Inspector Barnaby Mystery New Beginnings by Snoopadoop

**Summary:** Inspector Barnaby Mystery New Beginnings

Ben and Josie are trying to rebuild their lives, but Midsomer has a way of making the simplest things difficult. When you're trying to organise a wedding, it makes it almost impossible.

**Rating:** FRM - Mature

**Fandoms:** Midsomer Murders, Television

**Characters:** ensemble

**Genres:** General

**Tags:** Drama, Event - Wedding, Kink - Public Nudity, Nudity, Relationship - Established Romance, Romance, Sexual Relationship - Graphic, Violence - Mild

**Challenges:** None

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The pub was full and busy, but the far end was much quieter, the men sitting around the large table spoke in hushed voices interrupted by sharps laughs. They were blocked out from the rest of the customers by a half section wall, and the reason for this became evident after a rather loud a raucous laugh, when 4 month old Baby Thomas Dixon decided they were being far to loud and from his baby carrier in the centre of the table he gave a loud shout and wriggled kicking off his blanket. His father Simon rocked him slightly and he settled immediately, safe and secure surrounded by his “Uncles”. DCI John Barnaby, DI Gavin Troy, DS Ben Jones and PC Tim Carlton sat with Ben's friends Andy and Dave from the garage and Simon and Thomas, celebrating Ben's last night as a single man. In the morning he would marry Thomas's Aunt Inspector Josephine Barnaby.

"Why are we babysitting Simon?" PC Carlton asked

"The girls are doing Jell-O shots and Tom offered to finish the paperwork." John explained, keeping his voice low.

"Jell-O shots?" Ben asked

"Not the first time they've done that" Gavin explained "Cully and Josie used to do Vodka jelly all the time."

"I didn't know Cully drank vodka?" Simon asked "we haven't any at home."

"I'm guessing they weren't adults?" Ben asked, taking a swig of beer.

"Oh definitely not" Gavin took a massive swig of bitter and laughed "first time I know of, Cully was about 15, so Josie was 13 or so. Tom and Joyce had gone out for the evening; I think it was Shakespeare or something, and Cully's evil little friend Hayley came round." At the name Hayley, Ben shook, that girl scared the crap out of him, and she was serving a long term for blackmail, "she brought Vodka and Jelly, and as far as I understand explained to the girls the concept of Jell-O Shots. I got the call from Josie saying Cully had passed out and been sick, and Hayley had run off and she didn't know what to do."

"Oh GOD!" Simon exclaimed "What happened?"
Gavin made a very unmanly giggle "nothing, she was asleep, passed out fell asleep, I got there, properly worried found Josie bouncing and crying and Cully fast asleep." He giggled again "I was scared shitless Tom would come home, find me there with his daughters both pissed, one asleep, the other frankly hyper, and punch me or fire me or both. I carried Cully to bed, made Josie drink about a litre of water, sent her to bed and had to tidy the whole bloody house, before Tom and Joyce came home, and do you know what?"

"Tom came in and thanked you the next morning?" John asked

"Yeah, exactly, I was so bloody careful trying to clean up and he still knew" Gavin said giggling again

"I know I know" Ben said suddenly banging the table

"Jones?" John asked

"I know what you did wrong Gavin, Sir" Ben said waving his hand excitedly "He did to well"

"He did to well" John agreed soberly.

"So go on Super Gavin" Simon ribbed "What else did our girls do?"

Gavin took another pull of his beer, "Oh far too much, I started working with Tom in 1993, Cully was 14, and Josie was 12. I mean I love them they're great and Tom and Joyce, but you know what it's like the boss treats you like a puppy, and the girls well they saw me as their personal hero."

"But they were good girls?" John said "Tom's always been very proud of them."

"Oh God they were terrors" Gavin said laughing "Once Cully must have been about 16, Josie about 14 I got a call from some WPC she'd found them in the park, giggling their arses off, Cully would only give them my name. Turns out they'd bought some weed of a lad on the Moorfield Estate, smoked it all in one massive amount in the park in Causton. It was about midnight, and they'd told Tom they were staying over with some friends, so I had to take them back to mine. Two stoned teenage girls in my flat, absolute nightmare." He laughed "I thought they could sleep in my bed, I could sleep on the sofa, send them home in the morning. But no, because what I hadn't bargained on was 3am the munchies happening, and them demanding food, and entertainment in increasingly louder voices."

