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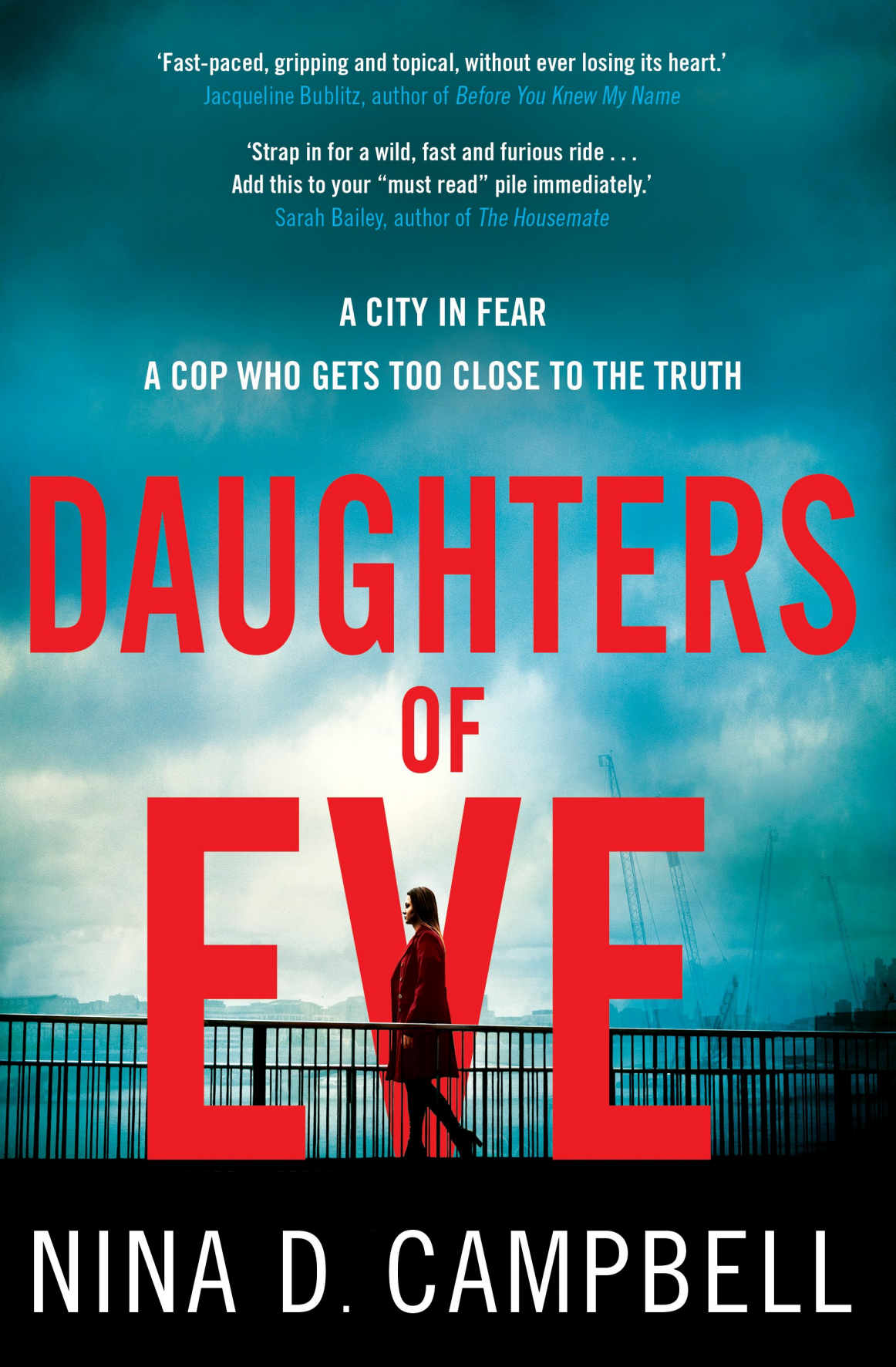
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Add this to your "must read" pile immediately.'

