Inspector Barnaby Mystery Keeping It In The Family by Snoopadoop

Summary: Tom and Joyce feel settled both daughters married, and away from home. When tragedy strikes, Tom and his disgraced DS Ben Jones are dragged into the murky world of family politics. With a shadow hanging over them, they have to trust each other to survive.

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Author's Notes:

Inspector Barnaby Mystery Keeping It in The Family

Tom and Joyce feel settled both daughters married and away from home. When tragedy strikes, Tom and his disgraced DS Ben Jones are dragged into the murky world of family politics. With a shadow hanging over them, they have to trust each other to survive.

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Rating M

Triggers; Rape, Incest, Murder, Crime, bad jokes.

I do not own, yadda yadda yadda, only the story is mine.

The O/C is actually someone else’s, sorry if you’re reading this I did try and find the fic to credit you. Anyway the other writer had Tom and Joyce with another daughter 2 years younger than Cully who was a copper with the Met, when injured she moved back to Causton to work with uniform.

I'm actually quite pleased with this.

Hope you enjoy.

SJxxx

It was early March 1991 and weather in Causton was terrible, the newly promote DI Tom Barnaby had been working all night on a ridiculous Murder/Suicide case. Tom wasn’t prone to using words like ridiculous, but the fact that this case was a priority for the Midsomer CID had unnerved him somewhat. Two homosexual Octogenarian lovers with a suicide pact was not what he deemed an emergency, and certainly not worth him missing another night at home with Joyce and 12 year old Cully.

Joyce kept telling him these were the moments he should cherish, before the terror of teenage tantrums, and unsuitable boyfriends destroyed their domestic happiness forever. Tom tried, he really, really did but Midsomer had a way of ruining every event, every plan, and every evening in. He’d only been at Causton Nick for a couple of months, having transferred from the Met, and he couldn’t believe his case load. There was hardly a week without a serious crime.

The tyres on his Silver Unmarked Sierra slipped on the greasy country tracks, and as he fought for grip his eyes scanned the road in front. He was travelling through the small cut-through at the edge of Setwale wood when in the dark misty rain something small and white was picked out in his full beam headlights about 100 yards in front. He braked instinctively as the object appeared to dart into the road, he swerved hard, missing it by inches, and his car came to a juddering halt in a spray of mud and greenery on the opposite side of the road.
He sat there for a few moments, assessing that he had suffered no damage, as the car gently steamed in the pouring freezing rain. Looking in the rear view mirror, he saw the white object sitting in the middle of the road. Assuming he’d hit some animal, Tom swore mildly and forced his door open. Stepping into ankle deep mud, and giving the rain an evil eye, he walked back along the slippy water logged road toward the bundle.

As he got close to the bundle it moved, and he could see it was a soaking wet white towelling robe, he gently prized it open to reveal a pair of massive blue eyes, ringed with red. With a moment of gasped indrawn breath, Tom realised it was a tiny naked child. His paternal instinct immediately kicking in, he scooped up the child and placed in carefully in the back seat of the car. It made no noise as he did this, just shivered in its robe. Tom called Causton control on the cars radio, explaining his situation, and before long an ambulance, tow truck and marked police cars arrived.

The child was loaded into the Ambulance, the Sierra was towed out of the mud, the wood surrounding the road was searched for where the child had appeared from, but nothing was found. The houses surrounding the woods had all seen and heard nothing, nobody ever reported the girl, for that’s what the child was missing, she had in fact come from exactly nowhere. In the years and decades that followed Tom wondered about that, about that night in Setwale woods, and when he did, his mind always ended on the last thing he saw of that little wet child that night. Bundled in the back of the Ambulance staring out of the back doors at him, two of the biggest bluest eye he ever saw.

Twenty years later those big blue eyes are sitting across the table from her Husband, in their large Georgian Manor, The Maples, just north of Midsomer Worthy. She is smiling despite herself, and giggling even as their world collapsed around them. Her husband Derrick 35 years her senior kept tickling her wrist and eventually, she dragged it from his grasp playfully, and as he followed her they tumbled to the kitchen floor laughing. As she fought happily he pushed his nose deep into her wavy blonde hair,

“Oh God, Josie I’m so sorry about all this, if I could, if none of this was happening, Oh God I’d keep you for ever.”

In the later afternoon, Derrick went to talk to his plants, and Josie crossed the lawn and down to the stream where it passed through the edge of the formal gardens. A handmade tepee resided there, and Josie had filled it with her favourite things, handmade blankets, a small woodburner, some of her favourite books, cushions and a futon style bed. It was her little piece of heaven, pulling herself inside she lit the stove, and pulled a bottle of brandy from a wooden crate. She grabbed a box of pills from under a cushion and carefully measuring out a number of tiny white pills she swallowed them with an unladylike swallow.

Curling up on the futon, wrapped in blankets she starts to cry, still sipping from the bottle. Her eyes close and the bottle slips from her hand, spilling the contents into the rug.

DCI Tom Barnaby was sitting down to dinner with his wife Joyce, their recently married daughter was performing a play in Causton and they had been expecting her to stop in before dinner, but she had cancelled at the last minute and now they stared at each other over a mound of unidentifiable vegetable mush. Joyce was spooning a steaming pile into a pasta bowl when the phone started ringing, she gave Tom a harsh glare.

“No, Tom” she warned, knowing it to be futile, he would answer it.

He in return gave an apologetic shrug, and a silent prayer of joy for not having to eat the vegetable surprise.

“Tom Barnaby?” he answered the phone, “Yes, yes”

Joyce looked up as his voice changed,

“Yes of course, erm yes we’ll be right there” He hung up the phone, his face grave.
“Tom?” Joyce asked

“Joyce, it’s Josie, she’s in the hospital.”

DS Ben Jones, stood on the lawn looking toward the Georgian Pile, the white square tent in the middle of the lawn, ruined what would have otherwise been his perfect view. George Bullard was berating one of his assistants as they came and went from the tent, and whilst waiting for DCI Barnaby, Jones was doing his best to look commanding and in control. So it was with a moment of relief but also a little bit of sadness when he spotted Barnaby’s car coming down the drive.

Ben raised his hand as he saw his boss, and walked towards the tent to meet him.

“What’ve we got?” Tom asked, his voice haggard

“You know” Ben started cautiously “Derrick Keene, 65…”

“Yes” Tom kicked the floor with his toe “Is it? Was it?”

“Dr Bullard confirmed it was definitely murder” Ben smiled “er Sir it’s quite messy and you did” he stopped and looked at his bosses face, “How is Sgt Keene, sir?”

Tom looked at him for a moment, but was saved from saying anything by George Bullards grave face as he walked towards the men.

“Tom” the medical examiner started “I’m afraid he’s a bit of a mess, multiple stab wounds to the chest, more to head and neck. But I think the killing blow was probably the stab wound to the groin, he would have bled out in seconds”

Ben went distinctly green, but Tom just nodded.

“How is she Tom?” George asked

“Erm yes, not well, overdose they think” Tom explained, “still unconscious of course. Joyce is at the hospital, and Cully”.

A uniformed constable walked towards them, trailed by two of the coroners undertakers pulling a temporary coffin, Ben excused himself and walked towards them. Tom and George watched him go.

“Of course somebody else will take the case?” George continued as they watched Ben and the Constable. “Bad enough she’s a copper, but with your connection…”

“She isn’t a suspect” Tom cut him off, “she is as much as a victim as Derrick.”

Several hours later Ben flicked the nurse on duty of the ICU at Causton General a winning smile, and his ID. She returned the smile, noting the bunch of flowers in his hands, and pointed him down the corridor to a side room, where a uniformed constable stood outside. He smiled his thanks, and walked down the silent corridor. The smell of the ward was acrid and clinical, too much disinfectant and the often terminally ill. He smiled at the constable, but there was no friendliness in it, and the smile returned was equally sour.

“The Barnaby’s left about an hour ago” the Constable explained

“I know” Jones told him, smiling and gesturing at the flowers, before slipping behind the Constable into the darkened hospital room.
The room was quiet the steady bleep of a heart monitor, and the whoosh of the ventilator all that covered the noise of Ben’s footsteps on the hard floor. A large arm chair had been pulled across to the bed, and Ben walked around to it, placing his flowers on the top of the melamine utility cupboard he sank into the chair.

“Hiya” he said quietly his voice sounding odd in the quiet room, “I bought you some flowers, it seemed appropriate.” He looked at her sleeping face, strangely peaceful despite the dark blue eyelids, and cyanotic lips, and the pipes and wire trailing across her visage. “Erm, so you had the whole clan here earlier?” He absent mindedly pulled at his suit jacket, the room was slightly chilly and he’d been awake for nearly 20 hours. “Sir, will sort this all out you know? I mean not everything obviously, but well” he stopped and rubbed his eyes, smirking at his own stupidity. “this is all a bit of a mess isn’t it, Jose? I suppose I’ll have to tell Sir though.” He swallowed and laughed again, “I don’t suppose you want to do it?” Her face remained impassive, not even her eyelids moved, they’d told him she should make a full recovery, but for a moment he doubted it. “It’s a bit like meeting your girlfriend’s parents isn’t it?” He lightly took her hand, and sighed “except you won’t be there, you’re foster father is our boss, your husband’s just been murdered, and” he drew a massive breath “I don’t actually know what I am to you?”

He sat there for an age, lightly holding her hand, a volcano of thoughts burning through his head. He probably dozed, the strangely calming sound of the hospital machinery lulling him, because his next logical thought was caused by the Constable on the door knocking lightly.

“You OK Sarge?” he asked, startling Ben who dropped the sleeping woman’s hand.

“Er yeah, think I dozed off there” he smiled.

“I was gonna get a tea? Do you want anything?”

“No, no I’d better be off, you get your tea, and then I’ll be going myself”

As the door closed, Ben stood up, he arranged the flowers into a jug, and looked down at the bed. He bent over the sleeping woman, and gently placed a kiss on her forehead. “You get better, do you hear me? I can, we can sort this out, but you have to get better first.” He heard the Constable return and turned towards the door. “We’ll find out who did this to you as well, don’t worry about that. When we find out who did this, we’re going to have to stop your Dad from killing him.”