"What did you do?" Ben asked

"Took them to McDonalds" Gavin laughed "when they sobered up, they apologised, and Cully called me Super-Gavin."

The laughter around the table disturbed baby Thomas again, and this time he made a pitiful little cry. "So they really were naughty, just Tom never found out?" Simon asked, rocking the baby back and forth. Gavin nodded grinning at the table, causing another eruption of laughter.

Ben looked across the table and shook his head, "You know I'm having a hard time believing any of this?"

Three Months Earlier

"You know I'm having a hard time believing any of this" Ben told her staring at her pale naked body in the dim light of his living room. "I can't believe you're here, I certainly can't believe you're naked."

"I'm not naked" Josie interrupted, "I have my boots on, I'm not daft, I'm not going to walk across Causton in bare feet" she smiled at him, and he felt himself smile back.
"Yes, that's the one thing that's convincing me this isn't some desperate drunken dream, I don't think I'd have imagined you in Police Issue Boots?" He continued to stare, before looking up into her face, "You walked from Causton Green dressed like that?"

"Of course, I walked to throw myself prostrate at your feet." She looked down the perpetual frown she'd worn since she'd met William Morrison, back in evidence.

Ben walked towards her, suddenly aware of how unsteady he was on his feet, he was more drunk than he'd imagined. He gently tipped her chin upwards so she was looking back at him again. "I think it's me who should be doing the apologising isn't it?" he kissed her lightly on the lips, brushing her cheek with his hand. "I meant it before though, I've been drinking, a lot, I wouldn't hold it against you if you left now, and we try again tomorrow. We don't have to do this now; we don't have to decide to rebuild our relationship here and now."

She removed the rest of her raincoat, letting it fall to the floor in a puddle around her, "Do I look indecisive Ben?" she asked stepping closer closing the small gap between them, so she now stood pressed against him, "do I look like I came here on the off chance you were willing to rekindle our relationship?" she placed her thin arms around his neck and he felt a small pinch where the diamond engagement ring on her left hand ran across the skin at the nape of his neck.

"No" he murmured as their mouths met once more, this time she opened her lips and he ran his tongue along her bottom lip. "No you don't, you look amazing" he murmured and pushed his tongue further into her mouth, feeling her respond to him, he placed an arm around her waist pulling her closer to him, his other hand making its way to the back of her head, cradling it as he deepened the kiss. He felt her fight slightly and he pulled away sharply, "Sorry are you OK?" he asked quickly.

"Yes" she giggled "Sorry, I'm so sorry, is there any chance I could take these boots off, it's just I feel ridiculous and all I keep thinking is I'm wearing these massive boots, I should have worn high heels or taken them off before I knocked on the door, but it's cold and wet outside and…"

He interrupted her nervous ramblings by kissing her again, quickly and sharply, then running a warm soft hand down her cool flesh, kneeling by her feet, he started to undo her boots. "I'll fall at your feet" he told her "I'll fall at your feet and beg you to take a very foolish man back, I will kneel here and apologise and kiss your feet and tell you I love you." He gently removed one of her boots, and the thick sock underneath, and started on the other boot. "I have been a complete fool, and I can't believe you would want someone like me, but if you'll have me, I'll come back crawling on my knees." He removed the other boot and sock, and she stood in front of him naked. "And if this is some dream or fantasy when I wake up that's exactly what I'm going to do."

"Ben I'm real, I love you, I'm sorry I hurt you" she knelt down beside him, cupping his face in her hands "I miss you so much, can we go back to how things were? Will you come home?"

He took her hands and held them nuzzling her neck while he squeezed them, "If you want me, I will be there" he let go of her hands, and she sat back on the floor "are you staying with me tonight?" he asked neither of them in any doubt to what he meant, she nodded looking into his eyes, laying her head and body back.

He followed her, kissing her stomach and chest and breasts as he crawled over her "Ben, be gentle" she moaned as he ran his tongue from the cleft between her breasts to the hollow of her throat.

