in his Porsche Boxster. It was ten to nine in the morning. That morning was supposed to be breakfast with his closest friend, James. They were both millionaires and were both ex-students of Eton and then Cambridge. Both of them did business and finance. Both ended up working in the city, until James decided to leave to start his own company which ultimately made him the super-rich man he was.

Harry reached the brow of the hill and turned into James' drive. The fog had cleared, and the sunlight replaced it. It was a cold but a fine day, as the low winter sun dazzled him, he held his hand up to shield his eyes. He'd had a big night out, drinking champagne and snorting coke. Now he was hungover on a big come down. He got out of his car and walked up to the large oak double doors and rang the bell. As he waited, he stared into space, still a little hung over from the drinks party he'd been to last night where ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair had been present. It wasn't the first time he'd met him, or a whole range of high-flying politicians. He looked at his watch, feeling impatient. He then noticed

the heavy oak door was open a little. He pushed it open a little more and put his head round the door. It was in a vestibule with a stained-glass double door. That door was open on one side and closed on the other. Shoes and umbrella's and coats hung in the space he was stood in as he pushed the door open. 'James! Carrie!' he shouted as he walked through and immediately saw James's bloody corpse lying on the floor face down. 'Oh no,' he said. He walked over to him, careful not to walk in any blood. He bent over, putting his hands on his knees and carefully watched to see if he was breathing, unwilling to check his pulse with his fingers on James's neck. He didn't to end up covered in his friends' blood. The house was quiet. You could hear pin drop. 'Carrie!' he shouted as he stood up straight and looked around, through the door to his right which led to a living room. He couldn't see anyone. The hall was large with marble floors and a beautiful hand carved oak staircase, that was in the centre of the hall, which then split into two – one for the first wing and the other for the second wing of the house. He looked left moving a little further past James's body and could see through a dining room into a kitchen. No sign of life. He pulled out his phone from his jeans pocket and dialled 999. He could assume that either Carrie was dead somewhere in the house or she was out. Could she have killed him and ran? The police arrived quickly as he greeted the uniformed officers who had arrived first – one a large male officer with a black beard and the other, an also tall female, with a blond ponytail.

'Mr Case?' the female officer asked.

'Yes.' Harry had come out of the house, aware of the fact that he could have contaminated the crime scene.

'What's the problem?'

'As I said on the phone, my friends James and Carrie live here. I had a pre-arranged breakfast with them this morning. When I got here, the door was open and James is dead inside in the hall. He's covered in blood. I don't where his wife is.'

'Right. Let's go have a look shall we?' the male officer said as he walked forward and tentatively put his head round the door. The inner stained-glass door had been left open by Harry, as he went inside with the female officer behind him. After a few minutes they both came back

out. 'I've been upstairs and it seems what I assume is his wife, is also dead,' he explained to Harry.

'Shit,' he said and rubbed his face several times, feeling stressed. The officer called in the double murder and after an hour, a whole murder investigation team had showed up, as Harry sat in his car, trying to contact Jame's sister, his only family.

Chapter Two.

DI Meyer arrived by 12 noon, with DS Franco. ‘This is a bad one,’ said the sergeant who had taken control of the crime scene. Franco and Meyer silently walked to the house, anticipating the carnage to come. After putting on forensic clothing, Meyer walked through the vestibule and into the main hall. ‘Wow, nice place,’ he said. Detective Inspector Carsten Meyer was 38 and was of dual British and German heritage. He was born in the UK to a German father and an English mother and had moved to Germany when he was young and returned to join the Met police, after a spell as a BND officer.

Detective Sargent Paul Franco, was short but stocky, with jet black hair and olive skin. He had been Meyer’s partner for the last four years. He had Spanish parents, but had never lived in Spain.

Meyer and Franco stood over the first body, with CSI tech’s buzzing around tracking down evidence. ‘He’s been wacked in the back of the head with something heavy. Can’t see what. A tool, a hammer maybe,’ Meyer said.

‘Where’s the ME?’ Franco asked a passing CSI.

‘Upstairs,’ he replied. Meyer went up to see her. He was in the master bedroom leant over the body of Cassie Tofey.

‘This is the wife,’ she said as she stood up to speak with Meyer. ‘Several stab wounds. Deep ones. Whoever did this was in a frenzy which will cast doubt on the burglary gone wrong theory.’