The next afternoon an exhausted Tom Barnaby stood outside one of the little cottages that edged the road to The Maples, yesterday’s house to house had brought up a few interesting clues and Tom and Ben were now doing the follow ups. Luckily with his boss so tired and pre-occupied nobody had noticed Ben’s equal look of exhaustion. An elderly lady wearing a yellow long sleeved sundress came to the door, she was around 70 and had tinted pink hair.

“Good afternoon Mrs DiAngelo” Tom started “I’m DCI Barnaby and this is DS Jones, we are from Causton CID?”

“Oh yes” the lady said grabbing Tom’s hand and dragging him through the door, “You’re here because of the murders aren’t you?” She looked Tom up and down, “I remember you, from the wedding, you gave Mrs Keene away didn’t you?”

“Yes” Tom smiled

“Such a sweet girl” the lady said “She had a boyfriend of course, it’s a pity she had to die”

The room went silent, Ben’s eyes widened and he shuffled his feet, but Tom didn’t notice, skipping over the inaccuracy in the ladies statement, Tom sat down and smiled.

“Sergeant Keene was having an affair?” he asked her
“Of course dear? Did you want tea?” she bustled off into the kitchen, while Ben stared out of the window, and Tom paced the room.

“Mrs DiAngelo” Tom called into the kitchen “How did you know she was having an affair?”

The older lady came out of the kitchen carrying a tray, and set it down on the low coffee table, “well you see I’d go up to the house to talk to Derrick, Mr Keene at least once a week, and he’d caught them you know, on the sofa apparently. He didn’t want her to know of course, there was such an age difference, and Derrick was so ill, and I think he was pleased for her” she passed a cup of tea to Tom, and offered one to Ben, but he just ignored her, unfazed she continued “I mean I don’t think it had been going on very long, a few weeks, but she’d been taking less drugs since, and that made Derrick happy” Tom looked at his cup of tea.

“Drugs?”

“Yes dear, since the diagnosis” an alarm rang somewhere in the house and she stood up. “Have you got everything you need dear, only I’d better get that, it’s a cake”

“Er yes, thank you Mrs DiAngelo” Ben said pointedly reading his watch, and gesturing to his boss.

Tom looked sharply at him, but got up to leave anyway, “Yes thank you Mrs DiAngelo, we’ll let ourselves out” he said getting up, and leaving the cottage.

As They got to the car, Tom stared at Ben, and they both got into the car. “Do you mind telling me what that was all about Jones?” he hissed.

“Sir, look I’m sorry, I you need to know it’s not like Mrs DiAngelo said” he swallowed

“What is it Jones?”

“It’s me” he looked at his Boss and swallowed hard “It’s me, the man, it’s me”

“You” Tom raised an eyebrow, “You’re telling me you and Josie were having an affair?”

Sitting opposite Tom across the kitchen table, his face ashen, sat a guilty Ben Jones. As if caught el flagrante himself, sat in the family Kitchen Ben felt a fool, but he knew and trusted his boss, the fact that he wasn’t currently residing in the custody suite at Causton nick meant that to a certain extent Tom trusted him as well. The thought of the custody suite brought Josie’s face into sharp relief in his mind, stood behind the large clean clinical custody desk; her smiling face always a welcome sight during a hard long shift, despite himself Ben choked a small harsh sob.

“Jones?” Tom’s voice was gentle and concerned “You know this makes you a suspect don’t you?” Ben nodded and took a swig of his tea, “Tell me about it, from the beginning, when did it begin?”

Ben swallowed “You remember the night they found out about Derrick?”

About 2 months previously Tom and Ben had been working a Murder case at Midsomer Magna, towards the end of the case Tom had been hit on the back of the head by a rather desperate suspect. Ben had brought him home, despite all protestations to his continuing health, and Joyce fussed around the kitchen table. Ben had just accepted an invitation to stay for dinner when the door banged furiously, Joyce rushed to it and Ben and Tom were privy to a hysterical garbled conversation on the doorstep. Joyce then dragged, half carried a sobbing Josie into the kitchen and Ben helped her place her into a chair.
Over a strongly brewed cup of tea, Josie explained between wracks and sobs that her husband of just over a year had been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour. Derrick had gone home to phone his daughter, and Josie had run home to the only family she had. Tom and Joyce had spent a long evening trying to comfort their foster daughter, while Ben had sat beside her at first being quietly sympathetic, and finally offering to drive her home.

By the time Jones pulled up outside the Maples, Josie was dozing in the passenger seat. He shook her gently awake, “Josie, come on we’re here”

“Come in with me Ben” she begged grabbing his hand, “please?”

Sitting beside one another on a large chesterfield sofa Josie started sobbing again, and Ben pulled her softly towards him, putting his arms around her, he intended to let her sob against his shoulder, but as he looked down at her face, she looked up. Their eyes met for a moment and before either of them really knew what was happening they were kissing deeply.

“Yes” Tom interrupted with a cough, “I think my imagination can supply the rest”

“But no” Ben interrupted, “that’s it, we kissed and then she went to bed and”

“You went home?”

“No” Ben smiled, at the quirk in Tom’s eyebrows “It’s a big house, they have over 20 bedrooms, I found one and hunkered down for the night, left the next morning.”

“And that was it?” Tom asked “Sounds rather tame compared to the vivid imaginings of Mrs DiAngelo?”

“We’d go to the cinema, or out for dinner sometimes, nothing more than friends, really.”

“And how did these, meetings end?”

“Sir, look Josie loved Derrick, she didn’t, we didn’t.”

“It’s Ok Jones I understand, can I ask a question though” When Jones nodded Tom continued “Did you know Derrick knew, did you think he knew about the two of you?”

“No, Josie was quite insistent, she didn’t want him upsetting, he only had a couple of weeks, and he hated to see her as upset as she was”

“Jones?” Tom asked “How upset was that?”

“Drugs you mean?” Jones laughed into his mug “Mrs DiAngelo was wrong there”

“She was taking a sabbatical?”

“Not that sort, Josie had seen the Doctor, she’d given her some sedatives, things to help her sleep that’s all, she didn’t like taking them but, they helped I think.” Tom stopped looking at Ben for a moment, thinking and pulled out his phone, “You don’t think, the OD? You don’t think it was self-inflicted?”

“I really hope not Jones, I really hope not.”

George Bullard was able to confirm it was unlikely that somebody of Josie’s height and build would have been able to produce the wounds seen on her husband’s body, and careful investigation of the contents of Josie’s tent had shown her brandy bottle had been spiked with a powerful sedative. Combined with her
prescribed sedatives and a large quantity of Brandy it had produced an effect on Josie’s body to produce coma. The timing of the murder gave them a rough timeline, somebody spiked Josie’s Brandy, waited until she went down to her tent, curled up and fell into unconsciousness, and then as far as they could tell stabbed Derrick to death.

But there are three aspects to crime, as Tom often commented and four aspects of gaining a conviction. The first three are means, motive and opportunity and the fourth intrinsic value was evidence. In the case of Josie there was only one of the four rules that counted and that being opportunity, Tom could see no viable case against her. However in Ben’s case three of the four fitted neatly, and although without evidence no case could be called, what was a policeman’s job if not to look for evidence?

Ben had taken his automatic suspension from duty with surprising aplomb, carefully taking his arrest and automatic bail in his stride. What else, as he told his boss, was he supposed to do? He knew he hadn’t murdered anybody, and certainly hadn’t harmed Josie. Tom could sympathise when once in a similar position he had grumpily dogged Jones footsteps whilst attempting to clear his own name, so barely an hour after the younger man had been returned home in a police car, Tom found himself knocking on Ben’s door.

“Hullo Sir?” Ben asked, on the doorstep, confused but sounding to Tom remarkably chipper, “have they put Martin Spellman on the case?”

“No Jones” Tom said patiently “You will be pleased to know I am still the senior investigating officer on this case.”

“And is this an official visit?” Ben asked

“No Jones, but I did think I’d give you the chance you once gave me” he paused looking down the street, and then shrugging into his jacket, whispered conspiratorially “to clear your own name”.

Ben smiled, and gestured at his shoeless feet, “I’d better get some shoes on then, hadn’t I?”

They had been driving out of Causton on the road towards Midsomer Worthy for some time when Tom turned off the road near Setwale woods, and into a small car park set back from the road. He turned off the engine, and slid around to face Ben.

“This is where I first met her you know” he said, gesturing back towards the road “about a 100 yards in that direction, did you know that?” When Ben shook his head, Tom continued, “She was this tiny wet creature, all skin and bone, so frail, and so pale she was almost blue. She stared at me with those big blue eyes, and you know Jones, she wasn’t scared. She was naked, and it was cold and wet and I must have seemed massive to her, and I’d nearly hit her with my car, but she wasn’t scared, she just stared at me, watching me. She didn’t speak then, it was months before she could speak, she would just sit and stare at you. Of course when I took Joyce to see her at the Children’s ward in Causton Hospital, she thought I’d gone mad, but there was something about her, this tiny slip of a child, and then as soon as Cully met her that was that, as thick as thieves those two.” Tom stopped and smiled into the distance.

“You never found out where she’d come from?” Ben asked “Nobody reported her missing, or anything?”

“No, Jones” Tom frowned “A total mystery, one night she walked out of these woods, from who knows where, and nobody ever came searching for her.”

“She doesn’t remember anything before you” Ben said, flatly “I asked her once, and that’s her first memory” he shrugged “Before that it’s just blackness apparently”.

“When did you last see her?” Tom asked suddenly

“Last night” Ben answered truthfully, but taking one look at Barnaby he added “after you left the hospital, I went and visited”
Tom smiled “You really like her don’t you?” Ben smiled and nodded “and before last night?”

“The night before the murder, I picked her up from the Maples, and we went for a drink. The Rose and Crown in Luxton Deeping, then we went for a drive, and I took her home about 1am.” He ignored the look in his boss’s eye, and continued “that was it, I went home, on my own and the next time I saw her, she was in Causton General.”

“Where was Derrick, while you took his wife out for the evening?” Tom asked unable to keep the sarcasm from his voice.

“Josie phoned me, said he’d been very unwell and had gone to bed, she had wanted to get out of the house for a bit.”

“Did anybody else know? About you and Josie? Did anybody at the station know?”

“There really wasn’t that much to know, she was married, and faithful, and I was, am, a shoulder to cry on.”