"Come to the bedroom, you'll be comfier and warmer" he told her helping her to her feet. "You feel freezing." He wrapped his arms around her and then as she started giggling again, he lifted her into the air.
"Ben!" she shrieked "what are you doing?"

"Carrying you over the threshold of course?"

Three months later

"So you're definitely going straight off on honeymoon" Joyce Barnaby asked her youngest daughter, "he's not going to carry you over the threshold first?"

"No" Josie said blushing brightly, "he's already done that, more than once" she fell into a fit of giggles and leant heavily on her sisters shoulder.

They were at on the carpet in the middle of the Barnaby's living room, Josie, Cully, Joyce, John's wife Sarah and DC Gail Stephens. Josie had requested a gentle, low key evening, some wine and snacks and just a few of them to keep her company and stop her nerves getting the better of her.

"Soooo" Cully said ribbing her "Have you told him?"

"NO!" Josie shouted shrilly batting at her sister, "not till tomorrow night, we decided!"

"What's this?" Sarah asked drinking deeply from her glass.

"Nothing, nothing at all" Josie mumbled

"Is this why you're not drinking?" Gail asked smiling. The detective part of her brain kicking in.

"Oh Darling REALLY?" Joyce asked

"Yes, but she hasn't told Ben" Cully said laughing

"Why not?" Sarah, Joyce and Gail asked at once.

Josie smiled bitterly, she'd been through this over and over with Cully, but she knew she was in the right. Poor Ben had the right to choose whether he wanted to marry her or not, he had the right to say no, to walk away. She didn't want to take that choice away from him, not when they were still recovering their relationship. Cully thought Ben would be more upset she hadn't told him straight away, but the truth was that before a few moments ago the only people who knew outside medical staff was Cully.

"She thinks that if Ben knew she was pregnant, he'd feel obligated to marry her." Cully supplied

"But he's marrying you tomorrow, without knowing; because he wants to marry you" Sarah told her "I don't understand?"

Josie swallowed "When we, when we were, when we were apart, split up whatever. I thought he couldn't, wouldn't ever want me again and that's why he'd left. He thought I didn't need him or want him and thought it would be easier if he left. I wasn't fair, I didn't give him a choice and I feel guilty. If he wants to change his mind, I have to let him." She gave a little half sob, "I don't want him to think I trapped him into this."

Three months earlier

Ben carefully laid her on the mattress, swaying slightly as he did so; to have her in his arms giggling was amazing. He's missed this, he'd missed her so much, and she'd come to him, and now she was lying here
naked in his arms. His head felt swirly, "I love you Jose" he said kneeling on the bed beside her.

"How drunk are you Ben?" she asked, propping herself up as he started fighting with his clothes.

"Erm, a lot?" he said smiling goofily, he laughed, and waved his arms sideways "a little help may be needed?"

She laughed, "no Ben this isn't fair, when you're sober you might regret this, you said yourself this isn't something we need to do tonight."

He kissed her hard pulling his shirt off, and lying beside her. "I love you" he whispered running his hand over her, "I won't regret this I promise" He brought his head down and kissed her, she ran her hands through his hair, relaxing to his familiar touch. She sighed as he stripped his trousers and boxer shorts off, manoeuvring himself around her, and claiming her lips again. "I've missed you so much."

He moved between her thighs and she lay back, happy to be in his arms again, "I've missed you too, I love you" he pushed himself inside her and she moaned his name.

"You are amazing" he repeated over and over thrusting into her, running his hands over her soft body. She called his name, throwing her head back, raising her hands above her head as he kissed her breasts sucking each sensitive nipple into his hot mouth. She mewled and keened and clamped her muscles as she started to come. As she stiffened under him, and felt her muscle clamp he thrust hard forward coming hard deep inside her, he called her name, and she saw through partially closed eyelashes his eyes become glazed.

"Ben?" she whispered

"Hmmm" he moaned stilling inside her

"I love you" he bent his head towards her, kissing her as he moved from her body and laid beside her "Are you OK?" he asked sleepily, opening his arms to let her crawl into them.