‘Well, let’s see shall we,’ Meyer replied. He didn’t know what to make of it all yet. It was way too early. He caught sight of something behind him in the bedroom. The room was very large and sparsely decorated, with custom made wooden furniture, which would have cost them thousands of pounds, per piece. There were two doors off the bedroom, besides the entrance. The one that had caught his eye was a large dressing room, with one side devoted to him, the other to her. But at the back was an open safe. He walked in and bent down to look inside. There were two shelves in there. The top one was empty, the bottom

one had a pile of documents and envelopes. He leafed through the papers but saw nothing that would be relevant at first glance. 'This safe had something on the top shelf, which is now gone,' Meyer yelled at the pathologist. She looked up, but didn't reply. Meyer went back into the bedroom and stared at the bloodied body of Cassie Tofey, then when he'd seen all he could see, he went and searched the other rooms, unsure what he was looking for. There was a sizable office up there, which he stepped into. Judging by the décor and the odd pink thing, he guessed this was her office, with his upstairs on the next floor. He went in behind the desk, and picked through some items, nothing really catching his eye, until he realised that there was an obvious space on the wall behind him. He quickly turned. It was about a meter and a half, by a meter, where the edges of the staining left off and a clean space began. A picture had been removed. Was it valuable, he wondered? Did the thief take it along with whatever was in the safe? At this point he was thinking about relatives. Someone who could fill the gaps and tell him what may have been taken. The picture was interesting, because a fence would be involved – someone who could move a valuable piece of art, without tipping off the authorities. Someone with connections in the stolen art market. He made notes in his notebook, then moved on upstairs to the second office.

Again, it was richly decorated and furnished, with another set of bespoke wooden furniture, with the very best craftsmanship. He had been to shows before, where carpenters and designers brought their work and some of the larger pieces would sell for upwards of £30,000 each. In the back of the room was a large and very beautiful desk. Up above were skylights, with one of them ajar. He lifted the windowpane and looked at the edges of the window, just in case someone had been up there. He then thumbed through some books on law and finance and then peered through a large glass cabinet where antique and rare books had been collected. 'Some insurance premium,' he mumbled to himself.

Satisfied for the time being that there was nothing of interest in the second office, he went back down the stairs to meet with Franco. As he began to climb down the final set of stairs to the lobby, there was a commotion at the door. He stepped forward and opened the stained-

glass door, then through the large oak front doors and onto the drive, where a woman, dressed in a pair of black jeans, with a small puffer jacket and long black hair, was making a big noise.

‘She wants to go inside,’ the uniform officer said. Harry Case was stood behind her, seemingly in shock, just staring at her.

‘Please can you calm yourself madam,’ Meyer told her. ‘I’m DI Carsten Meyer. I am the senior ISO. Are you a relative?’ he asked. She calmed down and through her sobbing she managed to tell him she was.

‘I am Jane Tofey, James’s sister.’

‘I see. Well perhaps you can help us out a little,’ he said, attempting to distract her. She reached into her bag and pulled out a handkerchief and wiped her face and blew her nose. Not very dignified, Meyer thought.

‘With what?’ she asked.

‘This seems to us at this early stage, to be a robbery. Some things are missing. I wondered if you had any knowledge about what your brother kept in his safe.’

‘He has cash and gold bullion, plus Cassie’s jewellery. He also had an antique Rolex watch, quite rare.’

‘Right. That’s very helpful. If it’s rare we might be able to track it down. Franco,’ he said, beckoning over his partner. ‘Get someone on to jewellers and pawn brokers. I’ll try and get precise details of this watch. What vintage it was, what it looks like.’

‘Okay,’ he said, pulling out his phone and turning away.

‘There was a picture in Cassie’s office. That’s been taken as well,’ Meyer told her.

‘It was a painting by Simon Sturgeon, worth about forty-thousand pounds.’

‘And what of this watch? Are there any photos?’

‘Yes, I believe photos are sent to the insurers. That’s what normally happens.’

‘And which insurers?’ Meyer asked.

‘I don’t know. The details will be in one of the offices. Cassie’s or my brothers. Not sure which.’