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A CITY IN FEAR

A COP WHO GETS TOO CLOSE TO THE TRUTH



DAUGHTERS  
OF  
EVE

NINA D. CAMPBELL

## PRAISE FOR *DAUGHTERS OF EVE*

‘Fast paced, gripping and topical, without ever losing its heart. A contemporary and engaging take on the classic revenge thriller, *Daughters of Eve* will have you questioning notions of justice and retribution, and just how far you would go to protect the ones you love. I hope there’s more to come from Campbell’s complex and engaging Detective Emilia Hart.’ —**Jacqueline Bublitz**, author of *Before You Knew My Name*

‘Strap in for a wild, fast and furious ride. *Daughters of Eve* manages to have it all: romance, a soaring body count and a wonderfully complex main character who you will be rooting for from page one. It’s a propulsive, addictive read but it tackles big, real issues—add it to your “must read” pile immediately.’ —**Sarah Bailey**, author of *The Housemate*

‘This accomplished, intelligent debut brings us Emilia Hart, a gutsy detective determined to find justice for abused girls and women. But as Emilia becomes embroiled in a multiple murder investigation, she starts to question who the victims really are in this case and if justice is ever possible. Dark and compelling, this story races to an explosive climax. I loved the beating heart of this novel—Emilia and her cobbled-together family of lost souls who would do anything for each other. With twists and turns that will keep you guessing, this is an electrifying, thought-provoking thriller.’ —**Petronella McGovern**, author of *Six Minutes*

‘Gripping, gritty and gung-ho . . . an important new voice in crime fiction.’ —**Kylie Ladd**, author of *The Way Back*

‘Explosive and confronting. Nina D. Campbell is a new talent in crime fiction. One to be watched.’ —**Fleur McDonald**, author of *Deception Creek*

‘*Daughters of Eve* is a breathless, thoughtful, primal narrative, stylishly and passionately written. But most of all it is a story with heart.’ —**Sulari Gentill**, author of *Crossing the Lines*

‘Compelling, taut, and impossible to forget, *Daughters of Eve* is an important book from formidable new talent Nina D. Campbell. Blending unputdownable suspense with heartbreaking family drama, this book is a must-read.’ —**Lisa Ireland, author of *The Shape of Us***

‘This is an astonishing debut! Expertly plotted, this is a brave and vulnerable story that will pull you in from the first pages and leave you gasping at the end. *Daughters of Eve* is written with deep insight and sensitivity into the injustices all too many women face, while highlighting the need for society to take gendered violence and misogyny seriously. Never have I read a story like this one, a crime novel that is so much more. This is a story with a beating heart that reaches through the pages and urges you to look at familiar issues with new eyes. An utterly moving book with characters who will hold on to you long after the last page.’ —**Tabitha Bird, author of *A Lifetime of Impossible Days***

‘A highly original and thought-provoking procedural thriller. I was hooked from start to finish.’ —**Sara Foster, author of *The Hush***

**DAUGHTERS  
OF  
EVE**

**NINA D. CAMPBELL**

  
**ALLEN & UNWIN**  
SYDNEY • MELBOURNE • AUCKLAND • LONDON

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TO MY MOTHER MARY, MY FATHER ALEC AND MY SISTER RUTH  
YOU WERE THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH I BUILT MYSELF

I MISS YOU

TO BRUCE  
BETTER THAN THE BEST PARTNER IN CRIME I COULD IMAGINE

TO MOLLY  
WHO SAT BY MY SIDE FOR EVERY SINGLE WORD

## CHAPTER ONE

HE FOLDED LIKE A CHEAP SUIT AFTER CHURCH ON SUNDAY, SANK to his knees and then slumped until his forehead met the pavement with a sickening crack.

The crowd around him faltered as he fell, then parted like a river around a rock, avoiding his prone body as they spilled out between the towering sandstone pillars of Sydney's Darlinghurst Courthouse.

I was two metres behind, maybe three, and I'm ashamed to say I considered letting the crowd carry me away, until the weight of the warrant card in my bag tugged at my conscience.

Dropping to my knees beside him, I cursed my decision to wear heels and a skirt as my knees scraped on the car park's damp tarmac.

My fingers found a feeble pulse before I eased him over onto his back. That's when I saw the spreading red stain and felt the crowd bristle around me.

'Is that . . . ?'

'Oh, Christ.'

'He's bleeding.'

Time slowed as my training kicked in. I scanned the scattering crowd for anything out of place. For stillness. Someone who couldn't look away. Any sign of a gun.

My heart pounded as I pushed my bag and the brand-new coat I'd been carrying away before sliding out of my jacket and pressing it to the wound. I'd seen enough bodies to know what I was dealing with, and what I was dealing with wasn't good.

A gunshot wound. And it looked professional. A centre mass shot, probably taken over distance, as I'd seen no sign of a gun and hadn't heard the shot.

I looked past the half-moon of grass and hedge to the heritage buildings that lined the Oxford and Flinders streets intersection. Ornate two- and three-storey facades, the perfect hide for a sniper. Beyond those, a handful of multistorey buildings lined with windows, any of which could have harboured a gunman.

