

Four brutal murders, a city living in fear,
a killer on the streets...

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Bestselling author of
Prime Suspect

MURDER MILE

A Jane Tennison thriller

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CHAPTER ONE

Jane Tennison, recently promoted to sergeant, looked out of the passenger window of the CID car at the snow, which was falling too lightly to settle. It was 4.30 on a freezing Saturday morning in mid-February 1979 and recently the overnight temperatures had been sub-zero. The weather reports were calling it one of the coldest winters of the century.

Apart from a couple of minor incidents, Jane's CID night shift at Peckham had been remarkably uneventful, due to the bad weather. She looked at her watch: only another hour and a half to go before she finished her week of night duty and could get home to a warm bath, good sleep and some time off. She'd be back at Peckham on Monday for the day shift.

Detective Constable Brian Edwards, an old colleague from her Hackney days, had been her night duty partner throughout the week. He was so tall he had the driving seat pressed as far back as it could possibly go, but his knees were still almost touching the steering wheel.

'Can you turn the heating up?' she asked, as they drove along East Dulwich Road.

'It's already on full.' Edwards moved the slider to be sure, then glanced at Jane. 'I meant to say earlier: I like your new hairstyle. Sort of makes you look more mature.'

'Is that a polite way of saying I look older, Brian?' Jane asked.

'I was being complimentary! It goes with your smart clothes, makes you look more business like . . . Especially now you've been promoted.'

Jane was about to reply when Edwards suddenly slammed his foot on the car brake, bringing it to an abrupt halt. They both lunged forward, Edwards banging his chest against the steering wheel and Jane narrowly avoiding hitting her head on the windscreen.

‘What? What’s up?’ Jane asked, startled, staring at Edwards.

‘A rat . . . A bloody rat!’ He pointed at the middle of the road in front of them.

Illuminated by the car headlights was a massive rat, a piece of rotting meat between its sharp teeth. The rat suddenly darted off across the road and out of sight.

Edwards shook his head. ‘I hate rats. They give me the creeps.’

‘Well, that’s obvious! And yes, thank you, Brian, I’m OK – apart from nearly going through the windscreen.’

‘I’m sorry, Sarge. I didn’t mean to hit the brakes so suddenly.’

‘I’m just touched that you didn’t want to run the rat over, Brian,’ Jane said.

Edwards pointed over towards Peckham Rye to a pile of rubbish-filled plastic black bin and shopping bags. They were piled up five foot high and stretched over twenty feet along the side of the park. The stench of rotting rubbish slowly permeated its way into the stationary car.

‘It’s thanks to Prime Minister Callaghan and his waste-of-space labour government that the bin men and other public-sector workers are on strike,’ grumbled Edwards. ‘Everyone’s dumping their rotting rubbish in the parks and it’s attracting the rats. No wonder they’re calling it the “Winter of Disconnect”.’

‘It’s “Discontent”,’ Jane corrected him.

‘You’re quite right – there’s not much to be happy about! Mind you, if Maggie Thatcher wins the next election we might get a pay rise. She likes the Old Bill.’

Jane was trying hard not to laugh. ‘It’s the “Winter of Discontent”! It comes from Shakespeare’s *Richard III*: “Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York . . . ”’

Edwards looked sceptical. ‘Really?’

‘I studied *Richard III* for A level English.’

‘All that Shakespeare lingo is mumbo-jumbo to me. I left school at sixteen and joined the Metropolitan Police Cadets,’ Edwards said proudly.

‘I didn’t know you’d been a “Gadget”,’ said Jane, somewhat surprised. A ‘Gadget’ was affectionate force jargon for a cadet.

‘It was all blokes when I first joined the Gadgets,’ Edwards went on. ‘We lived in a big dormitory and got work experience on division alongside the regulars. It gave me a better understanding of police work than your average ex-civvy probationer who went to Hendon. No offence intended,’ he added hastily.

‘None taken. If I’d known what I wanted to do at sixteen I’d probably have joined the cadets – though my mother would likely have had a heart attack.’ Jane liked Edwards, but he wasn’t the brightest spark. He’d been transferred to various stations and hadn’t lasted long on the Flying Squad. In her estimation, he’d probably remain a DC for the rest of his career.