Two more of Meyers team showed up, as Meyer thanked the victim’s sister and turned his attention to them. DC Attwood, a female officer,

with dyed blonde hair and a very nice grey ladies' suit, with trousers. And DC Hawking, a young overconfident detective, only having been a detective for four months, now assigned to Meyer's team. Meyer approached them both. 'Attwood, there is CCTV in the house as part of the victims home security, and you,' he said, rudely pointing to Hawking, start canvassing the area. Ask about any suspicious people or cars or vans etc and ask each householder if they have CCTV and ask them for a copy of their footage for last night. Come to think of it take everything they've got, cos' the killer may have been on a reccie before he actually burgled the house.' They both nodded dutifully and said, 'yes sir' and headed off.

'Sergeant,' Meyer said, turning to the uniformed officer who had secured the scene.

'Yes,' he said, reacting to Meyer.

'How many bodies can you spare for house to house?' Meyer asked. The sergeant looked around the site and did a quick head count.

'Five, I reckon, six if you can spare the officer on the door, managing who goes in and out.'

'No. I need him to do that. Five it is then.' Meyer then grabbed Franco's attention, as they headed back into the house. He tracked down DC Attwood who was hunched over a computer in a small room on the ground floor, where all security apparatus was stored and managed. There was a split screen showing four cameras' in total.

'What do we have?' Meyer asked her.

'Deletions sir. Whoever did this has deleted the last few hours of the tape leading up to when he left the house, where you can see him from behind, dressed in black. Obviously we can't see his face, but it gives us quite a precise time of death.'

'When you got here was the computer password protected?'

'Yes, but the code was on a post-it note, here,' he said, lifting up a small plastic evidence bag, with a small sticky yellow post-it note inside.'

'Where was it stored?'

'Just here,' DC Hawking said, pointing to small space on the desk, next to the keyboard.

'Not good,' Meyer said. Next to the computer was a medium sized window with blinds covering them, facing outwards to the drive. Something caught Meyer's eye. The blinds were open. He moved to the window and moved a slat with his finger. The victim's sister was laughing and joking with a police officer. He shrugged it off. People react differently to a loss. There was no standard grieving behaviour. 'Last will and testament, and insurance policy,' Meyer said to Franco, as he turned away from the window.

'I will start a search straight away,' Franco said and left the small office, heading upstairs to the two larger offices and the safe. There would be a will in there somewhere.

Chapter Three.

All the different pieces of information were now coming into Meyer, as he sat at his desk in his office, with DC Attwood, who had been collecting and collating the CCTV, from the house and the neighbours. The video was playing on Meyer's desktop computer as Attwood leant over, showing a little cleavage. Meyer wondered whether she was flirting with him or not. It wouldn't be the first time, but Meyer had always been terrible at translating this kind of behaviour and was too nervous to come to a conclusion, so he would just ignore it. He was single and was recently out of a six-year relationship. They were still friends, but contact with her was getting less and less, as time passed – which he didn't mind.

'This figure here,' DC Attwood said, while pointing at the screen, almost touching it with her finger. 'He's dressed for committing a crime. Black hoodie, black joggers and black trainers and he's heading into the area around the time of the killings and leaves in time too. We can only assume he's the same person who was caught on the camera's at the house.'

'Good. Keep on it. Try and track him as far as possible. We need to identify any high-end burglaries. Ones where the house has up-to-date security. Harder targets than your usual premises. Offenders with specialist knowledge. We also need to talk to the sister again, find out whether Tofey was in the habit of leaving his safe open. We still don't know whether he was forced to open it, or the killer knew the code or knew how to break in to a safe like that. Is there a cheat to get around the code, put there by the manufacturer?'

'We have reports of burglaries in the area, including an aggravated burglary where an elderly woman was beaten up and her cash taken. Couple of grand by all accounts. There is an outstanding warrant for a suspect of one the burglaries. Jeff Black, twenty-three. Burglary squad haven't located him yet.'

'Are they even trying?'

'Yeah, I think so. But we can up the ante if you like.'

‘Yeah I like,’ Meyer said, his German accent coming through. ‘Let’s take a look at him, shall we?’ Meyer opened the database and did a search, which quickly spat out a result. A pale looking, large face appeared on screen. ‘Prison time a couple of years back for a burglary, plus one for a street robbery, which involved violence. So this man isn’t afraid to attack his victims. Let’s go pick him up,’ Meyer said as he stood up. ‘Print off his last known address will you,’ he said, as Attwood clicked print on Meyer’s computer.

Meyer picked up the phone. ‘Burglary squad,’ he said to the receptionist. A click, some waiting music then a deep male voice answered.

