

WENDY TURNER
HARGREAVES

A central image of a window with two hands pressed against the glass. The window is set in a brick wall and is surrounded by dense ivy. The hands are silhouetted against the bright light coming from the window. The overall mood is mysterious and suspenseful.

JUSTIFIED

WOULD YOU JEOPARDISE YOUR FUTURE
TO ESCAPE YOUR PAST?

JUSTIFIED

Wendy Turner-Hargreaves

DEDICATION

For my Dad, Jack, whose creativity endlessly inspires me
and my Mum, Joyce, who taught me that rejection
is just another hurdle.

For my partner Chris, whose input, support and belief
I appreciate beyond measure.

For our daughters, Matilda and Pippa who fill
my life with love, fun and magic.

Thank you

Justified by Wendy Turner-Hargreaves

www.wendytturnerhargreaves.com

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wendy@retroriver.co.uk

Cover by Khalid

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Chapter One

Storm Clouds

Suspicious death in Broadstone. As rare as waking up in your own coffin.

DI Robin Scott accepted the call out and diverted from his regular route to the station, cutting across two lanes of snarled commuters already inching miserably towards the town centre. A rapid U-turn and he was free again, hurtling down the empty carriageway as invigorated as a skydiver stepping out into miles of fresh air. He cranked up the volume on his radio to drown out the thrash symphony of raindrops drumming on his car roof, and his sound system accepted the challenge with a brief crackle of protest. Screechy guitars battered his ears instead, so loud the vibration rattled his travel cup in its holder. If thunder clattered around overhead, he didn't want to hear it.

Broadstone rushed by. Charming, vibrant but criminally unexciting. Tearooms full of tourists and trendy bars where the commercial quarter did lunch and Zoomed in quieter corners. His satnav sent him towards the older, affluent suburbs, ten minutes out of town. He turned into a sloped avenue lined with high trees and checked the address with the control room. It didn't feel right. Suspicious death? The occasional break-in or a nicked Range Rover maybe, but this was a peaceful collective of empty nests and executive hideouts. While control checked, he took a quick glug of the caffeine oil-slick his partner Catherine had made him just before he left her house. A pleasant mental image. Mad hair everywhere, deliciously dressed in just the shirt he now wore, singing to Bowie while the kettle boiled. A morning person. He inhaled her scent on the fabric and enjoyed the memory.

The address checked out so he continued, wipers swiping on double speed.

Fifteen seconds later, he floored the brake and skidded to a slippery stop alongside two drenched women grappling on the pavement. Another charge of adrenalin thrummed in his ears. He yanked the handbrake and shoved open his door against a weighty wind. An icy smack of rain punished him for his arrival, mugged him of breath, and made his face hurt. The elements were raging.

The fight spilled into the road. A stocky Merc going the opposite way swerved, alloys scraping on the high kerb. The women looked wretched, like they'd been out there a while, gusting around in the deluge. Robin waded in and pulled apart the uniformed female officer and her fugitive, an apple-shaped woman with the face of a wrestler. His fingers barely circled the woman's chunky wrist as she yanked and writhed in his grasp, half crying, half snarling. Maintaining hold, he twisted towards the police officer, who bent over to get her breath back.

"What's going on?" he shouted. A roar of wind swallowed his words and forced the nearby trees to sway and bow in submission. "Are you ok?"

"Yeah, I'm ok, Guv." PC Judy Smith grabbed air back into her lungs. "She's a care worker. Found her client dead. Back there, number seven. I've not been in yet."

Robin glanced up the street to the marked car with its lights still on. The woman jerked his arm again. He might be half her width, but he was twice her height and ten times stronger. A pointless struggle.

The label on her saturated jacket bore the name 'Karen Taylor' under a Bluebird Homecare logo.

"Karen, I need you to calm down. What's happened to your client?"

"She's dead; she's been ... oh God."

Judy straightened up and shoved back her hair. "Killed she said. That's why I called it in."

"OK, let's go inside ..."

"I'm not going back in there." Karen tried again to snatch herself out of his grasp. Tough but tiring, she let out a shriek of frustration when her efforts failed.

“Did you see what happened?”

“No! I didn’t do anything. I just found her.”

“Great, then let’s go and sort this out.” Preferably somewhere dry. The rain battered his cheeks like a nasty cloud demon was peppering him with ball-bearings.