We were too exposed, but when I checked his pulse again it was weaker. I couldn't risk moving him.

Leaning into the wound with one hand, I rummaged through my bag for my phone, watching the buildings across the street for movement.

'What service do you need?' The woman's voice was steady and calm.

'Ambulance.' The paramedics would let the police know. I'd be knee deep in uniforms in no time.

Hanging up, I tried his pulse again and cursed. They'd better be quick, because I didn't want to give CPR to this scum-sucking bottom-dweller—sorry, defence barrister. The idea of pressing my lips to his made me gag.

It wasn't that he was a defence barrister; it was that he was *the* defence barrister. Thomas Griffith-Jones of the Point Piper Griffith-Joneses. The man you hired when you were guilty.

I'd been sitting in the Supreme Court all morning listening to Griffith-Jones sum up. He'd been defending that son-of-a-bitch who *lost control of his car* on the Sea Cliff Bridge just north of Wollongong. The bastard went into the water at high tide with two kids in the back, but he was the only one to survive. When they pulled up the car, the child locks were still on. Poor kids never stood a chance.

I'd been with Robbo when he told the wife. He was lead detective on the case even though we're both detective sergeants. He'd asked me to come along in case a *woman's touch* was needed.

It wasn't. She knew why we were there as soon as she opened the door. Her eyes went wide and filled with tears. Not the gut-wrenching, soul-deep tears that made men uncomfortable; these were the tears of a battered and defeated soul.

I'd seen realisation dawn for Robbo. This wasn't a tragic accident. It was the final brutal chapter in a long, sad story of abuse and intimidation.

Like most of the men in the squad, Robbo had never shown much interest in domestics. Those deaths usually found their way to my desk unless something made them worthy of the boys' attention. Press interest. The possibility of something other than the run-of-the-mill 'man beats woman, woman refuses to press charges, man kills woman' pattern of so many domestic deaths. Violence against women was an accepted and intractable fact of human existence in their eyes. A great messy miasma in which the women seemed almost complicit in their own humiliation and death. Everyone agreed the perpetrators needed to be prosecuted, but it wasn't going to make anyone's career.

Still, something in the way that mother crumbled in front of our eyes pressed the iron into Robbo's soul. He pursued that case like the consummate professional he is. Interviewed everyone who'd

ever crossed paths with the couple as well as past girlfriends and mates right back to school days. He'd built the strongest case I'd seen. Put in more hours than he'd logged on his time sheet and used his own car when the DCI suggested he'd burned too many resources on the case.

When it went to trial, he'd asked me to sit in the court and update him. That's why I was there, watching Thomas Griffith-Jones unpick the fabric of Robbo's case strand by strand in his inimitable style.

Now I was crouched over him with my hand over his heart, trying to stop its failing beat from pushing the blood from his body.

When the ambulance finally drove through the wrought-iron gates to pull up beside us, it was a relief to surrender responsibility to the paramedic who kneeled on the tarmac opposite me. She checked for a pulse before lifting my jacket, looking at the growing pool of blood and shaking her head almost imperceptibly. I felt no sense of sadness. Perhaps this was what justice looked like outside our system.

Then I thought of his family. His parents—and did he have a wife? Kids? As I stood to let the second paramedic drape a blanket over the body I thought of my girls. Of the call I hoped they'd never get. The call to tell them I'd been killed in the line of duty.

Every life had value to someone. That's why I'd become a cop. Why I'd worked my way up through the ranks to Homicide.

As the white waffle blanket slowly turned red, I noticed the onlookers for the first time. A crime scene crowd is a peculiar beast. Transformed from a group of individuals into a kind of collective consciousness, they moved with the fluidity of water as they pressed closer to get a better look.

I might not have had much respect for the deceased in life, but that didn't mean I'd let his death become a circus.

‘Step back, please.’ I brandished my warrant card and people reared back like vampires facing garlic.

Two squad cars drove in through the gates and stopped behind the ambulance with a screech of tyres. Uniformed officers spilled out onto the tarmac. I took what must have been my first full breath since the body had fallen.

‘Jesus, Hart. What have you done?’ Peterson pushed past a uniform with his warrant card held high for all to see. Pocketing it, he ran his hands over his trademark slick short-back-and-sides, sweeping wayward windblown hair back into place and grinning like the cat that got the cream. I followed his line of sight down to a bloody handprint on my skirt.

‘Fuck off, Peterson.’