‘Burglary squad, DC Benfield,’ he said.

‘This is DI Carsten Meyer, murder squad. We’ve had a double killing during a burglary. Your outstanding warrant for a man called Jeffery Black, who I believe your still searching for.’

‘Yes. I know the one.’

‘Any luck?’

‘Last known is a bust. His girlfriend knows where he is and he’s aware of the warrant, which means he would have gone to ground.’

‘We need to talk to him for this murder. Do you want to link up, find him today?’

‘Sure. I will just check with the boss,’ the phone clicked and the music came back on, as Meyer rolled his eyes and sighed with irritation. The music was Gary Barlow. Meyer hated Gary Barlow. The phone clicked back through to DC Benfield. ‘Meet you downstairs in five.’

‘Good,’ Meyer replied.

Meyer’s team split with the burglary squad soon after the briefing, as they searched for Black. His girlfriend’s house was targeted, along with his father’s house and mother’s house. They also got told about a possible sighting in the Stonehouse estate, by uniform, who had been given a photo and a copy of the warrant in their morning handover briefing.

Meyer’s phone rang just as he headed towards the small High Street Metro supermarket to grab a sandwich. He quickly pulled over, not

being one of those people who think it's okay to use the phone whilst driving. 'DI Meyer,' he said. He recognised the number as being his boss DCI Ed Collins.

'Carsten. Update me on the Tofey killings.'

'Person of interest at this stage. What we need to do quickly is establish how and why the safe was opened, when there were no signs that it was forced open. Did Tofey leave it open on a regular basis? Did someone know the code? Was he forced to open it at knife point? Is there a work around on that model of safe? If we get some clarity on that it will help us determine what kind of suspect we're looking for.'

'Or it might lead down a blind alley.'

'True. But we will still learn something.'

'This person of interest. Who is he? What's his profile?' Collins asked.

'Prolific burglar who has used violence before and already has an open warrant for attacking and robbing a pensioner in her own home. A twenty-three-year-old white male, called Jeffery Black. We're chasing up leads right now, with burglary squad. If they can bring him in for the burglary, we will be able to interview him without the clock, as he'll be remanded straight away.'

'All good. Keep me up to date.'

'Yes, sir,' Meyer replied. 'Right, lunch time,' Meyer said to Franco.

The police radio crackled into life, just as Meyer took the last bite of his sandwich. 'Black is now in custody, repeat Black has been apprehended. We're all heading back to HQ now.' Meyer hastily swallowed his mouthful and confirmed he'd heard the report and turned the key on the car, heading quickly back to the station.

'We have our man. I have a feeling about this lad. He fits,' Franco said.

'Let's not jump too easily. We have a lot of work to do. To be frank I want to talk to the sister more than Black, because I need to clarify how that safe got opened.'

'Obsessing on detail as usual.'

'That's what makes me a good copper Sergeant,' Meyer snapped back. 'When we get back, I want you to start going through the victim's

financial statements including his company. This could still have been murder for hire, for all we know. Find out who benefits from their deaths. I'll handle Black, see if we can't eliminate him or identify him as our killer quickly. Killers like these tend to give up their secret once the evidence is presented. But the fact is we have no forensics yet.'

'Yeah. What's up with that? Forensics hasn't reported back to us yet.'

'I'll chase it up before I go into the interview with Black. See what's there. His fingerprints and DNA are already in the system, so it should be a quick conclusion.'

'Unless he was careful,' Franco replied.

'That much blood. There's got to be trace evidence somewhere, I would have thought.'

Chapter Four.

Meyer just got off the phone to DC Benfield, instructing him not to tell Jeffery Black that he was in the frame for murder. Meyer hoped he might slip up in his interview. But as it turned out he went no comment anyway. He was held at the Croydon station. Meyer and Franco were expected at the morgue to go through the first summary of the ME's findings. He sought out Franco who was smoking out the back. 'Come on. Put that out, we have an appointment,' Meyer said as he passed Franco and headed for his car, which was a six-year-old, Modeo Zetec. As they arrived the morgue was down in the sprawling basement, with a labyrinthine series of corridors and double doors, with plastic windows on the top half, to prevent collisions. Eventually they arrived. Dr Michelle Carruthers was in her office. Meyer knocked softly on the door and went in.