With an arm each, they led her back to the house, a decorative detached with an overly grand entrance to the side. Karen shoved herself into the corner of the porch next to a statue of a pissed off angel holding a plant in its stone basket.

“I’ll check on the deceased.” Robin slicked back his hair and swiped water from his face. “Sort her out please, and get some details. Don’t let her leave.”

“Guv.”

As Robin turned to go inside, DS Jack Tanner’s red Ford Capri chugged up the street, encouraged by a crunchy gear change. He stopped to wait for him and tapped his weather app. No end to the rain, a 20% chance of thunder. He’d take that.

Jack parked the Capri behind Judy’s patrol car. Face screwed up, he jogged towards Robin, doing the weird, hunched thing people do when they’re trying not to get wet. He’d withdrawn into his overcoat, several chins tucked behind a high collar, hands shoved deep in his pockets.

“Have you lost the seventies, Starsky?”

“Very funny. Have you been in?” Jack nudged his head towards the door and wiped his craggy face.

“Not yet. I’ve just arrived too.”

Inside, the house was pristine, nothing out of place. Pale grey walls, clotted cream carpet, watercolour paintings of landscapes and gardens. Robin stuck his head into the two rooms on the right of the hallway and found the same. Chintzy rich. Whoever owned this house had old-fashioned but expensive taste.

“Nothing here,” Jack shouted, “Kitchen, conservatory and utility room, no sign of disturbance. Back door and patio doors are locked.”

Robin bounded up the stairs, and as soon as he reached the upper landing outside the front bedroom the smell beckoned him. Death presented itself differently every time their

paths crossed, and today it crawled into his airways from a smothering rag of crushed lavender and fear. He stopped at the doorway. Claggy old lady perfume with top notes of dirty meat.

Death breath.

A dainty cup lay in a puddle of brown liquid on the floor, just inside the room. He stepped over it and sensed Jack come in behind him.

They edged through a two-second time warp. In the bedroom, all sense of modernity vanished, replaced by Gatsby-era furnishings and art done so meticulously it resembled a film set. A mahogany bed with a fanned art deco headboard and pompous gold feet dominated centre stage. Nailed to this spectacular statement piece was an elderly woman dressed in a cream satin and lace nightdress.

Robin froze. Jack took a few steps backwards and banged into a set of drawers.

“I thought I’d seen everything.”

Robin stared at the woman, transfixed. “Me too.”

Her body weight had dragged against the thick nails, forging a path through her palms, and the sleeves of her glamorous nightgown draped from her arms like blood-soaked wings. The sight of her pinned into place repulsed him, but he couldn’t help but be fascinated by the bizarreness. She reminded him of a broken butterfly, vulnerable and frail but beguiling still. Hair, the colour of brushed steel, hung to her shoulders, styled on one side but hacked off to her scalp on the other. A miniature bible with pages bordered in gold balanced between the clawed fingers of her left hand.

“Who is she?” Robin’s attention shifted downwards. The bed covers had been pulled back, her nightdress hitched up to her thighs, and both knees had been battered.

“Ursula Harrison. Used to be CEO of Harrison Engineering.” Jack parted the curtains and peered outside. “Spectators are out already.”

“What did you do to deserve this?” Robin asked the dead woman, and his mind raced over possibilities, none of which merited this death, not even close. She had to be eighty at least. Frozen terror shrieked in her eyes, yet her lips scrunched together, her scream denied.

“Her lips have been glued, look.” Hair stuck to her lips, like she’d eaten some by accident and tried to spit it out.

“This was planned. Unless she kept 5-inch nails and a hammer in her bedroom.”

Unlikely. The room was this woman’s world, abundant with vintage indulgence, where she spent much of her time. An ornate walking stick lay on the floor by the bedroom chair, snapped into two pieces and bloody. It had probably been used to smash her knees. Was it possible for a solid piece of wood to snap against human bone? Robin stepped over it and moved around the bed.

“How do you nail someone to their bed?” asked Jack, “They’d either struggle if they were conscious or be a dead weight if they were out cold.”

The woman’s arms were creamy smooth, and she’d been in good shape for her age, her body still slender. Ursula Harrison had taken care of herself and refused to age or give up her passions. She’d had enough money to indulge herself, just not enough to guarantee her immunity from evil.

“She was alive when this happened. She bled out for a while.”