‘Who’ve we got here?’ He reached for the blanket, but I pushed his hand away, trying to ignore the frisson of expectation that stirred the crowd.

I leaned in so no-one would hear and copped the full force of cigar smoke and whisky residue from his clothes. ‘Griffith-Jones.’

Peterson reared back, eyes wide. ‘The lawyer?’

I nodded.

‘Shit.’

‘Yeah.’

Behind Peterson, the crowd turned as one to watch the forensics bus pull into the car park, closely followed by the coroner’s van. It was finally beginning to look like a crime scene, with people in clean suits and booties erecting a privacy screen around the body and uniformed police laying out perimeter tape.

‘You the senior on scene?’ A man wearing a white paper spacesuit and pale blue paper booties stuck his hand out to shake Peterson’s.

‘That would be me—I was first on scene.’ I stepped forward and offered my hand. ‘Hart. Emilia Hart.’

I sensed Peterson bristle.

‘Scott Johnson. I’m the new medical examiner.’ Dr Johnson nodded down at the body. ‘Anyone I should know?’

I followed his gaze and pictured the deceased in court, commanding the room like a king. Against my better judgement, I felt a sting of sympathy for the empty shell at my feet.

‘Defence barrister. Griffiths-Jones.’

‘Ah.’ He nodded as he snapped on a latex glove. The unspoken pact between police, forensics and prosecutors had been invoked and we understood each other. This was not one of our own. Nevertheless, Dr Johnson and his team would do the same scrupulous job of documenting the body, surveying the scene and reporting, just as I or whoever took the case would carry out a thorough and professional investigation. Which reminded me . . .

‘Where did you come from?’ I turned to Peterson as the crime scene photographer started taking snaps.

‘I heard about it at the club. I was there for lunch. At the club.’

I tried not to roll my eyes. The squad was sick of hearing how the DCI had sponsored Peterson’s membership to some fancy club in town.

‘You?’ Peterson asked, but before I could answer him the medical examiner kneeled and we both leaned over to look. Johnson peeled back the blanket and lifted the blood-soaked fabric of Griffith-Jones’s shirt.

‘Multiple gunshot wounds,’ Johnson said.

‘Looks professional.’ I pulled out my phone to take a picture before I got in the crime scene photographer’s way.

‘What makes you say that?’

I pointed at Griffith-Jones’s chest.

‘Tight configuration. That’s tough over distance.’

Peterson frowned. 'How do you know it wasn't close range? Have you spoken to witnesses?'

I took a beat before answering him. 'I'm a witness. I was here when he went down.'

Peterson's eyes went wide and I watched him connect the dots. I might get to be the lead investigator. On a career-making case. High-profile barrister gunned down in public—the press would be all over it.

'I gotta go.' Peterson patted his pockets. 'I think I left my phone at the club.'

My jaw dropped.

'I'll see you back at the squad room, Hart.'

And he was off, his black trench coat flapping in the wind.

'Bloody snake in the grass,' I muttered.

If I was going to get this case, I needed to get to the DCI before someone else tickled his balls in just the right way and I ended up back on the bench.

• • •

I was heading towards the courthouse gates ten minutes later when I heard a voice behind me. 'Detective Sergeant Hart!'

*Bugger.* Peterson already had a good head start. It would take another ten minutes for me to walk back to the Bunker, also known as the Surry Hills Police Station to the uninitiated.

I fixed a diplomatic smile in place before turning. Sergeant Thomson was old-school uniform and I had a soft spot for him. He was the sergeant when I graduated and was assigned, fresh-faced and full of hope, to Kings Cross. He took the raw rookie voted most likely to wash out during probation and turned me into a solid police officer. But the years since I'd graduated had not been kind to him. His not-insubstantial frame was fuelled primarily by beer

and fried food, and it showed in his ruddy cheeks and the time it took him to catch his breath after a relatively short jog.

‘What do you need, Thommo?’

Thommo was the senior uniform on scene but he’d arrived late. The fact he was talking to me meant he’d assumed I was lead. Ironically, that assumption and the time it would take me to answer his questions might be the reason I ended up losing it.

The sergeant was still huffing, his hands resting on the holster and radio attached to his low-slung leather belt, but he pushed through. Old school.

‘I’ve got twelve officers inbound from the Bunker. Just wondering what you want done.’

I thought back to the assignments I’d already made. I had three uniforms taking statements, four on crowd control and two keeping the media neutralised, as far as that was possible. I flicked through a quick mental checklist. Scene secure. Forensics on site. ME with the body. It was up to the lead detective to determine the next steps and that wasn’t me—yet. And if it ended up being Robbo, he’d be dark as hell if I crossed that line.