“But now her husband is dead, Jones. And Josie is very much alive, and you are holding a rather large candle for her. Now Jones when we put that together, and look to whom might benefit from the demise of Derrick Keene, and it is you my young friend whose name floats to the surface does it not.” Ben looked down at his lap, “So when I ask you, if you told anybody, or if anybody had found out about you two, what do you tell me?”

“Not that I am aware of Sir”

Any other comments on the subject were cut off by Tom’s mobile ringing.

“Barnaby?” Ben was treated to a one sided conversation for a few moments, mostly made up of “yes” and “Right Away” and “I’ll bring him”. The last one combined with the look on his bosses face made his skin crawl, he mentally prepared himself for the worse as the DCI hung up, but Tom just looked at him and smiled. “She’s awake, and Jones?” he smiled broader, “she’s asking for you.”

As the two men walked through the now crowded hospital, the thoughts that kept running through Ben’s head were “She’s awake, she’s awake and she’s talking, she’s awake and she’s talking so she must be OK, and finally she’s awake and she’s talking and she’s asking for me”. When his mind reached that final spin of rhetoric he smiled, and did a small skip. Tom didn’t acknowledge it, but every time his Sergeant did it, he smiled. Finally they got to the side room where a different uniformed constable now stood guard.

Tom pushed open the door first, to find Josie propped up talking to a small blonde nurse.

“Tom” she croaked, her face lighting up, “they won’t tell me anything, but they keep asking me what I remember, tell me Dad, what’s happening?”

Tom walked across the room, towards her but before he could say anything, Ben stepped into the room, and if possible Josie’s face lit further. Her lips split into a large grin, and those massive blue eyes sparkled. As if the blonde nurse and Tom himself had both melted away, he watched as his Sergeant knelt beside his foster daughter’s bed and pulled her into a hug. Ben nuzzled his face into her hair, and seemingly ignorant of his boss’s scrutiny as Josie put her hand to the back of his neck he started kissing her deeply.

Tom stood there for a few moments, unsure as to what to do for the best, finally he coughed loudly. Breaking the couple apart sharply and guiltily, “what do you know has happened Josie? What do you remember?”

She broke away from Ben slightly, still keeping firm grip on his hand “Derrick told me he knew about Ben and I” she looked at Ben and shrugged “he asked if we we’re in love, and I said yes” at which she squeezed
his hand, and he kissed her cheek. “And then he asked why I hadn’t told him?”

“What did you say?” Ben asked

“I said I hadn’t wanted to upset him, and he laughed.”

“Laughed?” asked Tom

“Yes, he said I was a daft kid and if I’d just told him he’d have given us his blessing.”

“And then what?” Tom asked

“We had a cup of tea, and then he didn’t feel very well so he went to talk to his plants, and I went to the river, and then I woke up here, and nobody will tell me anything.”

“Jones?” Tom warned, Ben knew full well that one of the things he shouldn’t be there for, was telling Josie the details of the crime, but both men knew full well the devil himself wouldn’t have been able to drag the DS out of that room.

“Did somebody try and kill me?” Josie asked suddenly “Is that why I’m here?” then she looked at Ben, “Oh Ben you’re in civvies, do they think you tried to kill me?”

“Yes” he answered truthfully, and when her eyes widened in shock, Tom stepped in.

“Josie 2 days ago Derrick was found murdered on your lawn, you yourself were found poisoned a few yards away, you’ve been in a coma since.”

“And you think Ben did it?”

“No, no I don’t but…”

“…you don’t have any other suspects, and Ben had means, motive and opportunity?”

“He taught you well” Ben laughed, kissing her hand, but she pulled it down onto the bed again.

“How was he killed?” she asked, “was he poisoned as well?”

“No, no he was stabbed Josie” Tom told her solemnly. “Can you think of anyone who had a grudge against him, anyone who’d want to kill him?”

“No, look Tom he had days left to live, weeks at the outset, I can’t think of anyone who’d want to kill him, it would have to be someone with very little patience.”

“That’s unfortunate” Ben told her but she grabbed him and pulled him close again.

“Dad, Ben won’t get into real trouble will he? Not for us? Not for me?”

“Why is it, that I’m only “Dad” when you want something?”

“Because DCI Barnaby, that is the way of these things” The blonde nurse turned and told him, “now if you’ve stopped asking questions of my patient, I’d like her to get some rest.”

“Can Ben stay?” Josie immediately asked

“No love, I’m sorry but I really don’t think he can” Tom told her, “but I promise you, I promise both of you that no harm will come to either of you. And when this is over, and whoever really did this has been brought to justice, I will do everything in my power to help you.”
Tom took Ben home, they sat in silence till they pulled up outside, the Ben turned to his boss “How much trouble am I actually in, Sir?”

“Honestly Jones, I don’t know” Tom rubbed the bridge of his nose “I think you need a solicitor, I think you both need a solicitor, and you are going to need to speak to the police Federation.”

“If she resigns?”

Tom gave him a sharp look “You think she would?”

“Would you be angry if she did?”

“It’s not what I would want for her, but look we’ve got to get out of this mess first.” Tom sighed again, “Go in Ben, go to sleep, I had a word before we left the hospital they’ll probably let her out tomorrow, things will look better then.”

Ben smiled, both at the use of his Christian name, and the comfort of the words, “Thanks Tom.”

“No,” Tom said suddenly stern, but smiled at Ben’s startled look, “If you date her you may become Ben to me, but I will still be Sir, or Mr Barnaby, never Tom.”

The next morning Ben woke to the sound of his phone ringing, he’d climbed into bed almost fully dressed, and as he searched for his phone realised he was half strangling himself with his jumper. Kicking at the bed and his clothes, he got enough leverage, to grapple to the side of the bed, and grab his ringing jeans.

“Jones” he croaked into the phone

“Ben?” Josie’s voice called from the other end “is that you, you sound odd?”

Ben coughed, removed his jumper, and sat upright “No, no I’m fine, I was just being strangled, but I’m OK now”

“Strangled? Ben are you OK?” every inch the career policewoman came out.

“Yes, yes sorry are you OK, do you need something?”

“Yes, Ben they’re going to let me out in about an hour, and Mum and Dad and Cully think it’s a good idea if I go and stay in London at Cully and Simon’s.” she stopped to draw breath, and Ben found his stomach go cold “but I don’t want to go, and Cully and I wonder if we could perhaps, not drive to London at all, but maybe, came to yours instead?”

“Oh honey?” Ben cursed himself for the use of such a sickly endearment, but continued regardless “I’ve only got one bedroom, and look I don’t think there’s room for me, you and Cully.”

“No Ben, Cully isn’t coming to stay, just me.”

“But I still only have one bed!”

“Don’t be thick, Ben, can I come?”

“Of course”

Two hours later, there was a knock on the door of Ben’s tiny maisonette, he had run about like a headless chicken, shoving stuff into bags, and bags into cupboards or bins and generally trying to stop his messy bachelor pad looking like, a messy bachelor pad.
He ran down the stairs to find the Barnaby sisters on his doorstep, for a moment Ben’s mind rebelled with the thought “Oh God their Dad is gonna kill me, followed by, OH Bloody hell, my boss is gonna kill me.” The sisters embraced and after Cully gave Ben the harshest look he’d ever received, which summed up within it all the feelings of “I don’t like this, if you hurt my sister, and I don’t know what your intentions are.” Ben and Josie were left on his doorstep, staring at each other.

“Hi?” she ventured “erm can we go in?”

“Yeah, erm hi, come in”

Ben made them each a cup of tea, while Josie looked around the apartment, she’d never been there before it was quite cosy really, a small kitchen diner, living room and bedroom with an en suite bathroom. When she returned to the living room after wandering about Ben was sitting on the sofa staring at his cup of tea. He looked up at her and smiled, and she came and cuddled next to him.

“How you feeling?” he asked the top of her head, kissing it lightly.

“A bit odd really, someone tried to kill me?” She giggled into his chest “What about you?”

“I’ve been arrested for murder, and your attempted murder, I’ve been better.” He shrugged “what are you doing here?”

“I feel safer with you, I want to be with you, and Ben” she kissed him “I love you.”

He kissed her back, attempting to block out the voice in his head, the voice that sounded suspiciously like DCI Barnaby that was telling him this was a really bad idea. After a length of time spent kissing, that left them both breathless, and shirtless, Josie pulled away from him.

“You have a bedroom through there Ben” she panted “would you like to show it to me?”

He smiled and looked her straight in the eye “Are you sure?”

“Perfectly”

Ben smiled, and carefully picked her up, to which she giggled but still nuzzled into his neck. He laid her on the bed, and carefully removed his clothes down to his boxer shorts, aware that her gaze was now on him, he smiled a little goofily at her.

“Erm, not done this in a while” he laughed and lay down beside her. Running his hand over her now naked legs and thighs, she shuddered and giggled again. He pulled her close and they giggled and kissed and after he finished stripping her, and let her strip him, he knelt above her and looked down. She was absolutely beautiful, and for a moment he couldn’t quite believe his luck, he studied her face for a moment and saw a flash of uncertainty and fear. “Are you really sure about this?” he asked.

“Of course” she smiled, and pulled him gently towards her, he let her pull him close letting her choose her own pace, until the last moment, when he locked eyes with her, catching her smile and thrusting his hips forward, entering her. Ben was surprised to find resistance, and her slightly pained expression.

“Are you OK?” he asked her urgently

“Yeah, not done this in a while” she told him, her voice tight and pained. She wouldn’t have admitted for all the world how much pain she was actually in at that moment, so she pulled him closer and kissed him hard. After all this was actually happening and then Ben pulled back gently, and the pain went, replaced with a hot tight feeling, and suddenly she wanted him inside her again, and this time deeper and this time it didn’t hurt so much, and when he pulled back she moaned and threw her head back. After a longer time than she could understand, which could have been moments or could have been hours the pain had completely gone,
and she was panting and calling his name, clinging to him and pulling him closer to her. Her whole body became centred on her sex, and she opened her eyes to look into his.