‘Tell you what: head back to the station so we can warm up with a hot drink and I’ll type up the night duty CID report,’ she said.

Edwards snorted. ‘That shouldn’t take long – we haven’t attended a crime scene or nicked anyone all night.’

Their banter was interrupted by a call over the radio. ‘Night duty CID receiving . . . over?’

Jane picked up the radio handset. ‘Yes, Detective Sergeant Tennison receiving. Go ahead . . . over.’

‘A fruit and veg man on his way to set up his market stall has found an unconscious woman in Bussey Alley. Couldn’t rouse her so he called 999. There’s an ambulance en route,’ the comms officer said.

‘That’s just off Rye Lane.’ Edwards made a sharp U-turn.

‘Yes, we’re free to attend and en route,’ Jane confirmed over the radio, switching on the car’s two-tone siren.

‘If she’s been out drinking she’s probably collapsed from hypothermia in this bloody weather. Or maybe she’s been mugged?’ suggested Edwards.

‘Let’s just hope she’s OK,’ Jane said.

Rye Lane ran between the High Street and Peckham Rye. In its heyday it had rivalled Oxford Street as a major shopping destination and was known as the ‘Golden Mile’. It was still a busy area,

with a large department store, Co-op and various small shops and market traders selling home-produced and ethnic goods from their stalls. During the 1970s, Peckham had gradually become one of the most deprived areas in Europe, with a notorious reputation for serious and violent crime, especially muggings, which were a daily occurrence.

Jane and Edwards arrived at the scene within two minutes. A man who looked to be in his mid-fifties was standing under the railway bridge at the entrance to Bussey Alley, frantically waving his hands. He was dressed in a dark-coloured thigh-length sheepskin coat, blue and white Millwall Football Club scarf and a peaked cap. Edwards pulled up beside him and opened the driver's window.

'I thought you might be the ambulance when I heard the siren.' The man crouched down to speak to them. 'Poor thing's just up there. She's lyin' face down and ain't moved. I put one of me stall tarpaulins over her to keep off the sleet and cold. I was hopin' she might warm up and come round . . .'

Jane put on her leather gloves, got the high-powered torch out of the glove box and picked up the portable Storno police radio.

'There's quite a lot of rubbish been dumped on one side of the alley, just up from where she is – be careful of the rats,' the market trader said as they got out of the car.

Jane grinned at Edwards. He hadn't looked too happy at the word 'rat'. 'You get the details,' she said. 'I'll check on the woman.'

She turned on the torch, lighting up the dingy alley. The narrow path ran alongside the railway line. In the arches underneath were small lockups where the market traders stored their stalls and goods. Jane walked at a brisk pace, until about forty feet along she could see the green and white striped tarpaulin. Crouching down, she lifted it back and shone the torch. The woman beneath was wearing a thigh-length blue PVC mac, with the collar up, covering the back of her neck.

Removing her right glove, Jane put her index and middle fingers together, and placed them on the side of the woman's neck, in the soft hollow area just beside the windpipe. There was no pulse and the woman's neck felt cold and clammy. Jane felt uneasy. She stood up and slowly shone her torch along the body, revealing dried blood smears on the back of the blue mac. The woman's knee-length pleated skirt was hitched up to her thighs, revealing suspenders and black stockings. Near the body the torch beam caught three small shirt buttons. Peering closely at one of them, Jane could see some white sewing thread and a tiny piece of torn shirt still attached. It looked as if the button had been ripped off, possibly in a struggle.

A little further up the alleyway Jane noticed a cheap and worn small handbag. Wearing her leather gloves, she picked it up and opened it carefully, looking for any ID. All she found was a lipstick, handkerchief, a small hairbrush and a plastic purse. Inside the purse were a few coins and one folded five-pound note. There were no house or car keys to be found. Jane placed a ten pence coin down on the spot where she'd found it; it would go in a property bag later to preserve it for fingerprints.

Next, Jane shone the torch around the body. It was strange: she couldn't see any blood on the pavement around or near the victim, or on the back of her head. She crouched down and slowly lifted the collar on the PVC mac back, revealing a knotted white cord around the victim's neck and hair.

Shocked, Jane got to her feet and pulled out the portable radio.