Blood puddled on the bedsheet beneath the deep holes in her hands and slopped down her arms. More congealed in the sleeves of her slinky nightdress. Not your usual old lady nightwear. Hers, or had her killer made her wear it? No immediate sign of sexual abuse, and no other clothes tossed aside. Robin snapped on gloves and opened the bedside table drawer. A packet of tissues, a pot of Vaseline and a vibrator. Not your usual old lady possessions either. He pressed the ‘on’ button, and the vibrator hummed in his palm.

“Check this out.”

Robin returned the vibrator, closed the drawer, and turned around. Jack held the laundry basket lid in one hand and a wine-red basque dangling from his pen in the other. “Sex game gone wrong?”

“Call me naive, but I don’t know of any sex game which involves nailing a woman to her bed. Can you call Joseph Carling please, Jack? We need forensics in here and this house sealed off right away.”

“Guv.”

Jack left the room, his phone already to his ear.

Alone with his dead companion, Robin tried to see the scene through her eyes, to imagine what she'd been through as she'd taken her final breaths, who'd watched her die. Someone she trusted enough to let into her home or a stranger who knew she'd been alone.

Whatever had happened in this room hung in the air, like the pungent lavender scraping at his throat. Where was it coming from? He panned around, taking in the luxury. Billowy curtains in a metallic print, gold wall sconces, a chaise longue under the window. Then he spotted it. A large bottle on the mirrored dressing table lay on its side, and the perfume pooled out around a collection of jade bottles. Lavender. He would never smell lavender again without thinking of Ursula Harrison, crucified and pulverised in her beautiful room, surrounded by her beautiful things.

Tinny fingers of rain chimed against the bedroom window, calmer now after the earlier deluge.

Ursula. An unusual and feminine name. It suited a woman who still wore glamorous nightwear and cherished her luxuries. Being alone in her room, sharing her death and vulnerability, brought him closer to her. An unusual intimacy. He stared at the one breast sagging outside the neck of her gown. Her chest had been exposed as she'd fallen forward and made her position brazen and lewd. He resisted the urge to cover her up. She would be photographed and catalogued from every angle, and he couldn't give her back her dignity. Sadness dragged in his guts as he moved away, out of her personal space.

From the foot of the bed, Robin burned Ursula's image into his memory.

"Forensics on their way." Jack peered around the doorway, phone still against his ear. "And Joseph Carling."

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"This is the strangest death I've ever seen."

Joseph Carling, Broadstone's coroner, straightened and flexed his back. He looked more like a surfer than a medical examiner with sunny blonde hair, several leather necklaces,

and a paisley patterned headband. Scene Of Crime officers were now all over the house and three of them in the bedroom mutely dabbed and swabbed.

“She’s been dead about seven hours. Currently in rigor mortis, although it’s warm in here, so I may be out by an hour or two. There’s also evidence of cadaveric spasm,” he pointed at the victim’s fingers around the bible, “You see it with drowning victims. They’re often found still gripping whatever they hoped might save them, like a piece of wood, or in suicide cases where they’re still clutching a knife.”

“But her hand was nailed down,” said Jack.

“Yes. I’d say nailed first, then the bible was put into her hand. The nail’s gone in clean on this hand, not so clean on the other. There would still be movement in the fingers.”

Joseph’s eyes shone, as if he’d discovered a chest of ancient treasures and a cure for cancer on the same day.

“No defence wounds,” said Robin, “No sign of a struggle.”

“Maybe she wasn’t conscious. The injuries to her legs are all on the front. If she’d been moving, trying to get away, there would be bruises all the way around. I think she was alive for some time after she was nailed, then battered once in place. No struggle here.”

“She had to be out cold.”

“Tough job, but not impossible,” said Joseph. The three of them were silent in shared perplexity.

“It’s a strange one for sure. Fascinating.”

“You’re enjoying this?” Jack didn’t hide his disgust. “Fucks sake, Joe.”

“Enjoying? Hell, no. It’s dark and nasty. But something exceptional happened in this room; physically, mentally and medically. This is not normal, and to me that’s fascinating.”

Robin admired Joseph’s honesty and was about to probe further when a commotion erupted downstairs. He broke away and followed the noise back to the hallway where a uniformed officer was arguing with a newcomer. The woman, in her fifties, so distinctly resembled the woman upstairs Robin catapulted back in time again. Now he saw Ursula when she’d still been able to enjoy her passion for art deco, maybe had a lover to seduce in her glamorous lingerie.

“I’m sorry, you can’t come in. You shouldn’t have crossed the cordon.”