'Ah. You've arrived,' she said, pleased to see him. She was a short, petite woman in her late forties, with thin designer glasses and shoulder length black hair tied back in a ponytail. She stood up.

'Good to see you,' Meyer said as they followed her into the examination room, three bodies lined up on top of the tables. She went to the one furthest away and pulled back the sheet, revealing the naked body of Mr Tofey, with a severe looking sown up Y incision, across his torso.

'Now there is only one cause of death and one injury that did the job,' Dr Carruthers started. 'I think, with a 75% certainty that he was struck on the back of the head with a crow bar, here,' she said as she lifted the victims head round to show Meyer and Franco the wound, where she'd shaved his head hair off, to get a better look. 'It cracked straight through the skull and this would have killed our victim very quickly.'

'How quickly?' Meyer asked.

'Half a minute, maybe more. Now the tox screen came back with some fine red wine, I expect, given that he was wealthy – I haven't tested it to find out the vintage and I am assuming he had a headache at

some point because he took some paracetamol. A small dose, before you ask. Now victim number two, Mrs Tofey,' she said with a loud clear voice, shifting from one exam table to the one next to it. She pulled the sheeting up, unveiling the naked body, with a Y incision wound, sown up. 'She was stabbed at least twenty times, with what I think is a large kitchen knife.'

'Did we check the kitchen knives in the house?' Meyer turned to Franco.

'I will have to check,' he said, looking a little sheepish. 'I know we never recovered a murder weapon for either victim.'

'Check the house again, including the grounds and drains.'

'Of course,' Franco replied and made a note on his iPad.

'The reason I am unsure about the number of stab wounds, is that either by accident or design, the killer struck her with the knife, in the same places a couple of times, here and here,' she said, pointing to the wounds, which were now cleared of blood. 'The knife was seven or eight inches long, so she would have had trouble surviving any of the eight or so deeper wounds to her body and neck. Her tox screen was just alcohol, no drugs or paracetamol. Now, trace DNA and other samples. Mr Tofey had one long strand of dark brown hair, without a follicle, which was stuck in the congealing blood on his face, which suggests to me, the killer has long brown hair.'

'Which either points to a female killer or a male with long hair. Black has short hair,' Franco explains, while looking toward Meyer who was focused on the body in front of him.

'What about time of death?' Meyer asked.

'Between 12 am and 3 am. As for any other form of DNA it all came back negative.'

'Does that wrap things up?' Meyer said with a smile.

'It sure does Carsten. Good luck with the case.'

Franco and Meyer walked briskly towards the car in silence, but they were both thinking the same thing. That Jeffery Black may not be the killer. 'He may have had an accomplice with long brown hair,' Franco said, breaking the silence, as if he knew what Meyer was thinking. Meyer took a pregnant pause.

‘Could be. Even if that isn’t his MO, he could change his MO, anytime he wanted. And he must have known that there was a chance the Tofey’s would be there and willing and able to put up a fight. As for the ferocity of the attack on Mrs Tofey, well there’s no MO for that for a burglar. That’s over kill even for the worst ones. That’s either serial killer levels or a crime of passion. Let’s have a closer look at her, see what’s in her closet. Talk to her friends and relatives and get access to her computer and social media accounts.’

‘Sure,’ Franco said, as he reached for his phone to recruit a couple of DC’s to the tasks. As he finished speaking to them, he checked his emails. ‘Forensics prelim is in,’ he told Meyer.

‘Good. And another thing to add to the list. Affairs. Was Mr Tofey loyal to his wife? Check with his friends and social media. And do the same for her.’

‘Tofey didn’t have any social media.’

‘Right. Sensible man.’

‘Mrs Tofey was a light user of Facebook,’ Franco added, anticipating Meyer’s next question.

Meyer virtually ran to his office, once he knew the forensic report was in. He also still had to interview Jeffery Black, although this was beginning to become less of a priority, since the ME told him about the long strand of brown hair and the fact that the attack on Mrs Tofey was so brutal, it didn’t fit the profile of an aggravated burglary. Plus, one of his big questions had been answered. Was Mr Tofey tortured or beaten to get the safe code out of him? It was clear that he died from one very hard blow to the head, with a crowbar, with its sharp claw blades at each end.

‘As soon as the crime scene and local drains have been re-searched, I want an update!’ Meyer bellowed at Franco, through the open office door.

‘Yep,’ Franco replied and gave him a thumbs-up.