'WDS Tennison to Peckham Control Room. Are you receiving? Over.' She spoke with confidence and authority, despite the fact she'd only been promoted and posted to Peckham a few weeks ago.

'Yes, go ahead, Sarge,' the comms officer replied.

'Cancel the ambulance. The woman in Bussey Alley appears to have been strangled. I've looked in a handbag for possible ID, but can't find any. I need uniform assistance to cordon off and man the

scene at Rye Lane, and the far end of Bussey Alley, which leads onto Copeland Road.'

'All received, Sarge. A mobile unit is en route to assist.'

Jane continued, 'Can you call DCI Moran at home and ask him to attend the scene? I'll also need the laboratory scene of crime DS here. Oh, and the divisional surgeon to officially pronounce life extinct . . . Over.'

The duty sergeant came on the radio. 'Looks like a quiet week just got busy, Jane. I'll call Moran and tell him you're on scene and dealing . . . Over.'

Jane ended the transmission and replaced the tarpaulin over the body to preserve it from the sleet that was still falling, although not as heavily. Then she walked back to Rye Lane.

Edwards was still speaking to the market trader and making notes in his pocketbook. As she approached him, she gave a little shake of her head to indicate this was more than a collapse in the street or hypothermia, then went to the rear of the CID car. Taking out a plastic police property bag, she placed the handbag inside it.

'Is she all right?' the trader asked.

Jane shook her head. 'I'm afraid she's dead, sir. Did you see anyone hanging about or acting suspiciously before you found her?'

The man looked shocked. 'No, no one . . . Oh, my – the poor thing. What's happened to her?'

'I don't know, sir, I'm afraid. Further investigation is needed.' Jane did not want to reveal more.

'Can I get me gear out the lockup and set up for business?'

'Sorry, not at the moment, but maybe in an hour or two,' she said. 'We'll need to take a more detailed statement off you later.'

Jane took Edwards to one side. By now their hair was soaking and their coats sodden.

'I take it you're thinking murder?' he whispered.

Jane nodded. 'Looks like she's been strangled with a cord. I've spoken with the duty sergeant who's informing DCI Moran. The

market man's up a bit early – does his account of how he found her sound above board to you?’

‘Yeah. His name's Charlie Dunn, he's sixty-two and he's been working the markets since he was twelve. He's always been an early bird. He said he's just been over to Spitalfields fruit and veg market to get fresh stock for the day. That's his white van under the railway bridge. He was unloading it to his archway lockup in the alley when he saw the woman on the pavement. I checked his van: it's full of fresh goods. He also showed me the purchase receipt for the fruit and veg and his market trader's licence. He sounded and acted legit to me.’

‘Well, she's stone cold, so it looks like she's been dead a while, anyway.’

‘Any ID on her?’

‘Nothing in the handbag, not even keys. I haven't had a chance to check her coat pockets yet. I want to get both ends of the alleyway sealed off and manned by uniform first – all the market traders will be turning up soon and wanting access to their archway lockups.’

Edwards nodded and blew into his freezing hands. He didn't question her authoritative tone; on the contrary, he liked the fact WDS Tennison was taking responsibility for the crime scene.

The market trader went to his van and returned with a Thermos flask.

‘Hot coffee? You can have it, if you want. I'm going to go home and come back later.’

‘Thank you!’ Edwards took the flask and poured some coffee into the removable cup and handed it to Jane. She took a mouthful, swallowed it, then let out a deep cough and held her chest.

‘There's more brandy in that than coffee!’

Edwards promptly held the flask to his lips and took a large gulp. ‘So there is,’ he said with a grin.

‘Put it in the car, Brian. We don't want Moran smelling booze on us – you know what he's like about drinking on duty.’

Edwards took another gulp, then put the flask in the back of the car and got a packet of lozenges out of his pocket.

“Be prepared”, as we used to say in the scouts. You see, I remember some famous quotes as well.’ Edwards took one for himself, then offered the packet to Jane.

‘What are they?’ Jane asked.

‘Fisherman’s Friend. They’ll hide the smell of the brandy and warm you up at the same time. I take them fishing with me when it’s cold like this.’

Jane reached into the pack, took out one of the small, light brown, oval-shaped lozenges, popped it in her mouth and immediately began taking deep breaths. The menthol flavour was so strong her eyes began watering, her nose started running and her throat tingled.