“This is my mother’s house; you can’t stop me. Where is she? Who are all these people?” She edged in further and craned her neck to peer up the stairs.

“I’m DI Scott from Broadstone CID. Maybe you should come in ...”

“Oh, now I’m allowed in, am I?” Clenched jowls nestled in the high neck of her cream blouse. “Well?” Hands on hips, thin eyebrows raised in question.

Not an ideal scenario for a family death notice, but he had to tell her. A quick mental search around his usual phrases didn’t throw up anything suitable. He’d never told a relative their loved one had been crucified before, especially one who glowered with eyes like storm clouds.

“I have some bad news. Your mother’s carer found her dead this morning.”

A blink, nothing more. Had she heard him?

“Why did no one call me? A neighbour told me, which is deeply embarrassing.”

Yet she still had the time to dress, do her hair, squirt some perfume and stomp over in her polished boots. The eyebrows were still raised.

“I’m sorry for your loss. Now...”

“That bloody care company. I’ll sue them for incompetence...”

Robin held up a hand to stop her, baffled by her reaction. “There’s no evidence to suggest the care company were to blame. Now, Mrs ...”

“Barbara Rickman.”

“Mrs Rickman ...”

“It’s her fault, isn’t it? The fat one with the bleached hair. She never liked my mother. Where is she?”

Barbara Rickman spun on her heel and strode down the hall. She barged past Jack, who spun around and reached for her arm. She shook him off without a glance and shoved open the living room door. Judy narrowly avoided getting smashed in the face, and collided instead with Barbara, who disentangled herself with a huff.

“You!” Barbara spat, pointing a burgundy talon at the carer, “This is your fault.”

Karen Taylor swallowed, perhaps grateful now for the presence of Judy, who became a helpful barrier between her and the enraged daughter.

“This had nothing to do with me. I just found her.”

Barbara Rickman spun around towards Robin. “I want to see my mother.”

“That’s not possible, I’m afraid.”

“You have no right to stop me!”

She took a step, considered shoving past Robin’s considerable six-foot-two frame. But he didn’t budge, and for the first time, she hesitated.

“I understand this is a shock, but I can’t allow it.”

People dealt with unwelcome news differently. Perhaps anger was her way of controlling the situation because facing other feelings such as grief and loss meant accepting vulnerability, and this woman didn’t have a vulnerable bone in her body. He stared at her in a silent challenge, wanting her to reveal more of what lay beneath the veneer. But, maybe sensing she’d met her match and with nowhere else to go, Barbara Rickman threw herself into an armchair. An invisible tripwire of hostility separated Karen and Barbara.

“When did you last see your mum?” Jack sliced through the tension.

“Yesterday. And she was fine.”

“Were you close to her?”

“She was my mother. What do you think?” Mrs Rickman checked him over and sighed. “She depended on me. I moved close by to help her as much as possible.”

“Does she have a partner?”

“No.”

“Who knows the code to the key safe?”

“The carers do,” another venomous glare, “The cleaner, and me of course.”

“Could she have given the code to anyone without your knowledge?”

“How the hell would I know, if it was against my knowledge?”

A smile twitched on Jack's lips, and he turned away to write in his notebook.

Another CID car arrived, and the FLO got out, holding her hood up in a battle with the wind. Robin spotted a chance to escape. "Our family liaison officer's here, Mrs Rickman. I understand this is difficult, but"

"I demand to know ..."

Robin held up a hand to stop her as his phone rang and indignant jaws snapped shut. Clearly Barbara wasn't used to being silenced. He took the call in the driveway, finger in one ear to block out the wind. DC Vic Mason babbled out information in a verbal stream which only subsided when he took a breath.

Jack appeared beside him and puffed out a breath. He looked relieved to be out of the toxic environment indoors. He scanned the road as Robin managed to end his call with Vic.

"This wasn't random. She's minted."

"Do you reckon this was just about her cash?" asked Jack.

"If she'd been clunked on the head or stabbed, maybe. One of these curtain twitchers must've seen something."

Diagonally opposite, a woman in a massive bathrobe watched the unfolding events from the shelter of her porch, cradling a mug. When Jack made eye contact, she released one hand and beckoned him over.

"You've pulled."

"It's the bald thing. Women love it."

"Vic's so excited he can't breathe."