After a while Meyer beckoned Franco into the office to discuss the forensic report. ‘Shall I close it?’ Franco asked, with one hand on the office door.

‘No, no. We’ll brief everyone later on anyway. There’s nothing here to be kept back or embargoed.’

‘Okay,’ he said and pulled the chair out and sat down, iPad in hand, with the report up onscreen.

‘Fingerprints. A dozen sets, none in our database. DNA swabbing has only identified the two victims and two other profiles, which have not come up on our database. No weapons found,’ he continued while speed reading the document. He paused while he tried to pick out any salient information. ‘Not much here is there?’ Meyer said. ‘I think we need to swab anyone who’s been to the house. And fingerprints. Can you sort this out, while I wrap up our suspect?’ Meyer asked.

‘Yes,’ Franco said, as he stood up and left the room. Meyer checked his emails and then shut down his computer. He then stood up, but his jacket on, grabbed his briefcase and headed off to the cells.

After dismissing Black from his enquiry, Meyer opened his notebook and looked up Tofey’s sisters’ number. He still needed to understand why the safe in the master bedroom was open. He dialled the number. It rang four times and then it was answered.

‘Yes,’ she said, sounding unhappy that someone was calling her.

‘Jane?’

‘Yes. That’s me. Who is this?’ she asked.

‘DI Meyer, murder squad. I have to ask you some questions about your brothers’ death. Can you come into the station?’

‘Yes. When?’

‘Today?’ he suggested.

‘I’ll be there in an hour, unless I need a lawyer. I don’t need a lawyer do I?’

‘Not at this stage no.’

‘I’ll see you in an hour,’ she said, and hung up. Meyer headed back up to his office. As he arrived DC Underhill, one of the older members of the team, not far off retirement intercepted him.

‘Boss. I have spoken with the female victims’ friends and family.’

‘And?’ Meyer asked.

‘Nothing of interest. No affairs, no marital difficulties, as far as they knew. However, I know you want to find out about the safe and the computer that ran the cameras.’

‘Go on,’ Meyer said, feeling a little impatient.

‘One of the female victims’ friends, a Mary Wolding. She said he was known to be very lax with security.’

‘Despite all the money he spent on it?’

‘Seems like it.’

‘That doesn’t seem like a person who is fearing for his life. I would hazard a guess he was feeling very secure. That tells us a lot.’

‘Yes,’ DC Underhill replied.

‘Okay, good work. Next I want you and someone else, urrrr,’ Meyer looked around the office trying to find someone who was free. ‘Bryan. Take Bryan and go to his office and take statements from all his colleagues. Find out whether they knew of any threats or difficulties he might have been having. And affairs. Find out whether his social life was purely colleagues from work or whether he had friends outside work.’

‘Yes boss. I’ll head over there now.’

‘Good.’

Meyer entered reception through a secure door with a buzzer, controlled by the officer on the front desk. ‘Ms Tofey. Welcome to Croydon station,’ he said and stuck out his hand to shake hers, which she did. ‘Come through,’ he said. The door buzzed loudly and he walked through and held the door for her. ‘In here,’ he said, as he opened a door very close to the entrance. Inside was a tub chair and a sofa and a small coffee table with one motorbiking magazine on it. Out of date. ‘Take a seat,’ he said as he took the seat on the opposite side, placing himself on the edge of the chair, his coat hanging over his body, touching the floor. He reached inside his briefcase and lifted out a notebook and found the next empty page, holding a silver pen which he’d fished out of his coat pocket. ‘Now, your brother. Are you okay to talk about this? Do you want someone to sit in with you?’

‘No, I’m fine,’ she said. She looked pale and drawn, like Meyer would have expected a grieving relative to look like.

‘Right. Good. Your brother. Did he have any enemies that you know about?’

‘No. He probably wouldn’t have told me the details even if he did.’

‘Who is set to inherit his estate?’

‘It will be split several ways, among his family and Jane’s family, because if he died before Jane, then she would have inherited everything. But because they’re both dead...’ she cut off when she realised the rest of the statement was obvious.

‘Now, what about the safe? Do you think he would have left the safe open as a normal thing, or would it have been locked normally, because it was found open?’

‘I think the safe was in the bedroom, but as far as I know he would have left it locked. Why else would you have a safe, if it’s just left open all the time?’