Ben for his part, was desperate to make this last as long as he could. Not only because the feeling was amazing, but because it had never been like this before. She moaned and writhed beneath him, and she was calling his name, in a way no other girl had ever done. She was tighter than any lover before, and the part of his brain not concentrating on the act, the part of his brain that was still a policeman wondered about that, and filed it away for afterwards, because the pace of her moans had changed, and now not only was she close to climax but he was as well. Their movement became more frantic and less rhythmical, till finally she clamped her muscles down on him, and his body lurched, as the rhythm of his body changed from thrusting to humming as he came inside her, she screamed his name, arching her back, and causing him to thrust further forward, and he was aware of coming to rest against her cervix.

Eventually their bodies stilled and he claimed her mouth again, he became aware of her trembling and wrapped his arms around her. Whilst aware he was softening inside her, he didn’t want to move, the feeling of her wrapped around him was magical, but she was now wriggling uncomfortably and he carefully knelt up again, making her mewl with pain. He removed the condom he wore, and threw it lazily at the bin, as he lay down on the bed beside her, he’d intended to gather her back to him, so he was mildly but pleasantly surprised when she wriggled across him, covering his chest with butterfly kisses before, engulfing his now soft manhood in her hot mouth.

Whatever his thoughts had been on her innocence, he now had serious doubts. She mouthed his balls and squeezed his shaft until to his surprise he was hard again. She peeled back his foreskin causing him to moan and buck his hips slightly, she smiled, as she nibbled and kissed across the smoother slicker skin underneath, propping himself up slightly on the pillows and watched fascinated, as she took his now purple engorged head back into her mouth, and scraped her teeth across the top. Clearly pleased with the hitch in his breathing, she did it again, chuckling at the back of her throat as he mewed. She took his shaft into his right hand, squeezing the base between her thumb and little finger, starting to gently manipulate the rest of her fingers up the length as if playing a complicated instrument.

Ben’s vision started to swim, but he still watched entranced as she took his balls in her other hand, pulling, squeezing and rolling them between her fingers, eliciting a series of grunts and sighs from him. She lifted her head lightly, looking him in the eye, and smiling, then winking she sank her head back to his groin, taking the head between her lips she licked across the top, with dextrous little flicks of her tongue, twining it with a rapid spidering of her fingers across his scrotum and down towards his perineum, where she lightly dug her nails into the delicate flesh, whilst pushing the tip of her tongue into the tiny eyelet at the head of his penis. He bucked his hips in response and felt his balls tighten. As she licked the precum from his tip, he breathed out hard and she increased the rhythm with her right hand, now as well as squeezing moving her hand up towards her lips, effectively masturbating him into her mouth. His body now acting on its own his hips bucked into her again, and he closed his eyes, only to feel her engulf him almost entirely into her mouth, leaving only enough room for her hand to have slight movement at his base. She allowed her tonsils and throat to soften around him, giving the impression that he was thrust right into her gullet, Ben had a moment of guilt, as he tried to buck again, desperately wanting to come, but as his thoughts filled with that, she dropped her hand, pushing the index finger of her left hand into his anus, his eyes widened with shock, but she started humming at the back of her throat, sending waves and shivers of pleasure through his body, the other clever fingers of her left hand, now stroked and thrummed his tight balls as if playing some extravagant stringed instrument, and as she gripped his shaft hard with her right hand she found his prostate with her left index finger and pushed.

Ben had never known anything quite like it, the experience of coming in one single hot wave, like all the heat in his body had been washed down her clever mouth, his hips bucked, but she held his dick still deep within her throat, swallowing his cum and keeping all the pressure on his rigid genitals. If Ben had a conscious thought it was that he was going to pass out, but first he let out a guttural scream of pleasure, before slumping back into his mound of stacked pillows. While he was slumped, she knelt up, licking and
cleaning the spilled cum from the head, placing delicate kisses on his softening shaft, and red hot balls. Shuffling upwards, and swinging her legs to gain purchase on the floor, Josie was surprised when Ben’s arm snaked back around her waist, pulling her close. She fought slightly, as he swung her round to face him, she looked into his flushed face, with beads of sweat decorating his pale brow and started to ask if he was alright.

She was cut off, by his lips pressing against hers, and although she tried to clamp her mouth, his tongue delved into it. He relished the taste of himself inside her, and at first her eyes widened with shock and he ran his tongue over her palate and teeth and tongue itself, but melting into the kiss, she let herself be pulled on top of him, glorying in the feeling of his hands pulling and tugging at her hair, his free hand running down her naked back and cupping her bottom, pulling her left thigh upwards so she sat astride his waist. She pulled herself away from him, and he opened his eyes.

“Ben” she purred, “I’ve got to wash” she waved her left hand vaguely “you don’t want to kiss me I’m icky”

“No” he purred looking at her seriously “you’re wonderful, really, really wonderful” he tried to pull her down again but, she fought slightly harder.

“Please? Just a minute, I’ll be back.” And before he could argue more, she slid from his lap and padded to the bathroom. He lay back again for a moment, wondering what had happened in the last hour he had received the two best orgasms of his life, both so ridiculously different that his mangled brain could almost account them to two different women. He heard the taps in the bathroom run, followed by the sounds Josie scrubbing her hands with what he assumed was his nail brush. A moment of guilt froze his stomach, and he slid from the sheets. As he walked towards the bathroom she called to him. “Ben, can I use this toothbrush?”

“The one in the packet?” he asked, coming up behind her “I bought it for you this morning, there’s some other stuff too” he opened the bathroom mirrored cabinet and gestured to a range of toiletries he’s bought in a panic after her phone call. Closing the cabinet, and wrapping his arms around her naked waist, he watched their flushed faces in the mirror as she carefully brushed her teeth. “Are you OK Josie?” he asked.

“hmmmm?” she spat out and rinsed the brushed “yes, are you?” she turned to him, plastering him with tooth pasty kisses.

“Yes” he kissed the top of her head, “come back to bed, I think, I mean, come and talk to me.” She looked worried and slightly pained, as he watched her climb into his bed, and cover herself over with his duvet. He slid opposite her, his back resting against the metal railed foot board, and his feet resting beside her ribs. “Have I done something wrong?” she asked, her eyes wide, and she looked terrified.

“No, no of course not, you are amazing.” He smiled reaching under the cover and squeezing her leg making her smile. “chuck us a pillow will you?” She threw two plump pillows at him, and he arranged them so he was comfy and squeezed her leg again. “What just happened?” he asked.

She tilted her head and smiled oddly, “I might be wrong, but I think we just had sex?”

“No, I mean” he swallowed deciding to head this out like a policeman rather than a lover “when you said, it’d been a while, what did you mean? How long is a while?” The two sergeants stared at each other for a while, “What about you?” Josie asked back.

“Erm, 8 months.” Ben answered truthfully, and added for clarification, “Cully’s wedding, one of Simon’s cousins, I didn’t, well it wasn’t great” he shrugged and grinned embarrassed.

Josie looked down, and pulled at a loose thread on the duvet, “twelve years” she sighed, and then flushing bright red she stared into his eyes.
“Twelve years?” he repeated, and then thought “you’d have been eighteen?”

“First fresher’s week at University, I was very drunk” she looked down, “I don’t remember a lot there was a lot of blood and a lot of pain and it wasn’t repeated.”

“But Derrick?” Ben asked, covering the fact that he wanted to find the University boy and beat his head in with a stick.

“Derrick wasn’t interested in that” she coughed and looked away, “he had other desires on me, erm, which suited him better.”

“May I ask?” Ben wasn’t sure “I’m guessing oral sex?”

She giggled, and blushed again “Why is this tricky to talk about? It shouldn’t be should it, not with you? Before we got married we didn’t do anything” she gulped “Erm less than us before Derrick died. On our honeymoon he explained he really wasn’t very interested in sex, but he asked if I was any use at giving blow jobs, and I had to admit I wasn’t.”

“He taught you, that?” Ben asked

“No, he. I loved Derrick you must know that, and I was happy, but he wasn’t very gentle in that department. If the urge took him, he made me kneel and he’d fuck my mouth.” She looked up as Ben’s fingers dug into calf where he’d been gently stroking “It’s OK, I didn’t like it very much, so I did a lot of research, there are books, and DVD’s and websites, and” she giggled again and looked at her “there is a lady in Felton Meadows who gives lessons.”

“What?”

“Not on real men, she has various teaching aids” she laughed at Ben’s face “But I’ve never had the chance to practice on a real person?”

“Derrick wasn’t interested?”

“He fell ill soon after, and I never got to try any of it on him” she smiled, and wriggled her toes gently into his groin. “Was I, did it, was I any good?”

Ben moved wriggling up the bed towards her, his hand brushing her still open and puffy lips he felt her wetness there, and her eyes closed and mouth came open as he gently pushed a finger inside her sopping body. Lying almost on top of her, he kissed her nose, and ran his tongue across her lips, he kissed her mouth and whispered “I love you, and you were, are amazing.” Opening her vaginal lips with his fingers, he felt himself hardening again, “what about me? Was I worth the wait?”

She moaned “Oh yes” as she felt his fingers pushing deeper inside her, the first time anyone had ever done that, it felt so intimate, she had trouble not clamping her thighs onto his hand.

“Did I hurt you?” Ben asked suddenly anxious

“It did hurt at first” seeing his pained expression she kissed him and smiled “but not for very long, and then it was wonderful. I’ve never felt anything like that.”

“I’m glad” he kissed her again, “do you want to try again?”

She didn’t need to reply, she kissed him and reached under the covers, pulling gently at his now fully erect penis, she guided him to her wetness, a look passed between them and he pushed forward, filling her as deeply as he could, she gasped and clung to him, as their tongues met, and she wrapped her legs behind him, keeping him trapped inside her.
“Josie stop” he gasped, looking at her “I assume you’re not on the pill, and although this feels amazing, and every fibre in my body is arguing, I think we need to be sensible.”

“I love you” she panted, releasing him and watching him climb carefully off her, and start scrabbling in a bedside drawer, “Can I do it?” she asked, gesturing at the small packet in his hand.

“Have you ever done this before?” Ben asked handing the whole tiny box over to her “Is it on the curriculum of the lady in Felton Meadows?”

“No” she giggled, and started reading the packet, studying the tiny diagram.

Her nose crinkled as she did so, and Ben was transfixed, utterly unsure as to what constituted love exactly, he thought lying back watching someone studiously attempting to put on their first condom, had to come bloody close surely. She pulled back the cover and sat for a moment watching his penis, Ben through resting eyelashes realised she was lining up the real thing with the diagram on the packet and had to stifle a laugh.