‘Look, I’ve not—’ I started as the phone in my hand chirped. Looking at the screen I saw Peterson’s name and the blood thumped in my temples. If he was ringing to tell me he’d been anointed he could just . . .

Sucking in a quick breath, I reined in my anger and met Thommo’s eyes. They shone with anticipation as he waited for direction: the pride of the teacher who’s lived to see his student surpass him. I didn’t want to disappoint him.

‘Can you send officers out to check all those?’ I gestured to the buildings that lined Oxford and Flinders streets, overlooking the courthouse car park, then to the taller buildings behind.

‘It’s likely the shot was taken from a distance, so check any building with line of sight to the courthouse entrance. I want doors knocked on, names taken, and if they can get onto the roofs without a warrant, I want searches done.’

‘I’m on it.’ Thommo’s chubby cheeks stretched into a grin and he winked before heading back towards the crime scene. He stopped a few paces away and turned back. ‘Good to be working with you again, Hart.’

I smiled and nodded, but the anger-fuelled clarity I had felt a few moments before faltered. There would be a reckoning for overreach waiting for me unless I could come up with something before I got back to the squad room.

## CHAPTER TWO

I WAS ALMOST BACK TO THE BUNKER WHEN THE IDEA HIT ME. IT WAS a long shot, but probably my best hope of getting lead on the case. Robbo and Peterson would be going five rounds with the DCI right now. If I turned up empty-handed, I'd be unlucky last on that list.

So instead of riding the lift up to the squad room, I took it down to the garage and signed out a general duties car.

Fifteen minutes later, having woven through some of Sydney's most expensive streets, I pulled up beside an ornate iron gate and leaned out the car window to press an intercom button embedded in a seven-foot stone wall. The air was crisp and clean this close to the harbour.

'Yes.' The voice was brisk but probably not family. It lacked the entitled edge of authority that came with the prestigious Point Piper address.

'Detective Sergeant Hart for Mrs Griffith-Jones.'

The intercom clattered and went silent. I glanced at my phone to see two missed calls from command.

The intercom crackled. 'What do you want, Detective Sergeant?' This voice dripped with privilege.

It was a gamble, but this was the best hand I had to play. 'Mrs Griffith-Jones? I need to speak with you urgently.'

'My husband isn't home right now. I don't speak to the police without him.'

I took a breath. 'It's your husband I need to talk to you about.'

'Well, I definitely won't be speaking to you.'

I'd overplayed my hand. A lawyer's family could be more paranoid than a cop's.

The intercom went silent. I waited. Nothing.

*Shit.*

I was peering through the gate to the grand house beyond when the mobile phone beside me started to sing, muffled by the evidence bag it was wrapped in. 'Claire de lune'. Nice.

I leaned out and pressed the intercom button again, holding the plastic bag to the speaker, and waited for her to make the connection.

When the phone stopped ringing the silence that followed seemed louder than the ringtone.

'Is my husband with you?' Mrs Griffith-Jones's voice had a hesitance now.

'Can I come in, please?'

The gate slid slowly aside.

I felt like a funeral hearse as I crawled up the drive, gravel crunching under my tyres, and pulled up under the portico. Miranda Griffith-Jones stood slim, stately and immaculately presented, framed by huge double doors. Her thin blouse made me shiver, even before I opened the car door and stepped into the frigid chill of winter. My coat and jacket were both in the boot, one soaked in her husband's blood and the other filthy from being trampled on the tarmac.

'May I have my husband's phone?' She held out her hand like a teacher demanding contraband as I stepped into the entry hall.

'I'm sorry. It's evidence.'

‘Evidence?’ Her voice rose almost a full octave. ‘What is it that you think he’s done?’

*Done? He’s died, that’s what he’s done.*

I set my face to empathy and used my best bad-news voice. ‘Mrs Griffith-Jones, I’m sorry to inform you that your husband was shot and killed today on the forecourt of the Darlinghurst Courthouse.’

Confusion came first and it clouded her eyes. I’m sure it would have creased her forehead and crinkled the corners of her eyes but for the botox.

‘His body is with the coroner’s office.’

Her hand reached for a side table, long fingers curling around the ornately carved wood as her knees softened almost imperceptibly.