‘Good point. What about security in general? Was he concerned about security, because he spent a lot of money on it, at the house?’

‘He was careful. Again, whenever I went round there, the alarm wouldn’t be on, because he was up and about, not in bed.’

‘And the CCTV room downstairs. Was the door left open or closed during the day?’

She looked down at her feet, then began to get upset.

‘Are you okay? That was my last question so no need to worry about this continuing.’ She wiped her eyes and then looked up.

‘It would be open sometimes, not that I would take much notice.’

‘Okay, well thanks for coming in. I may have follow up questions, but perhaps next time, you’d like to bring someone with you? Have you got a partner at home?’

‘No. I’m on my own.’ She eventually got up and left, as Meyer led her back out of the building, feeling quite sorry for her.

Chapter Five.

A hooded figure ran along the street, looking like nothing but a runner on a circuit. But as they turned into a drive, with a four-foot-high wooden gate, she hopped over it and walked the final few yards and headed through the well-kept garden to the back. She smashed a window and unhooked the lock on the other side. Fifty-eight-year-old Roger Day sat up bolt right, as soon as he heard the noise. He lived alone in this mansion, after losing his wife to breast cancer two years ago. He had one daughter who lived a few miles away with her husband and kids. He glanced over at the digital clock, with its bright red digits gently illuminating the darkness. He switched on the light and lifted himself out of bed, feeling a little stiff and awkward. His heart was racing as he reached for his phone and stood up in the corner of the room trying to think clearly. Trying to think about what he could use as a weapon. It was definitely a noise that had come from his house, downstairs. He was sure of that. He dialled 999 and whispered his concerns and his address down the phone, then kept the line open. *A weapon, he thought. I need a weapon.*

He crept downstairs checking every shadow, turning on every light and headed for the kitchen to the knife block and removed one of them. As he went to turn round, he was grabbed from behind. 'I have a knife at your throat Roger,' a woman said.

'You know my name,' he said.

'Yes I do. There is something I want. Get it for me and I won't kill you,' she said.

'I've called the police.'

'I know. Now I need something.'

As the police arrived the woman dashed out the house through the back door and into the garden, running full tilt and leaping over the fence in one leap. An officer gave chase, but it was already too late. Her black clothing melting her into the darkness ahead. The other officer, rushed

through to the kitchen. Roger had three shallow knife wounds, around his neck and his back and he had been hit on the head and was currently unconscious on the floor. The officer called an ambulance, as the officer who had given chase to the suspect returned, sweating and out of breath. 'He's gone,' he said, between deep breaths. He then reached for his radio. 'Can we get support for a male in black fleeing from the scene. Waterhouse Drive, number fifty?' he asked as the local force swung into action. 'You alright here?' he asked his colleague.

'Yes,' he replied as the other officer headed back out of the door to the car to continue the search for the attacker.

'Ambulance is on its way now,' the other officer told Roger. He lay on the floor and had come round, although he was barely able to stay awake. Blood was everywhere and the officer was also covered in it.

Meyer sat at his desk, hunched over piles of paperwork. He seemed quite disorganised for the uninitiated, but in reality, he was organised. He didn't fit the German stereotype of ultra-efficiency, but he was more than capable of putting together complex cases. As he read a report, he could see on the edges of his vision, a figure had appeared at his door. He looked up at DS Peters, a second before he knocked on the woodwork. 'Boss,' he said.

'Peters,' he said as he looked up at him.

'We've had another violent burglary, early hours. The man was knifed and knocked unconscious and his house ransacked.

'And the attacker?'

'In the wind. But get this. The victim said his attacker was female and he thinks he knows who it is.'

'Who?'

'The sister of your dead millionaire, Tofey.'

Meyer stared into space with his mouth open for a second before speaking. 'And he's alive?'

'Yeah. In hospital.'

'And speaking?'

'He's groggy, but he's talking to uniform. That's who kicked it upstairs.' Meyer stood up and put his jacket on.

'I'd better go then. Put a call out for the apprehension of Jane Tofey. And find a picture of her sharpish. Franco!' he yelled as Franco looked up from his desk looking a little startled.

Meyer and Franco arrived at the hospital and hastily headed for Roger Day's room. Meyer knocked on the window, then entered without waiting for a reply. Roger's daughter was there, and he was sitting up and awake. 'Mr Day. I am DI Meyer and this is DS Franco, with the Met's murder squad.'