“Do you want me to do it?” he asked

“No!” she told him using her sergeants’ voice “I need to learn”

He looked up at her, “you don’t really, there are other things we could try” then he smiled “that I hope we will try?”

“Yes” she said opening the packet “but it might come in handy one of these days”. Argument thus extinguished, she placed the condom over the head of his penis, resting the diagram on his stomach she unrolled it carefully, towards the base he gasped as the tightness of the sheath became uncomfortable, “Sorry!” she said immediately. But Ben took her hand showed her how to loosen it slightly, making it more comfortable on him. This done, he swiped the little box across the bed, and dragged her too him.

“Roll on your side, with your back towards me.” He ordered, and she complied without a word, Ben wondered what a less trusting girl would have done. He pushed her top leg upwards, bending it at the knee, and pushing himself closer to her. He moved her lightly so she was resting entirely on his arm, and his own lower leg, bending her body he wrapped his other arm around her waist and down the front of her body so his fingers were resting on her clitoris, bringing his penis in line with her vagina from the back, he whispered into her ear, “are you ready? Are you OK?”

“Yes” she whispered, as he pushed upwards, impaling her, she squealed with surprise at the different feeling from before “that’s, oh Ben”

“Do you like that?” he smiled, kissing the back of her neck, relishing the feeling as she grabbed at his hand, and he clutched it. “I love you” he whispered, thrusting harder than before as she squeaked and thrust back into his lap.

“I love you too” she panted, almost cried clutching at the bed clothes with her free hand.

Ben massaged her clitoris as they thrust together, thinking vaguely he was being rather unfair, as she was going to come long before he was, but that was what he wanted, the feeling of her coming with him deep inside her, whilst actually able to focus on it. She of course didn’t have a clue that was what he was doing but as she started to come, she scrabbled and mewed, and he smiled wickedly, holding her hand as hard as he dared, whilst burrowing his nose into her hair. No longer able to thrust with him, he felt the moment her body climaxed, just before she screamed his name, her whole body went rigid and all her muscles clamped on him.

As she was still panting and coming and clutching Ben took the opportunity to withdraw slightly, and spin her round to face him. Her flushed face and closed eyes looked both sweet and filthy, taking the opportunity
of her bent rigid knees he laid her on her back, pulled her hips towards him and thrust back into her. Her vaginal muscles still vibrating and clinging, gave nearly as much resistance as the first time, but this time he knew there was no pain, as she moaned and squealed again. Making him wonder that if his neighbours were home in the middle of the afternoon, and what they possibly thought. He ran his hands under her body and while taking time to suck on her nipples, he dragged her almost upright towards him. He could feel her body relaxing again as she looked into his eyes, and seeing the confusion there he smiled and kissed her. He was now kneeling on the bed, with her thighs either side of his, “are you alright?” he asked and when she just nodded he kissed her, cuddling her to him. Her eyes widened with surprise when she realised he was still deep inside her, and she could feel every raw movement he made.

“Ben” she stuttered rolling her hips in experimentation “I don’t know what I’m doing?”

“I know” he whispered kissing her again, and causing a giggle. “Does it hurt?” when she shook her head, and moved again he moaned “I want you to make me come, I want you learn how to make me come.” She squeezed her muscles and he groaned, “Yes just like that, look do what you want, you are in charge, but I don’t want you to use your mouth.”

She rolled her hips, and squeezed her muscles, her clever eyes watched him as his reactions changed, leaning towards him and away from him elicited different reactions, and by moving up and down she made him pant, and call her name, lightly at first into her mouth as she kissed him, and then into her hair as he cuddled closer. When her rhythm increased, and he felt himself coming closer to the third mind blowing orgasm of the day, he opened his eyes to look at her, flushed, with her eyes closed, he realised she was going to come herself, unsure quite what he should do he kissed her deeply, and they moaned together. What thrusting upwards he could do was limited by their relative positions, but as she started to thrust hard down, he came up to meet her. Their breathing ragged, Ben was aware his muscles had clamped just as hers did, and he screamed her name, as she in turned screamed his.

What happened next was somewhat of a mystery to both of them, but Ben assumed they’d passed out, as he awoke without the so expertly applied condom, but naked stiff and with his arms still wrapped around Josie. He lay there for a moment, wondering what it was that had woken him; looking out of the window he could see it was still mid-afternoon. Dropping his head, his smelt Josie’s hair, taking a moment to watch her sleep, before the door downstairs banged loudly.

That must have been what woke him first time, gently shaking Josie awake he slipped out of the bed.

“Put some clothes on” he whispered, “take one of my shirts if you want.” He pulled on his jeans without boxers, and a jumper.

“Who is it?” She whispered urgently “I shouldn’t be here, I’ll get you into trouble”.

Ben blew her a kiss, but as he left the bedroom he whispered “If you want to hide, you can get into the attic, through the wardrobe”.

Leaving her smiling, he walked through the living room, hiding their shirts and shoes behind one of the sofa cushions, and then ran down the stairs, as the door banged again. Pulling it open he had to stifle a groan on seeing his boss, and Constable Stephens on the doorstep.

“Hullo Sir, Gail, I assume this is a formal visit.”

“Yes Jones, I’m afraid it is, can we come in?”

Ben thought of the state of the living room couch, and his bedroom and thought he really didn’t want his home searched at this moment, “Do I have a choice, Sir?”

“Well yes you do, you could come with us down to Causton nick, I could apply for a search warrant from
the magistrate which should take about an hour, and come back and search your house without you. Or you could let myself and DC Stephens come in, we could have a nice cup of tea, we could talk through the whole mess, Gail could write down what you say” He finished with a smile, that Ben knew he kept for suspects.

“Ben let them in” a voice came from the top of the stairs, “they’re not going to be angry.”

“Well that’s a matter of opinion young lady” Tom shouted from the bottom of the stairs, pushing passed Ben, “Especially as I was assured that you’re safely ensconced in Hounslow with your sister.”

Gail looked apologetic to Ben, and followed Tom up the stairs, as Ben seriously considered running down the street getting on a plane and perhaps joining the French Foreign Legion. However there was a sharp voice behind him on the stairs.

“JONES!” Tom shouted, and all thoughts of everything but getting through the next few minute of hell were wiped from his mind.

When he got upstairs Ben found that Gail had taken the seat on the couch behind which he’d hidden their clothes. He breathed a silent prayer of relief, but having caught the Constable’s eye he realised it was by design rather than accident, and an obvious attempt to keep him out of anymore trouble with the Boss. Tom was staring down at his wayward Foster Daughter, whose tousled blonde hair, bare legs and barely concealed body under one of Ben’s work shirts demonstrated quite eloquently what she and Ben had spent the afternoon doing.

“Would you like that cup of tea?” Ben asked, trying to sound cheerful. Before anybody could answer he’d collected the two cold tea mugs from his coffee table and hurried off to the kitchen. Josie looking between Ben’s retreating back, and her father’s disappointed face, she shrugged.

“I’ll go and put some clothes on then shall I?” she asked and vanished through the bedroom door.

When Ben returned, Tom was sitting beside DC Stephens and Josie had taken her place on a wicker chair that normally contained Ben’s junk mail pile. He was surprised it was capable of taking the weight of a human and only noticed when he took his place on the only free chair, a small round IKEA armchair, that her now legging covered calves were braced on the floor. He smiled when he noticed she’d kept his shirt on though, it was slightly decadent, reminded everyone in the room that moments ago that was all she was wearing, and demonstrated that she belonged there with him.

“What’s happened?” Ben finally asked, “you clearly came to ask me something new”

“If I was to ask you where you were between 11am and 2pm this afternoon, I assume the answer would be here, and if I was to ask if anyone could cooberate that, I assume you’d would say each other?” Tom asked Josie and Ben nodded carefully, and careful not to knock her off balance, Ben reached over and took her hand. “What’s happened?” They asked together

“This afternoon Mrs Violet DiAngelo was found dead at her home in Midsomer Worthy.” Gail told them.

“SHIT” swore Ben, looking around the room at three startled faces.

“Mrs DiAngelo, the mad woman from the estate cottage, bakes mysterious cakes?” she looked between the other three, “am I missing something?”

“Mrs DiAngelo was the person who told me you were having an affair, and as far as we know other than yourselves and Derrick she’s the only person who knew. And as Ben was there when she told me, and now
she’s been murdered “

“And once again Ben is the only suspect, especially as I should have been in Hounslow?” Josie asked. “Do you think someone has it in for Ben?”

“My real problem is, I have no other idea at motive apart from your affair, and although you both swore to me that it wasn’t serious, the moment you have the opportunity” Tom stopped and waved his hand at Josie, and the Bedroom door behind her. “As you once told me yourself DS Jones, sex is always a good motive for murder.”

“I think, I mean you will want Gail to do this for you, but I think I can prove pretty conclusively we were here all afternoon?” Josie told them

“The neighbours?” Ben asked laughing

“The neighbours” Josie agreed.

“Oh no Sir please don’t make me” Gail begged

“Am I a suspect?” Josie asked, “really? Do you think I murdered my husband, OD’d, got out of hospital and helped my lover murder a little old lady, for what? I knew my husband had a very short time to live, there was very little point in murdering him, yes he’d found out I was in love with someone else but”

“Josie, don’t say another word” Ben warned, “DCI Barnaby, DC Stephens, we formally request a solicitor before we say anything else.”

“We do?” she asked shocked

“Search the flat if you want, you won’t find anything, but please do, get a warrant if you want, we will be as quiet as church mice and very, very helpful, but I want you to arrest us, and interview us formally, but I want to speak to a solicitor first.” Ben said all this dead pan.

“Jones?” Tom asked “If there is something you don’t want us to know, it’s always better to tell us now, rather than it come out in court, you know that.”

“Sir, I know this is very unusual, and suspicious but I suspect we might be in more trouble if we told you, than if we kept quiet, and I want to speak to a solicitor.”

“Ben, is this about me?” Josie asked quietly, he squeezed her hand and nodded, “Cully knows” she told him, and he looked at her surprised. “You know, and Cully knows, not even Derrick knew, what you do now.”