I waited for a sign that words of comfort were needed, but instead she released the table and drew herself up, sucking in a deep breath. I understood then that it would not be a kindness to bridge the gap between us. She was a criminal barrister’s wife and I was a cop. She knew what I was doing as well as I did as I tracked her emotional journey. It’s common knowledge, mostly thanks to Netflix, that the person most likely to kill you is your partner. After that comes other family members, work and business connections, and somewhere way down the list we find total strangers and serial killers. Those figures are probably skewed by the high rate of violence against women, but still, it means that advising family members of a bereavement is more than a courtesy: it’s a vital first step in our investigation.

The muscles of Miranda’s neck tightened and she blinked rapidly.

‘I’m so sorry for your loss.’ It sounded plastic but it was the best I could come up with as we stood in the cavernous entry hall, surrounded by the trappings of a wealth that had failed to protect her from the most primal human experience: loss.

‘I think you should leave.’ Her voice was more fragile than I expected. I’d been struggling to get a read from her face and body. There had been shock, I was pretty sure. It had looked genuine, but behind that there had been something slippery and elusive.

Damn. I hate it when I can’t get a fix on someone.

‘Is there anyone who might have wanted to hurt your husband?’

And there it was again, just for an instant: a slight tightening at the corner of her eyes, lips drawn into a sneer. That was hate. Subtle but definite. And then, like a paintbrush over canvas, calm contempt covered it. She was back in control.

‘I would put you and your colleagues at the top of that list. He was very good at his job.’

She stepped back and reached for the door.

I grabbed a card from my pocket and held it out. ‘If you think of anyone or anything that might be relevant, please call me. Any time of the day or night.’

Miranda took the card between her thumb and forefinger and placed it on a table by the door as if it were tainted.

‘Thank you, Detective . . .’ She looked down at the card as if trying to make out the name.

‘Hart. Detective Sergeant Hart.’ On impulse, I extended my hand.

She looked at it, then at me, as if I was offering her dead husband’s head on a plate.

Then the door swung closed between us.

I was about to get into my car when the front gate slid open. A limo inched through and crept up the drive, coming to a stop behind me. The driver and I eyed each other for a moment, a standoff of sorts, until a shadowy shape leaned forward from the back. The driver climbed out, never taking his eyes from me, and opened the back door.

A teenager emerged—fifteen, maybe sixteen, fresh-faced with two ridiculously neat plaits and a uniform that was too tidy for the end of a school day.

I know my girls aren't typical. Some might say they aren't really my girls, but our bond is deeper than blood. They were my foundlings. Two unofficial foster kids who'd drifted into my life when I was a beat cop in Kings Cross. Over time each of them found their way into my heart and eventually my home, with the support and help of the Wayside Chapel, and the grudging acceptance of child services. And there was very little resemblance between them and this neat, tidy teenager.

It was a good day if I could talk sixteen-year-old Grace into going to school—but when I did, the question of a school uniform never came up. Through the chapel, I'd found a progressive school where uniforms weren't an issue. Then there was Rose, nearly twenty now and at uni. She'd taken to school like most kids take to sweets. Most days I came home to find Grace glued to the telly or YouTube, but Rose was always in the kitchen with her books spread across the table. I would cook while she studied. Still, at the end of every day, whatever they wore, they looked like they'd dressed straight from the spin cycle, creased and rumped. Like they'd never left the streets.

'Are you a cop? Are you here to arrest my dad?' The tidy teen walked towards me, her piercing blue eyes fixed on mine.

Now she was closer, I saw a smudge of mascara and smelled handwash. She'd probably used it to scrub her make-up off.

'I'm not here to arrest anyone.' I tried for soft and sympathetic, but Christ on a hot cross bun, what do you say to a kid who's lost her dad but doesn't know it yet? Miranda Griffith-Jones would have me on charges if I broke the news to her daughter.

'Why not?'

I hid my surprise, but it took me a moment to collect myself.

She was like a tiger crouched in the back of a cage, something guarded and furtive in her expression as she watched me.

‘Do you think I should?’

What was that? A flicker of something. Fear? Hurt? Hate?

‘He’s the enemy, isn’t he? That’s how he talks about you. About cops.’

I tried to smile but it was brittle, a smile of self-defence. I’d been a cop so long I should have been used to it. No-one wants us around until they need us.

‘Phoebe!’ It was Miranda Griffith-Jones. ‘Inside. Now.’

So, the daughter’s name was Phoebe. That hadn’t been in his online bio.

I opened the car door, but before I could slip into the driver’s seat Miranda turned her fiery gaze on me.

‘If you’re not off my property by the time I find my phone, I’ll call your commissioner.’