‘They taste awful!’ she exclaimed, spitting out the lozenge and placing it in a tissue to throw away later.

Just then, two police constables arrived in an Austin Allegro panda car. They got out and approached Jane.

‘What do you need us to do, Sarge?’

‘I need the Rye Lane and Copeland Road entrances to the alley sealed off with tape and one of you to stand guard at each end.’

‘Will do, Sarge.’ They both set off and then one of them turned back. ‘Oh, the duty sergeant said to tell you DCI Moran’s been informed and is on his way with DI Gibbs.’

Edwards looked at Jane. ‘I thought DI Gibbs wasn’t due to start at Peckham until Monday?’

Jane shrugged. ‘That’s what I thought as well.’

‘Maybe Moran wants him to run the investigation.’

‘Why? Moran’s the senior officer – he’s in charge of the CID at Peckham,’ Jane pointed out.

‘Don’t tell anyone I told you this,’ said Edwards, ‘but I was in the bog cubicle when I overheard Moran talking to the chief super. Moran said his wife was suffering from the “baby blues”. Apparently

the baby was crying a lot and he didn't know what to do for the best. The chief suggested he take some time off when DI Gibbs arrived – so maybe Moran's called Gibbs in early to familiarise himself with everything before he steps back to spend time at home.'

'I didn't know his wife had had a baby.'

'Yeah, about a month before you started at Peckham,' Edwards paused. 'I've not seen Spencer Gibbs since our Hackney days, but I heard he went off the rails a bit after Bradfield was killed in the explosion during that bank robbery by the Bentley family.'

Jane immediately became tight-lipped. 'I worked with Gibbs in the West End at Bow Street when I was a WDC and he was fine,' she lied.

At the time, Gibbs was drinking heavily to drown his sorrows, but managing to hide it from his other colleagues. She had always had a soft spot for Gibbs and didn't like to hear his name or reputation being tarnished. She suspected he must have overcome his demons, especially if he'd been posted to a busy station like Peckham. She also knew DCI Moran would have had to agree to Gibbs's transfer.

Jane and Edwards returned to the alley. Edwards went over to look at the body, whilst Jane picked up the coin she'd used as a marker and replaced it with the handbag, now inside the property bag. Lifting back the tarpaulin, they both checked to see if there was anything in the victim's pockets to help identify her, but there was nothing.

Edwards pulled up the left sleeve of the victim's PVC mac.

'She's wearing a watch,' he said. 'Looks like a cheap catalogue one; glass is scratched and the strap's worn. There's no engagement or wedding ring – they might have been stolen?'

'Possibly,' said Jane, 'but there's no white patch or indentation on the skin to suggest she was wearing either. Plus the handbag was left behind with money in it.' She got the radio out of her coat pocket and handed it to Edwards.

‘Call the station and ask them to check Missing Persons for anyone matching our victim’s description. I’ll do a search further up the alley towards Copeland Road to see if there’s anything else that may be of significance to the investigation.’

Edwards hesitated. ‘What should I tell Comms?’

Jane gave a small sigh. ‘Brian, just look at the victim and describe her when you speak to them, OK?’

‘Oh, yeah, OK, I see.’

Jane watched Edwards disappear down the alleyway, leaving her alone with the body. She replaced the tarpaulin on the body, then searched the rest of the alleyway, but found nothing of interest. It was still dark and now that the initial adrenalin rush was wearing off she was even more aware of the cold. She stamped her feet and flapped her arms across her chest to generate some warmth. A sudden noise made her jump, and swinging her torch around revealed a rat scurrying from a pile of rubbish that had been left rotting in front of one of the arches. She thought about the woman lying on the ground in front of her. What had she been doing here? Had she been on her own, like Jane was now, or was her killer someone she knew?

Footsteps approached from the Rye Lane end of the alley. Jane looked up, shone her torch and saw Detective Sergeant Paul Lawrence from the forensics lab approaching. He was accompanied by a younger man in civilian clothes. Even if she hadn’t seen Paul’s face, she’d have guessed it was him. As ever, he was dressed in his trademark thigh-length green Barbour wax jacket and trilby hat. Paul Lawrence was renowned as the best crime scene investigator in the Met. He had an uncanny ability to think laterally and piece things together bit by bit. Always patient and willing to explain what he was doing, Jane had worked with him several times and felt indebted to him for all that he had taught her. Now she felt relief at the sight of his familiar figure.