“Yes but what Derrick, must have known, is enough to have got you and he killed to the right person.” Ben explained, “and I want you to speak, and I want to speak to someone in the know before we say anything else.”

“Is this because it’s Dad?” she asked “because I don’t think he’ll be that shocked, I don’t think Gail would say anything to anyone, and I think you’re right.”

“Look” Tom suddenly started “I don’t know what you’re talking about, but if it’s something that has led to two murders, and attempted murder, one of my officers being falsely accused, I need to know, if that means you two want to be dragged down to the station and locked up, so be it, but trust me it’ll be easier if you tell us now”

“Take us to the station, and get us a duty solicitor” Josie told him,” just give us a few minutes to get properly dressed.”
Tom went to the car to phone the station, Gail sat demurely on the sofa, ostentiously trying to ensure that couple couldn’t get rid of evidence or do a runner. Ben and Josie went and locked themselves into the bedroom.

They got dressed carefully and fully, although Josie kept Ben’s shirt, with a t-shirt and bra underneath it looked more decent, but she was clearly still wearing it, much to his delight.

“Do you know what you’re doing Ben?” she asked him, “because I love you, but I’d really rather not be arrested.”

“You love me, but do you trust me?” He asked

“Yes of course”

“Right, here’s what I think, and if I’m right we are much safer at Causton nick than anywhere else.” He pulled her close, barely whispering and told her his theory. When he’d finished she looked at him, shivering.

“You really think that?” she asked “It doesn’t seem worth it?”

“To the right person, I think it would be worth a lot more”

“What do you want me to tell the solicitor?” She asked holding his arms “Do I tell him you’re suspicions?”

“You can do, but don’t tell him about the Fresher’s boy” he stared into her eyes, hoping she’d understand “If he asks, which I think he will, look him in the eye, and tell them you’ve only been with me. Do you think Cully would go along with that if asked?”

“Oh of course” she nodded knowing her sister would defend her to the ends of the earth if asked “but what about Dad?”

“I want him to get good and angry with us, I want him to doubt us, if possible I want him to try and charge us.”

“Why?”

“Because the devil himself couldn’t get into the cells at Causton Police Station, if Tom Barnaby doesn’t want him too.”

In the end two duty solicitors were called, and while Ben’s maisonette was searched, the lovers were taken to two separate interview rooms. Ben had unfortunately drawn the short straw and was interviewed by Tom and Gail, in the presence of a Mr Marston of Causton. Josie was interviewed by DI Martin Spellman, PC Denise Perrin and Ms Somer of Causton.

Having explained to Ms Somer’s the position she found herself in, and the reason for the insistence on a solicitor, Ms Somer’s suggested Josie told her interviewers the truth, that she had fallen in love with Ben whilst Derrick was alive, that Derrick found out and told her she had his blessing, when she was released from hospital she just wanted to be with Ben, so she had got Cully to take her to Bens, and spent the afternoon with him. Josie told DI Spellman all this as asked, answered every question truthfully. Ms Somers under the impression that until approximately midday Josie had been a virgin, had advised her not to say a word about it unless asked specifically, as Josie was not under any real suspicion there wasn’t any reason for it to come up.

Ben however was having a harder time, he had hoped to be interviewed by anyone but his boss, but as Mr Marston had wisely pointed out, you can’t always get what you want.
After the initial introduction to the tape Tom had started the questioning in the way Ben knew he would.

“Tell me why you think Derrick Keene was killed?”

Ben swallowed “I think that some person or persons unknown believed they had a greater right to Derrick Keene’s full inheritance than Sgt Keene.” Whatever Tom was expecting I wasn’t that. “I also have reason to believe that the same person or persons unknown wished to harm Sgt Keene, to ensure that their evidence of this was preserved.”

“And what evidence do you think this person was attempting to preserve?”

“That until earlier this afternoon, she was a virgin.” Ben tried to say that deadpan, but was somewhat hampered by his boss coughing loudly.

“I beg your pardon?” Tom asked

“My client is willing to make a statement to the fact that in the understanding of property law Sgt Josephine Keene was not the lawfully wedded wife of Mr Derrick Keene of The Maples Midsomer Worthy, and that as so, even with the terms of Mr Keene’s Will stating all his worldly possessions should be maintained by his wife, and her family, anyone with that knowledge could challenge Sgt Keene’s hold on the property, to their own ends.” Mr Marston stopped for breath “My client believes that if Sgt Keene had been killed or seriously harmed, this evidence would have been easily admissible, denying her family as understood by the terms of Mr Keene’s Will, and her beneficiaries, as understood by her own Will, access to the property which would then, it is the belief of my client revert to Mr Keene’s daughter and her family.”

“And the murder of Mrs DiAngelo?” Gail asked

“I think, DS Jones is suggesting, that she may have been the source of the information, and thus could have identified the killer?” Tom explained.

“Yes” Ben confirmed “I think somebody would happily kill, if it was well known that Derrick was going to give Josie his blessing to sleep with me.”

“Because heaven forbid she may have fallen pregnant, and then” Tom started

“There would have been another person in the way of our killer and The Maples” Ben continued “I think the person found out fairly close to the murder date, either that Derrick was planning to give Josie his blessing, or even that Josie had a lover and wanted to stop her as quickly as possible, and if you’re going to commit one murder, why not get rid of the old boy as well, and once you’ve done that”

“Mrs DiAngelo is just one further murder?” Tom asked

“why not?” Ben smiled

Tom stopped the interview at this point, and Ben was taken back to the cells, he’d borrowed a book from the duty sergeant, and sat with his back leaning on the cell war, perfectly happily, until his cell door opened, and Tom walked in.

“Hullo Sir, is this an official visit? Or are you here to punch me?” Ben asked smiling

“You know full well Jone’s that I have never harmed a prisoner yet, and don’t intend to start with you.” He leant against the door and sighed “What do you want, Ben?”

“I want her to be safe” Ben answered honestly

“Is that why you seduced her?” Tom asked his voice calm “To keep her safe?”
“I didn’t know, honestly Sir I didn’t know till it didn’t matter anymore.” He looked down, “But look, loads of people must have known other than Cully, her Doctor must know, whoever does her medical, and I know she thinks Derrick didn’t know, but she’s very innocent about these things and I can’t believe he didn’t. And ignoring that for a moment, lots of people could have learned that she and Derrick weren’t sleeping together, I suspect Mrs DiAngelo did, and he spoke to his daughter all the time, and”

“Enough Jones, I understand” Tom snapped, “why the solicitor, why this way?”

“Because I needed more help than you could give us, and I wanted to keep us locked away” he smiled “I think there is somebody out there who has murdered twice, and tried to kill Josie once already, safest place I know, Causton cells.”

“Ben, I know you’re no liar, so I’m going to ask you this carefully” Tom whispered “is there something wrong you’re not telling me?”

“She’s fine sir, I swear she’s fine, as long as I can keep her safe.”

“I think we can manage that Jones.”

Ms Somer’s was just in the process of requesting her clients’ immediate release, when Tom knocked on the interview room, and asked DI Spellman to come out for a moment.

“Look Tom” Spellman started “The girl knows absolutely nothing, and I know there is a personal connection but I can’t keep her, and Ms Somers is becoming a pain.”

“I know” Tom hissed “Look, before you let her go, ask her who her Doctor is in Midsomer Worthy, ask her why Mrs DiAngelo had an estate cottage, and ask her why she married Derrick.”

DI Spellman gave him a dubious look and smiled “Have you got something out of Jones then? Do you think he’s involved?” The gleeful look in Spellman’s eyes upset Tom, he’d never gloat over the downfall of a fellow officer.

“I’m not sure what I’ve got, but could you ask her please? And then come and find me?”

“Sure Tom.” Spellman said, slapping him on the back, causing Tom to sneer and march off.

Several hours later the custody Sergeant phoned Tom’s desk phone to ask for permission to release Ben, which Tom gave telling him to send the Sergeant home in a car.

“Back to his house?” The custody Sergeant asked.

“Yes, why? The search team finished hours ago, they didn’t find anything of note?”

“Well we sent Sgt Keene back there about an hour ago, we could have saved a journey.”

“What?”

“Sgt Keene on her release asked to go back to Sgt Jone’s, we didn’t see why not, as the search team had finished, about an hour ago.”

“Who ordered her released?”

“DI Spellman of course”
Tom told the custody sergeant he’d take Jones’s home, and then went to find Spellman. Spellman who in the way of these things everywhere had a proper office, not the plastic cubicle Jones, Barnaby and Stephens shared, and when Tom knocked on the door, there was a distinct gap before Spellman answered.

“Tom!” he called, gesturing at a chair in front of the and continuing to type, after a few seconds he spun back to Tom, a sickly sweet smile plastered on his face. “What can I do for you?”

“You were going to ask Josie some follow up questions? You’ve seen fit to let her go, so I wondered what her answers were?”

“Oh yes” Spellman fiddled with some paper on his desk “The Doctor is some GP practice in Midsomer Worthy, she normally see’s,” he fiddled with some more paper “Dr Setwale at Goldwyn Medical centre.”

“Would that be Dr Goldwyn and Setwale Medical Centre?” Tom asked

“Oh yes” Spellman smiled, “Erm yes, Mrs DiAngelo was the nursery nurse at the house, till about 15 years ago, then Mr Keene gave her the house on the estate” Tom’s eyebrows quirked but Spellman ignored it, “and the delightful Ms Somer’s wouldn’t let Sgt Keene answer the last question.”

“Really?”

“Yes she said it wasn’t pertinent” Spellman pushed around some more paper, “Is that all Tom, it’s just I have a date tonight, and I’d like to be off.”

A few minutes later he was walking through the custody suite, in a very grumpy mood.

“Are you ready Jones?” he asked his sergeant who was chatting with the custody sergeant.

“Yes Sir” Ben turned to follow his boss, who without a word, continued down the corridor, and out into the parking spaces outside the cell room doors, unlocking the car, Tom got into the driver’s seat, unlocking the passenger door for Ben. “Is everything OK, Sir?” he asked looking at his bosses face.

“No Jones, no I don’t think it is”

“Sir?”

“About an hour and a half ago, Spellman sent Josie back to your house.”

“On her own?”