"He gets like that. He nearly passed out once over a stolen mink. He thought he'd busted an international fur smuggling ring." He took a deep breath. "Right, if I'm not out in fifteen minutes, come and save me." He crossed the road, doing the hunched up half-run again.

A message buzzed on Robin's phone. Catherine reminding him they were going to her cousin's wedding reception and offering to collect his suit from the dry cleaners. Life is taken, yet life goes on with its mundanities. People still go to work, walk the dog, laugh on their phones. He'd experienced a similar sense of disengagement with life when his wife had

died, and he'd been so angry at everyone for carrying on as usual when his world had been shattered.

He closed the message. No chance he'd make the reception. Two seconds later his phone rang again, just as the heavens opened and unleashed a fresh barrage of cold venom. He did a quick jog down the road to his car and ducked inside to wait for a gap in the noise before he spoke. Their office manager Janet had taken two calls already about police cars and SOC vans blocking the street, and could they speak to number twelve about the height of their gazebo while they were there? Ten minutes later, Jack opened the door and filled his car with the whiff of wet dog from his overcoat.

"Anything useful?" Robin asked when he'd finished with Janet.

"Not much. She woke in the night and went to the bathroom. Reckons she saw a light in the bedroom at Ursula's around 3 am, but she didn't see anyone." Jack opened the glove box, didn't find what he wanted and closed it again. "I'll go back in and get a full statement from the carer."

"I'll deal with the daughter." The glove box rummage puzzled him but not enough to say anything. "Then we can get back and brief the team."

Jack dashed back to the house, backlit by a flash of lightning. Robin closed his eyes and focused on the rhythm of his breaths, doing the old trick he'd done as a child; count the seconds between the lightning and thunder. Five seconds for each mile. It was moving away. Satisfied, he shoved open the door and followed Jack through the rain.

*

The incident room at Broadstone station was rammed. Almost the entire payroll gathered in the seats and stuffed into standing room at the back. No wisecracks, no banter. Everyone focused on the crime scene and the grim images of the crucified woman. Tasks allocated, roles established, they dispersed to work on their own piece of the case.

CID lurked in the oldest part of the building with a lovely view of the bins and fleet garage. Jack had beaten him there, grumbling about someone nicking the biscuits he'd hidden in a filing cabinet.

“Christ, you move fast for an old boy.”

Jack smirked. “Your exit strategy is all wrong. Last in, first out. Schoolboy.”

Robin sat at the table in what his immediate team called ‘the cave’ while Jack redirected his scowl at the rickety coffee maker. The tiny room off the central office had previously been a graveyard for dead fax machines, dodgy swivel chairs and boxes of PC cables. Robin had moved out the junk and turned it into a tiny meeting room/break room under the radar of the buildings manager, who’d been preoccupied with the admin refurb.

DS James Witney, their tech brain, fired up a laptop labelled ‘Do not remove from Traffic’, while Vic scrolled through his phone at the table. DS Ella Montgomery plonked down a bag of sandwiches, narrowly missing his fingers.

“Breakfast.” She dug a greasy packet out of the bag. “Not that I feel like eating much after seeing that.”

Robin waited until they were all happily munching. “So, we’ve heard all the facts, and we have the practicalities covered, but I want to start with why. Why did someone crucify an eighty-year-old woman? Vic, talk us through what you have on her so far.”

Vic licked ketchup off his fingers, rearranged his fringe and opened his notebook with a fancy flourish. He loved the spotlight. Robin prepped himself for a potentially arse-numbing monologue.

“Well first, she was known to us. She’s made a raft of calls to the station about minor things over the years. I remember them from when I was in uniform. She pissed everyone off with her constant complaints. Anyway, her late husband Maurice started Harrison Engineering back in 1966 when he was just twenty-eight. She’s still a major shareholder, along with her daughter Barbara Rickman. She owned the house in Billingsworth outright – valued at over half a mil by the way - a property in France, one in Malta and a holiday home in Cornwall. Well, a log cabin, in a fancy forest park. Anyway, I’m waiting for a financial report, but her estimated net worth must be close to five million, excluding her share in Harrison Engineering.”

“And her daughter’s sole beneficiary,” said Ella, trying to clean a blob of egg off her top.

“Wrong,” Jack managed through a mouthful of bagel, “A neighbour reckoned she included a ‘significant’ donation to the church in her will. She bragged about it.”

“She had grandchildren too,” said Robin, “But they’re not listed on Companies House as having any significant control. Any scandal?”