Paul greeted Jane with a friendly smile. ‘I hear it’s Detective Sergeant Tennison now! Well done and well deserved, Jane. As we’re

the same rank, you can officially call me Paul.' He laughed. She had always called him Paul when not in the company of senior officers.

'You were quick,' Jane said, smiling back at him.

'I'd already been in the lab typing up a report from an earlier incident in Brixton,' he said. 'Victim stabbed during a fight over a drugs deal. Turned out the injury wasn't as serious as first thought and the victim didn't want to assist us anyway, so there wasn't much to do. No doubt there'll be a revenge attack within a few days.'

Jane explained the scene to him, starting with the market trader's account and exactly what she and DC Edwards had done since their arrival at Bussey Alley. She also told him about the handbag and buttons.

'Good work, Jane. Minimal disturbance of the scene and preservation of evidence is what I like to see and hear. Peter here is the scene of crime officer assisting me. He'll photograph everything as is, then we can get the victim onto a body sheet for a closer look underneath.'

The SOCO set to work taking the initial scene photographs of the alleyway and body. He stopped when the divisional surgeon appeared. Although it was obvious, the doctor still checked for a pulse on her neck, before officially pronouncing she was dead. As the doctor was getting to his feet, Detective Chief Inspector Moran arrived, carrying a large red hard-backed A4 notebook, and holding up an enormous black umbrella. Dressed smartly in a grey pin-stripe suit, crisp white shirt, red tie, black brogues and thigh-length beige camel coat, he nonetheless looked bad-tempered and tired.

'So, DS Tennison,' he said. 'What's happened so far?' He sounded tetchy.

Jane had worked with DCI Nick Moran when she was a WPC at Hackney in the early seventies, and he was a detective inspector. She knew to keep her summary brief and to the point, so as not to irritate her superior.

‘The victim was found in here by a market trader. Edwards spoke with him and is satisfied he wasn’t involved. I called DS Lawrence to the scene and the divisional surgeon, who’s pronounced life extinct. From my cursory examination it appears she’s been strangled. I haven’t found anything to help us identify who she is, though a handbag was nearby, which I checked—’

Moran frowned. ‘I had expected you to just contain the scene until I arrived. It’s my job to decide who should be called and what action should be taken. You should have left the handbag in situ as well. It’s not good to disturb a scene.’

Jane felt Moran was being a bit harsh. She, like everyone else, was working in the freezing cold and soaking wet. He should have realised she was trying to obtain the best evidence and identify the victim. She thought about saying as much, but wondering if his mood was connected to a sleepless night coping with the new baby, decided to say nothing.

Lawrence looked at Moran. ‘It’s standard procedure for a lab sergeant to be called to all suspicious deaths and murder scenes at the earliest opportunity. Preserving the handbag for fingerprints showed good crime scene awareness by WDS Tennison.’

Moran ignored Lawrence and spoke to the divisional surgeon. ‘Can you give me an estimation of time of death?’

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. ‘There are many variables due to the weather conditions, breeze in the alley and other factors, which can affect body temperature. It’s hard to be accurate, but possibly just before or after midnight.’

Just about managing to keep his umbrella up, Moran wrote in his notebook. Jane could see Lawrence was not pleased. She knew his view was that divisional surgeons were not experienced in forensic pathology or time of death, and should confine their role to nothing more than pronouncing life extinct.

Lawrence looked at Moran. ‘Excuse me, sir, but now the sleet’s stopped, it would be a good idea to get a pathologist down to see the body in situ. He can check the rigor mortis and body temp—’

Moran interrupted him, shutting his umbrella. 'The weather's constantly changing, and more snow is forecast, so I want the body bagged, tagged and off to the mortuary as a priority for a post-mortem later this morning.'

Lawrence sighed, but he didn't want to get into an argument about it. Opening his forensic kit, he removed a white body sheet and latex gloves. Using some tweezers, he picked up the three buttons beside the body and placed them in a plastic property bag. Then he unfolded the body sheet and placed it on the ground next to the body.