“In a marked police car” Tom swore as they hit late afternoon traffic, “I don’t think any of us is seeing the full picture Jones. According to Josie’s statement to Spellman Mrs DiAngelo was employed as the Nursery Nurse at the house, till about 15 years ago.”

“But Derrick only had one daughter didn’t he? And she’s about 20 years older than Josie?”

“15 years yes” Tom clarified, “So why was there still a Nursery Nurse 15 years ago?”

“Maybe Josie got it wrong, or Spellman?”

“Maybe, or maybe there was some need for her?” Tom fished his mobile from his pocket, “Phone Josie, tell her we’re on our way to her, and not to answer the door to anybody else.”

Ben dialled the number and put the phone to his ear, he heard it ring and ring, until he was put through the her cheerful voice on the answering service, leaving a message, he dialled his home number. It was engaged.
“Maybe she’s on the other line?” Ben suggested but was worried by the hum from his boss. “But you don’t think she is?”

Tom didn’t say anything else, but after a few moments they pulled up outside Ben’s home, and the first thing the 2 men noticed, was the wide open front door. Ben was out of the door, and sprinting up the stairs before Tom had finished parking the car, calling Josie’s name, he ran through the mess of his home, noting the swinging off the hook phone, and into the bedroom. Tom in the meantime, took out his phone and rang through to the station for some help, ending at the top of the stairs out of breath.

Ben opened his wardrobe, and fighting through his shirts, swore when he saw the attic hatch was undisturbed, he opened it anyway, shouting for Josie, but knowing he would get no answer. He returned out of the wardrobe, to face Tom who was looking as frantic as he felt.

“There’s signs of a struggle in the living room, there is a bag of shopping scattered across the kitchen as well” he told Ben, “And no sign of her?”

“No” he shook his head, “Who would have taken her, not just killed her here?”

“I’m hoping someone who doesn’t actually want to kill her”

Tom and Ben waited by the car for forensics and uniform to arrive, standing shuffling their feet, Tom phoned Joyce and Cully, just to ensure that Josie didn’t turn up at either house safe and well. After a few minute, police sirens arrived and Tom turned to Ben.

“Did you have a pre-arranged meeting place? Somewhere to hide if anything happened to either of you?” Tom asked.

“Yes, but she isn’t there.” Ben told him

“The attic?” Tom asked

“Yes there is a little hatch, and a set of steps, but nobody had been up there.” Ben swallowed “I don’t suppose she had time to hide, or run.”

“But she did try and call someone” Tom told him “I wonder if she let somebody in, they made a grab for her, she ran upstairs, tried to call 999 but was overpowered?”

Ben went green, “Do you have any idea who?”

“No Jones I don’t” then he thought for a moment, “They won’t need us for a bit come on” and he ushered the DS into his car.

Driving through the Midsomer countryside Tom’s mind wandered slightly, taking the turn towards Midsomer Worthy, he crossed the place where he’d nearly run over a tiny child 20 years before. Turning to his stricken Sergeant a thought occurred to him.

“Why did she marry Derrick?” He asked Jones.

“I don’t know, because she loved him? Did you never wonder yourselves?”

“Mrs Barnaby thought she must have been pregnant, and hadn’t wanted to tell us. It was all a bit rushed” he thought for a moment, “she was doing some research into the woods, I think trying to find out where she’d come from, and of course Derrick owned most of them.” He drummed his fingers on the steering wheel, “I think they got on, neither of them knew they’re real parents, he took her out to dinner a few times, and the next thing we know, he’d proposed.”
“Derrick didn’t know his parents either?” Jones asked

“No, he was left the house by some distant relative, he’d been a penniless orphan apparently, and one day he was collected from his orphanage by a solicitor and brought here” Tom finished his sentence as they pulled up outside The Maples.

“Sir you need to know something” Jones started “Derrick wasn’t a gentle man to her” Tom stopped and stared “I don’t actually know a lot about their relationship, but what I do, I really don’t like.”

“You think he hit her?” Tom asked

“I think he controlled her, and I think he abused her” Ben coughed “She hadn’t been in a relationship before, and I don’t think this was a safe place to start.”

“Look Ben I know this is really tricky and embarrassing but for God’s sake what do you mean?”

Ben kicked the gravel, and in a factual voice closing his eye to block out Tom’s face he told his lovers Father, the conversation they’d had in bed, about Derrick’s desire on her, and about her desperate need to please, and when he’d finished, bright pink to his ears, he drew a deep breath and looked at his boss.

“When I find her, and we are all at home and safe, we’re both going to forget we ever had this conversation is that OK Ben?”

“Perfectly Sir” Ben breathed out, “Why are we here?”

“Because I think, sadly, this is where it all started.” He was interrupted by his phone, and after a series of yes’s and hums, he hung up. “Marianne Keene, left Midsomer Worthy in 1978 aged 13 with her mother Sadie, she returned in 1991 aged 26. She got a job in Midsomer Worthy worked there for a few months, then in 1993 whilst 6 months pregnant by an unknown father she moved to Spain. She has a son, Adam who is now 18.”

“Where is she now?” Be asked

“Just over a week ago Marianne and Adam flew into Luton Airport, from Malaga.” Tom looked at Ben, waving his phone “What do you think the chances are that they are in Midsomer?”

“What happened to the first Mrs Keene?” Ben asked ignoring the creeping cold in his stomach “Did she ever return?”

“Derrick divorced her in absence in 1984, and she was declared legally dead in 1988” Tom told him.

“Three years before Marianne’s “return?”

“Yes Jones, but do you know what else?” Tom asked, his brain whirring in horrible clarity. “1991 is when I found Josie, just under a mile from this spot.” They walked into the cold darkened house, their footsteps echoing as they walked through the hall, “The cook and cleaners were told not to come back this week, so the house should be empty” Tom explained looking up at the large baronial pictures in a hallway he realised he’d not really looked at before, he stared at one particular picture, of a blonde well-built woman with piercing giant blue eyes.

“Sir?” Jones called “If the house is empty?”

“Then why can I smell frying bacon?” Tom finished quietly, but before they turned toward the kitchen he called to Ben, “look at this picture.”

Ben came over and stood by Tom, “It’s Josie?”
“No it’s not” Tom pointed to a date a century before, “but the resemblance is remarkable”

“What’s she standing in front of?” Ben pointed to a black dome in the back of the picture, but before Tom could answer footsteps disturbed them, he swung around to see a youth coming out from under the stairs where the kitchens were housed. The boy took one look at the two men, dropped the bacon sandwich he was biting into, and ran out of the front door.

“Stop, police” Ben and Tom shouted in unison, Ben darting out after the boy as quickly as possible, and Tom following at a jog. Ben caught up with the boy about halfway across the lawn, tackling him to the ground, and rolling him over. Had he not been kneeling astride the boy, he’d have let him go instantly, as he looked into his face. Other than the short cropped hair, and the stubble on his chin, he was looking at the twin of his lover. The same eyes, complexion, shape of face, the delicate cupid bow lips and sharp cheek bones. Luckily as Ben shrieked in surprise, Tom came up behind him breathless.

“Adam Keene?” he asked, and as the boy nodded “You are under arrest for the murders of your father Derrick Keene, Mrs Violet DiAngelo, and the attempted murder and abduction of your sister Sgt Josie Keene, you do not have to say anything but anything you do say may be used in evidence, do you understand?”

The boy nodded and added “My Mum knows where I am”

“I’m sure she does lad, but where is your Mum?”

“Not telling, and you’ll never find her” The boy told him definitely

“Jone’s take him to the car, cuff him, phone the station and wait until uniform arrives.” Tom told the DS.

“Sir?”

“I’ll explain in a bit, but when they arrive, you see the path into the woods?” Jones nodded and Tom continued “follow it till you come to that dome from the picture.”

Jones marched the boy off, and Tom followed the windy little path into the edge of Setwale woods, Valerian he thought, to himself, the plant which gave the woods their name. A powerful sedative, if you’d spent your formative years in this wood, you’d know how to prepare it, and drug a brandy bottle with enough to harm not kill. What if you’d spent those years, being told that the preservation of your beautiful blue eyed blonde family was of vital importance, and you’d go to unthinkable means to protect that, and that protection in itself became a secret. What if something went wrong with your plan, how far would you go to cover it up, to ensure that life continued, that you’re family continued.

He shivered slightly, and his sudden cold had very little to do with the deep woods, or the river fed lake he now knew must be close by. They’d tried to bring Josie up the same as Cully, but the girl had never been quite as confident or outgoing. He’d been pleased when she’d joined the Met on the fast track, straight out of University, it was a similar route to the one he’d taken, and she’d been happy and career driven. Quickly making Sergeant, of course she’d been hurt in the line of duty, and requested a return to Causton. However that had just made Joyce happy, with Cully off exploring the world to have a daughter at home, had been comforting.

Tom thought he should have noticed she wasn’t as outgoing as other young officers, but he assumed she was trying to be dedicated and make him proud. He knew she had been working on her Inspector exams, and then she’d become obsessed with Midsomer Worthy and Setwale woods. Joyce had told him it was fine and healthy. Then she met Derrick, and everything went so fast, and suddenly she was gone, living here in this massive house, and then Cully got married and with a wave of guilt, he realised he hadn’t actually thought about whether she was happy or safe. In recent weeks, he’d been more worried, the awful diagnosis, but even then, she was rich and well cared for, or so he thought.
He cursed when he realised that in his internal monologue, he’d lost the path somewhat, and looked around, hearing the distant sound of police sirens he felt more confident, knowing Ben would follow his instructions to the letter, he stepped out more confidently, spotting the mossy black dome he’d been looking for since he’d seen the picture, creeping towards it, he heard footsteps along the path, holding his breath, he stepped into the undergrowth and watched. The footsteps got closer, till the stopped just in front of him. Tom couldn’t see so he moved ever so slightly, startling the other person, he fell backwards into the undergrowth.

“Ben?” He asked, emerging fully

“Sir?” Ben asked, standing up and brushing himself down “You made me jump! Uniform is here and they’ve taken the boy into custody.” He stopped and looked round, “He didn’t say a word to me, not a thing, it’ creepy”

“Yes they do that.” Tom said quietly pointing to the dome, and creeping towards it.

“Who?”

“The children, I don’t think they’re allowed to talk, I think it’s some kind of rule”

“Sir do you think that it’s some kind of cult thing?”