“Nothing yet, but there’s a ton of stuff to go through. Loads of news stories about the company’s success, about how it regularly made charitable donations and contributed to the community. Massively active with the church. Harrisons paid for the repair of the tower and extensive renovation works at All Saints church in Broadstone. It was built in 1847...”

“Do we have any video footage of Ursula?” Robin couldn’t take a history lesson. “I’d like to see her alive.”

James’ fingers skittered across his keyboard, and after half a minute or so he spun his screen around. “This was on the news when the church tower reopened two years ago.”

They all hunched up. The video started with a before and after sequence, showing the extent of weather damage the church had suffered, followed by an overview of the renovations. Then the footage cut to the priest, a local MP and Ursula Harrison standing next to a tiny, curtained plaque. Robin leaned in further. She was immaculate and attractive for a woman pushing eighty, wearing a slash-necked blue dress with low-heeled shoes, platinum hair perfect. She used a walking stick for support, but it didn’t diminish her. It gave her gravitas and elevated her more.

Ursula began to speak, and James turned up the volume.

“I’m delighted and honoured to be able to fund this project for the church through Harrison Engineering. I’ve worshipped here all my life and this donation exemplifies my dedication to the church and our Lord.”

Clipped and clear voice, her words delivered with the intonation of an experienced public speaker. She opened the curtains, prompting a ripple of applause. The camera panned out to Barbara Rickman standing behind her mother with a tall, good-looking lad struggling to hide his boredom. Barbara’s smile appeared practised and phoney.

“Reminds me of Margaret Thatcher,” said Jack, “Like it’s a performance, each word and move scripted.”

“Cracking figure for an old woman,” said Vic, and Jack shook his head at him, “What? I’m just saying she looks awesome for her age. I wouldn’t do her. Well, I can’t obviously ...”

“Thanks for that insight, Vic.” Robin pulled Vic out of the hole he’d dug. “You’re right though. I noticed it this morning,” he turned to Jack, “I get you about the staged thing, and think about her bedroom. Another place, another stage. Let’s watch the end, James.”

James resumed the footage which finished with a cutaway of Ursula Harrison, accompanied by Barbara this time, pointing towards the top of the tower. More staging. Robin ignored what they were doing and studied what they were hiding. Barbara hovering behind the matriarch, allowing her to dominate the scene while she carried two handbags, one matching her mother’s dress. The way her jaw clenched, how she painted on a happy expression, suggested she didn’t enjoy the submissive role.

“It’s all very corporate,” said James as the video clip ended, “I wonder what she was like in private?”

“A tyrant apparently,” said Jack, “No one could stand her.”

“ ‘exemplifies my dedication’,” Ella quoted, checking her notes, “Who says that?”

“Convincing herself as well as others.” Robin leant back and studied the paused image of Ursula, splendid in electric blue. “Like when people rattle off their achievements or earnings. I think she was confirming her list of good deeds, reminding herself of why she helped. Buying her way to heaven.”

“And then she was crucified,” said James.

Who did she piss off so much they had to make her death a statement? Robin struggled to assimilate the woman on the screen with the one he’d seen earlier. Dead Ursula had been soft and vulnerable. This woman oozed authority.

“It’s personal,” said Ella.

Robin agreed. He’d felt like an intruder just by being in her bedroom.

“Any signs of sexual activity?” asked James.

“Joseph doesn’t think so. Just some kinky lingerie in her laundry basket,” said Jack, “Vibrator in the drawer.”

“You were right.” James winked at Vic. “The old girl was foxy.”

Vic looked sick at the thought.

“If the daughter’s involved, she paid someone else to do it,” said Jack.

“Any related crimes on the system?” Robin asked James, “Crucifixions?”

“Nothing in the UK except a paedophile who had a crucifix rammed down his throat. There was a case in Italy involving a prostitute who was crucified back in 1987. Check this out though.” James tapped and clicked until he found the right site. “It’s from John 19.31. Might explain why he smashed her knees.”

They all huddled over the screen to read the quotation.

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”

“He did it to make sure she was dead,” Vic said.

“I’m not sure it’s literal,” said Robin, “But there’s a link. Either this guy, or the person he acted for, knew Ursula’s religious beliefs. Vic, stay with Harrison Engineering, James on the tech please and Ella, see how you get on with the church connection. All the adoration is fake. No organisation is that squeaky. Let’s find the truth.”

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