Lawrence looked up at Jane and Edwards. 'I want to turn her over onto the body bag. If one of you can grab her feet, I'll work the shoulders. Just go slow and gentle.'

Jane took a step forward, but Edwards said he'd do it and grabbed a pair of protective gloves from Lawrence's forensic bag. As they turned the body over, Jane shone her torch on the victim, lighting up her contorted face and the rope around her neck. The strangulation had caused her tongue to protrude and her eyes were puffed and swollen. The victim wore little make-up, and looked to be in her late twenties to early thirties. She was medium height, with brown shoulder-length hair parted down the middle, and was wearing a pink blouse, which was torn, and her bra was pulled up over her breasts.

Lawrence pointed to the pavement area where the body had been lying. 'It's dry underneath her,' he observed.

'The sleet started about three a.m.,' Jane said.

'Then it's reasonable to assume she was killed before then.'

'How can you be sure it was three a.m., Tennison?' Moran snapped, tapping the ground with the steel tip of his umbrella.

Jane got her notebook out of her inside coat pocket. 'We'd just stopped a vehicle and I recorded the details and time in my notebook. I remember the sleet starting as I was taking the driver's details. Let me find it . . .' She flicked through the pages. 'Ah – here it is. Time of stop, 3.03 a.m.'

‘Well, I want it checked out with the London weather office in case it becomes critical to the case,’ said Moran. ‘The body is a stone’s throw from Peckham Rye railway station. She might have been out late Friday night and attacked in the alleyway if using it as a cut-through to Copeland Road.’

Lawrence shrugged. ‘She might have thrown it away, but there was no train ticket on her. She may have been walking from the Copeland Road end and heading towards Rye Lane. The fact there were no house keys on her could suggest she was returning home and expecting someone to let her in.’

Moran nodded. ‘We can put out a press appeal with the victim’s description and ask if anyone recalls seeing her on the train Friday night. Also we can run a check with Missing Persons for anyone matching her description.’

‘Already in hand, sir,’ Jane said, without receiving so much as a thank you back. She glanced at Edwards, reminding herself to check exactly what description he had given Missing Persons.

Lawrence crouched down next to the body, looked at Moran and pointed to the victim’s torn blouse. ‘She may have been sexually assaulted as well. There’s four buttons missing on her blouse. I only recovered three beside the body and there’s no more underneath her.’

Jane raised her finger. ‘I had a good look up and down the alley before DS Lawrence arrived and didn’t find any more buttons.’

Lawrence stood up. ‘Best we check the soles of our shoes in case one of us has accidentally trodden on it and it’s got lodged in the tread. It won’t be the first time something has unintentionally been removed from a crime scene in that way. When you see the market trader who found her, check his footwear as well.’

Everyone checked the soles of their shoes.

‘Someone tread in dog shit?’

Jane turned around. Spencer Gibbs was wearing a trendy full-length brown sheepskin coat. His hands were deep in the pockets,

pulling the unbuttoned coat around his front to keep out the cold. He had a big smile and Jane could instantly see he was looking a lot better now than when she last saw him, almost younger, in fact. His hair had changed as well. It no longer stood up like a wire brush, but was combed back straight from his forehead.

Gibbs's smile widened when he saw Jane.

She held out her hand. 'Hello, Spence. You look well.'

'Jane Tennison – long time no see!' He pulled her forward to give her a hug.

Jane noticed that DCI Moran didn't seem too impressed and wondered if Gibbs's jovial mood was due to drink, although she couldn't smell any alcohol.

Gibbs walked over to Moran. 'Good morning, sir,' he said, and they shook hands. Gibbs's coat fell open to reveal a blue frilled shirt, tight leather trousers, blue suede shoes and a large 'Peace' sign medallion. Everyone went quiet.

Moran frowned. 'So you really think that sort of outfit is suitable for a senior detective, DI Gibbs?'

'Sorry, guv. I did a gig in Camden town with my band last night, then stayed at my girlfriend Tamara's pad. Thankfully I'd added her phone number to my out of hours contact list at the old station. I didn't want to waste time by going home to change when I got the call-out, so after a quick dash of Adidas aftershave, I came straight to the scene by cab.'

Gibbs's looks and patter had become even more 'rock and roll' than they used to be.