“I honestly don’t know, it’s creepy and at the moment I’m worried about Josie, and I think we should have waited for uniform.”

“You think she’s in there?” Ben asked and when Tom nodded he ran over to the large metal door, punching the large padlock with his fist, Tom came up behind him, pulling him gently away. “What is this thing anyway?”

“It’s an ice house, all big house had them at one time, hidden away somewhere cold, fed by a river or lake, they can be as deep as a mine shaft.” Tom explained, looking at the door.

Ben looked at him a trace of fear passing over his face “What’s behind the door?”

“Hopefully a series of steps, or a ramp to the bottom, usually with a round chamber where they would store picks and sometimes little sledges, and then a tunnel, or sometimes” he swallowed and looked at Ben “just a huge drop”.

Vomit rose in Bens throat, and he looked on the floor, Tom thought his DS might faint, but the next moment he had picked up a huge rock, and smashed at the lock viciously. Tom stood back, as the lock snapped, and fell heavily backwards. Stunned he watched in horror as a tall blonde woman stepped out of the undergrowth and cracked Ben on the head with a tree branch. The DS fell to his side, blood blooming from his temple.

Tom was up and grabbing at the woman before she could swing at Ben again, he heard crashing through the undergrowth, so shouted “Marianne Keene you are under arrest for the assault of Detective Sergeant Ben Jones, the kidnap and attempted murder of Sergeant Josephine Keene, and”

“That’s not her name Copper” The woman who was now bucking at him screamed

At that moment, three uniformed constables ran into the small clearing, and-prizing Tom away from the woman cuffing her, and Tom dropped beside Ben.

“You OK there Sergeant?”

“Never better Sir” Ben croaked, wiping his hand across his head, he laughed at the blood. Scrabbling upright, with the help of his boss he stumbled towards the locked door, removing the remains of the lock, he
yanked at the metal door. It slid open easily, but they both withdrew from the smell of rotted things, and damp, the fumes of which were almost tangible, came out in a wave, and the darkness was oppressive. Tom reached behind him, and grabbed the flashlight from the closest uniformed officer.

Following the walls with the light, and then the floor both men breathed in relief when they saw solid steps and a small ramp. Stepping into the darkness Ben called Josie’s name, his voice echoing around the walls. Tom pointed the lights on the steps in front of Ben, and three steps down, came to rest on a hunched figure. A wave of de ja vu ran through Tom, but Ben was already slipping down the steps, and gathering the girl into his arms, her eyes fluttered up at him, and he saw a nasty cut almost twinning with his across her temple.

“Ben?” she asked in a whisper

“Yeah it’s OK I’m, here.” Ben told her, wanting to drag her up the stairs, but finding her difficult to lift.

Tom walked down the steps, pooling them in more light, her big blue eyes stared up at him, and 20 years vanished. “Are you OK sweetie?” He asked, reaching out, he pushed her hair from her face and looked at the cut, “Do you think you could walk, because I don’t think Ben can carry you at this angle.”

She didn’t move or make a sound, so Ben lifted her and took one side, while Tom took the other. As they reached the woods at the top of the steps, she looked up at Marianne Keene and screamed in terror, a noise so loud, that the Constable holding the woman stepped back letting her go, and the older woman lunged at the younger.

“Give her back” the older woman shrieked, “she’s mine she’s mine GIVE HER BACK”

Josie struggled backwards, pushing into Ben’s chest, “It’s OK Josie, it’s OK you’re safe” Ben told her as the two other constables, grabbed the woman, and dragged her away.

“That’s not her name bastard” the woman shrieked and Tom calmly asked the woman

“What’s her name then?” he was curious.

“Eve” the woman choked “she’s my baby, and her name is Eve.”

“Adam and Eve?” Tom asked

“The first children” Marianne explained as if it was the simplest thing ever.

Tom followed as the Constables led the shrieking Marianne away, leaving Ben and Josie standing hugging in the woods. They didn’t move for a long time, until Forensics and other officers carrying lights and equipment disturbed them. As one of the uniformed Sergeants, came up and gently suggested they went to Causton General, Ben suddenly remembered they were both covered in blood, and he no idea what Josie had been through.

“Josie come on, we’ve got to move” his whispered gently to her, but this time her vision cleared somewhat.

“Ben” she croaked her voice hoarse and cracked “I don’t think I want to be Sergeant Keene anymore, do you think they’d let me be Sergeant Barnaby again?”

“What about Sergeant Jones?” he suggested as they stumbled through the trees, back to the house.

While Ben and Josie were taken to Causton General, Tom and PC Perrin interviewed Marianne Keene.

“Josie and Adam have the same Father?” Tom asked gently as he could manage
“Her name is not Josie, it’s EVE!” Marianne spat

“Ok, Eve and Adam have the same Father?” he clarified

“Yes!”

“OK, was that man Derrick Keene?” Tom asked

“Of course, I wouldn’t upset the bloodline by sleeping with anyone else.” She told him.

“And what happened to your mother?”

“She died” Marianne shuffled “She couldn’t produce a correct child”

At this point Marianne’s solicitor Ms Somer’s swallowed hard, and advised her client not to say anything else.

“What do you mean by that?” Tom pushed

“She kept producing dead children, so Daddy tried with me instead.”

“Did your Father kill your mother?” Tom asked

“She was weak, so he strangled her she’d produced a half dead child again, and he said, we should kill them both now, and the we put them in the chamber with the others.”

“But you went into the chamber as well?” Tom asked, causing Ms Somer’s to warn her client not to say anything again.

“Only for a little while” Marianne told him “I didn’t do it right at first, and our first few children died as well, so Daddy kept me in the chamber, and then I had Eve.”

“Did your Dad let you out after Eve was born?” Tom asked

“Yes I lived in Daddy’s room, but Eve and the other children stayed in the Chamber.”

“Why?”

“Mrs DiAngelo, told Daddy that if he didn’t want the children taken away like he and Mother had been, we had to keep them hidden, so when it was time to have another baby I’d go to the chamber, and Mrs DiAngelo would arrange everything there.”

“What happened when Eve ran away?” Tom asked

“And what happened to the other children?” PC Perrin added

“The chamber flooded, some of the children didn’t survive like Eve did, she would try and look after the others, but sometimes they didn’t walk or were really little, and one day the chamber flooded and the others died, and Mrs DiAngelo went down to the chamber, with towels and blankets, but there was just Eve, and the water was so high she was sitting at the top of the steps, so when the door opened Mrs DiAngelo took her out, to dry her off, but she just ran into the woods, and we didn’t see her again.”

“And what about Adam?” PC Perrin asked as Tom looked distinctly green.

“After the others died, Daddy and I tried again, but when I fell pregnant with Adam, Daddy sent me away, he thought it was for the best.” She looked so sad, “Adam and I followed Daddy’s rules, and when Adam was old enough, we tried to make more babies, but it only worked once and the baby was so tiny, I had to
“Throw it away.”

“What about Eve?” Tom asked

“Daddy phoned me to say she’d come back to the house, looking for the family, and we could be a family again.”

“Your Father didn’t tell her who she was?” PC Perrin asked

“No” Marianne looked disgusted “She thought her name was Josephine, and she was a policewoman, and Daddy thought she’d run away again if she knew, so he told me he’d marry her and then she couldn’t run again.”

“And your father tried to make more children with her?” PC Perrin asked Causing Ms Somers and Tom to look sharply at her, and then at Marianne.

“No, he was going to, but then he thought it would work better with Adam.”

“So what happened?” Tom asked

“He thought we could play it nicely and slowly, and then Daddy got ill.” Marianne looked down and shuffled her feet. “I thought we could take her to the Chamber, and Adam could meet her anyway, and Daddy would be pleased.”

“But that’s not what happened?” PC Perrin asked

“Daddy phoned me, and said Eve had taken a lover, and it wasn’t going to work and we should be happy that we had Adam and Eve.”

“So you killed him?” Tom asked

And although Ms Somer’s warned Marianne she continued “I drugged Eve, thinking we could take her to the Chamber and Daddy would be pleased, but Daddy was angry, he asked me what if she was pregnant already, what about the boyfriend he’d want to know where she’d gone, so Adam stabbed him for me, but he was screaming and Mrs DiAngelo was coming up the drive, so we ran into the woods.”

“Mrs DiAngelo saw you murder Derrick Keene?” PC Perrin asked

“Yes, so we went back and killed her as well.”

“What about today? What about taking Eve back to the Chamber?”

“I got Adam to wait near the hospital, so that we knew when she came out, and we followed her to that man’s house.” Marianne smiled “Then later she came back alone so we took her then.”

Tom sat through the rest of the interview, quiet and nauseas, the details of inter-generational incest, and a strange belief apparently starting with Josie’s Grandparents or maybe that should be great grandparents that they were some kind of higher being. He briefly rested on he thought of what Joyce was going to say, and then on Josie herself, what she was going to say or think. Eventually having charged and remanded both Adam and Marianne, and after a tricky conversation with Joyce. Tom drove to Causton General, walking through A&E he was directed to a triage bed outside Resus, usual kept for slightly harmed coppers. Ben had been checked over and had his head stitched, but Josie sat on the bed waiting for a CT.

“She can’t remember anything after she opened the door to that woman” Ben whispered “She opened the door, recognised Marianne Keene, started to let her in, but the boy attacked her instead, she ran to the phone, but got quite a whack on the head, so they’re going to check her for permanent damage.”
“I’m in pain, Ben” Josie chided “not deaf or stupid”

When they took Josie away for her scan, Tom and Ben took a seat in the waiting room Tom caught Ben up on Josie’s family history. There were points when the DS looked like he was going to vomit and times when he just wanted to punch someone.

“Had that boy?” Tom asked gently, leaving the question in the air.

“No, no the nurses checked apparently, she screamed the place down as they did though.” He smiled stiffly.

“What are you going to do?” Tom asked, and then at Ben’s look he added “Nobody would blame you if you wanted to run a mile? It’s a lot to handle”

“Sir, do you really think that little of me?” Ben sounded hurt, “I love her very much, I was going to ask if you’d be upset if I asked her to move in with me?’’

“OK, I’m proud of you Ben” Tom said, shaking his hand

Ben smiled widely, “Thanks Tom.”

“I think we covered that already.” Tom told him harshly.

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