'Hello. I haven't been murdered have I?' he said with a smile.

'Nope. This would be a strange heaven. Now, you were attacked by Jane Tofey, the sister of James Tofey, is that right?'

'Yes. I didn't realise it at first, but I recognised her voice and she knew my name.'

'And what did she want, do you know?'

'Well, I do, but it was supposed to be secret. James swore me to secrecy when he gave me his journal. He told me to never read it.'

'And did you?' Meyer asked. He paused for a while, as he thought about it.

'To my shame, yes, I did read it. But only after he died, because I wondered if it would be relevant, that something in that journal got him killed.'

'And where is this journal now?'

'Seeing as she demanded I give it to her, I thought it pertinent to ask my daughter to go and fetch it. It's in this cupboard.' He went to reach down to the bedside cupboard, but moaned in pain as he did.

'Don't worry, I'll get it,' his daughter went to open the door, before Meyer protested.

'Actually, we need a proper chain of custody for it, so I will get it.'

'Okay,' she said and sat back down, as Meyer headed round the other side of the bed, before putting on latex gloves. He pulled it out. It was old and the pages frayed. It had a red leather cover, with the word 'journal' written on it in gold letters. Meyer opened it up.

'What did it say Mr Day?' Meyer asked as he opened it to the first page and looked at the handwritten notes with dates written at the top of each entry. There were also drawings in pen and some in pencil.

‘To cut a long story short,’ he said, as Meyer nodded. ‘He was in a sexual relationship with his sister, from the age of fifteen onwards. She was seventeen when it started. The last entry was last year, when he wrote about getting her to stop bugging him. She wanted them to be together and he wanted to end it.’

‘It was still going on?’

‘He stopped it last year according to his entries in the journal. So I guess she’s been building up to this. To kill him and Carrie I guess.’

‘That would explain the ferocity of the attack on his wife. Driven by jealousy,’ Franco said. Meyer nodded.

‘Well thank you for this. Tell me, how do you know him – Mr Tofey?’ he asked.

‘We met at a conference in 2003 and we’ve been friends ever since,’ he said.

‘Why do you think he entrusted this journal to you?’

‘He trusted me I guess.’

‘And any thoughts on why he passed it to you a year ago. I mean he’d had it all these years, presumably in the house where his wife could have found it?’

‘That bit I don’t know. Perhaps it was all being done on the build up to him finishing the affair.’

‘Maybe he thought it would all come out, if he tried to finish it?’ Franco said.

‘Thanks for your help,’ Meyer said. They then left to go and help track her down. Meyer got onto his phone as soon as they had left the building to call the uniform sergeant leading the hunt for her. ‘Any sign of her?’ Meyer asked.

‘We have her cornered in a shop, Matalan. She’s in a cubicle refusing to come out. I believe she has a knife and is threatening to cut her own throat.’

‘What about negotiators? Have they been called?’ Meyer asked.

Yes, sir. They’re on their way.’

‘So am I. I will be there shortly,’ he said and hung up, as he climbed into the car and switched on his blue lights and sirens. Matalan, was a

short distance away. It wouldn't take all that long to get there. Meyer and Franco got out of the car and ran into the shop.

'Where are the changing rooms?' Franco asked. 'Never mind,' he added as it became obvious where all the commotion was, because he could see a crowd of police and security guards and what looked like the store managers and a small crowd of shoppers near by being held back by police. Meyer and Franco jogged over and pushed through showing their badges. Just as they arrived Jane suddenly crashed through the curtain of the changing room, blood pouring from her throat.

'Shit!' Meyer said as he rushed forward and put his hand over her wound. 'Paramedics. Where are they?' he pleaded as two paramedics pushed through the crowd and took over from Meyer. But it was too late. She was dead. She'd bled out very quickly, with most of the blood in the changing cubicle. She did it inside the cubicle, and that's where she bled out, before collapsing through the curtain and onto the floor. Once she was outside the cubicle, she was only seconds from death. Meyer stood up with his hands held out, trying not get blood on his clothes. 'Bathroom?' he said looking at the shop's manager.

'Come this way,' he said.

'Well that explains why the alarm was disabled and the safe empty. She knew the codes already,' Franco said.

'Let's get her house searched. I'm expecting to find the contents of the safe and the picture. If they're there, that will confirm it was her,' Meyer added.