'Your band do glam rock, guv?' Edwards asked, trying not to laugh at Gibbs's dress sense.

'No, we're more progressive . . . Serious rock and roll. Girlfriend's in the band as well. Looks like Debbie Harry – she's a real stunner.'

'Well, you look like a real poofter in that gear,' Edwards replied, earning a playful slap on the back of his head from Gibbs.

Moran coughed loudly to get Gibbs's and Edwards' attention. 'Show a bit of respect, you two. We're supposed to be investigating a murder, not discussing bloody music!'

'Sorry, sir,' they said in unison.

'What have you go so far?' Gibbs asked Moran.

Moran frowned. 'A murder, obviously. I want you to organise house-to-house enquiries, DI Gibbs. Start with any flats in Rye Lane, and all the premises in Copeland Road. Tennison and Edwards can return to the station to write up their night duty report, then go off duty.'

Jane knew that organising house-to-house was normally a DS's responsibility and she was keen to be part of the investigation team.

'I should have the weekend off, sir, but I'm happy to remain on duty and assist the investigation. You've got a DS on sick leave, one at the Old Bailey on a big trial starting Monday, and one taking over nights from me tonight. House-to-house is normally a DS's role, so I could—'

Moran interrupted her. 'I'm aware of all that, Tennison. If you're willing to work for normal pay and days off in lieu, as opposed to costly overtime, then you can head up the house-to-house. Edwards, same rule goes for you if you want to be on the investigation.'

Jane and Edwards agreed. Earning extra money was a bonus, but never a big deal when it came to a murder inquiry; it was more about being part of a challenging case.

Moran closed his notebook and put his pen back in his jacket pocket. 'Right, DI Gibbs will be my number two on this investigation. We'll head back to the station. I'll get more detectives in from the surrounding stations and contact the coroner's officer to arrange a post-mortem later this morning. Tennison – you head back to the station with Edwards. Do your night duty report first, then prepare the house-to-house documents and questionnaires. You can get uniform to assist in the house-to-house, as well as

the Special Patrol Group. DS Lawrence and the SOCO can finish bagging the body and examining the scene. If possible, I'd like to know who the dead woman is before the post-mortem.'

'I'll take a set of fingerprints while I'm here,' Lawrence said. 'Uniform can take them straight up the Yard for Fingerprint Bureau to check. If she's got a criminal record they'll identify her.'

Moran nodded his approval. As he walked off with Gibbs, Edwards turned to Jane.

'He could have poked someone's eye out the way he was swinging that umbrella! I reckon he's in a mood because the baby kept him up, and his wife gave him a hard time about being called in.'

Jane said nothing, but she suspected there was some truth in Edwards' comment. Just as she was about to follow him back to the CID car, Paul called out: 'Can you grab the large roll of Sellotape from my forensic bag?'

He and the SOCO had wrapped the body in the white body sheet and twisted each end tight. Jane knew the procedure and helped by rolling the tape several times around each twisted end to secure them. She always found it surreal that a bagged dead body ended up looking like an enormous Christmas cracker.

'Thanks, Jane.' As the SOCO moved away, Lawrence asked, 'Is Moran always so tetchy these days?'

'Wife had a baby recently; sleepless nights are probably getting to him.'

'Well, he was wrong to have a go at you and ignore my advice. He should have called out a pathologist.'

'He was probably just asserting his authority to let us know he's boss.'

'He might be in charge, but he's spent most of his career on various squads like vice, so he's not had a lot of experience in major crime or murder investigations.'

'He did solve the Hackney rapes and murder committed by Peter Allard, the cab driver,' Jane pointed out.

‘Yes – but I also recall he was accused of faking Allard’s confession. If it hadn’t been for your dogged work in that case, he wouldn’t have solved it. He showered himself in glory because of you, Jane. He seems to have forgotten that you stuck your neck out for him that night in the park acting as a decoy. You were the one that got attacked by Allard, not him.’

‘I know, Paul, but I think he’s mellowed since our Hackney days. Apart from this morning he’s been OK towards me.’

‘Well, I’d be wary of him, Jane,’ warned Lawrence. ‘He likes to think he knows best, which puts not only the investigation at risk, but the officers on it as well.’