"Yes, of course, are you OK?" she asked, but heard his soft snore and smiled, curling up into him her hand over his chest, she pulled his thin duvet over them both, and fell into an easy sleep in his arms.

Three Months Later

"Are you OK mate?" Gavin asked Ben, nudging him slightly with his arm, "You dozing off there?"

"Hmmm, yeah, been a long week" Ben told him smiling, "I'm getting married tomorrow" he said his smile widening.

"Can't believe you worked the last week" Andy told him laughing, "you sure your boss will let you go on honeymoon?"

"After the week he's given us he should be paying for it" Ben laughed "Can you imagine, excuse me Sir can you pay for two weeks honeymoon so I can do very bad things to your daughter?"

The table erupted into laughter again, before Dave banged lightly on the table, careful not to disturb the baby, "so are the whole family coppers then?" he asked looking around the table, he waved and John, and Gavin.

"No just Tom, Josie and I" John explained, "Tom and I's uncle was a Detective with the Met, we followed his footsteps."
"Policing isn't genetic" Gavin said laughing, "as I'm sure Simon will be grateful to hear."

"Although the Barnaby's seem to think it is" Simon laughed, and then realizing what he said placed his hand in front of his mouth, "Oh God Ben I'm sorry I wasn't thinking."

"It's OK, I forget as well" Ben told him

"So does Tom" Gavin told them, "all the time, he's forever forgetting."

"I always assumed that was because he really was?" John told them, receiving shock from most and confusion from Andy and Dave.

"Josie isn't biologically related to the family, she is my boss's foster daughter" Ben told the mechanic's, and they nodded their understanding.

"The thing is she is so like the rest of the family, I'd always assumed she must be Tom's, and he was keeping it quiet for Joyce's sake" John explained.

"She does look like Cully" Simon added

"Yeah but Cully looks like Joyce" Gavin explained "Tell you what though Josie has her Dad's scowl down to a T"

"Oh GOD yes" Tim exclaimed "That look is terrifying; I couldn't marry her knowing she might give me that look!"

Ben laughed "When does she give you that look?" he asked "I mean me yeah, Gavin I can imagine, but surely not you Tim."

"Oh I get that look all the time" the Constable said "If I crunch the gears, if I sing off key, the day I hit the badger."

"Oh yeah Tom used to give me that look for my driving all the time" Gavin said sympathetically patting the younger man's shoulder.

"Anyway, you spent 20 years thinking you're Cousin had an illegitimate daughter he was making his wife raise?" Ben asked John.

"Oh yes, and unless somebody has gone around informing the family, I imagine most of the Barnaby's still do." He explained

"Why?" Ben asked "Tom is the straightest person I now, tap him and he rings true" he snorted quoting the boss directly.

"Oh I know this" Gavin explained "I mean I joined CID about a year or so afterwards, but they still talked about it then. He phones the station one night, out of the blue and tells them he's found this little girl in the middle of nowhere, and then nobody can find anything about her, it's like she fell from heaven or something, and then next thing they know, she's gone to live with them." He waved an arm about, "I think most of the station thought the same thing."

"Cully and Josie thought that was the most likely scenario as well." Simon added
"Poor Tom" Ben said "he must have doubted himself."

Three Months Earlier

Ben woke feeling sluggish and sick; he put a hand to his head and felt the hot clammy flesh. He opened an eye realising he was in his own bed that was good, unusual but good. He knew he must have drunk an awful lot, because he couldn't remember a thing, he wasn't sure the last thing he remembered, possibly sitting at his desk, thinking he'd have to go home. He was probing his memory thus when he realized his left arm had gone numb, he tried to move it experimentally when he realised it wasn't numb at all, a warm soft body lay on it.

He groaned quietly, how drunk must he have been to end up in bed with someone, with no recollection of it. He probed his memory a bit deeper; he remembered the rain, and the cold body. He thought he could remember a naked body under a raincoat. He groaned again, he really was a mess, had he picked up one of Causton's few prostitutes, had he been that drunk and stupid. He rolled slightly over, noting the blonde hair, and the naked body facing away from him, the thin frame tucked into his side. He ran a hand experimentally down the girl's side and received a light moan in response; she woke and turned towards him. His apology, died in his mouth as she smiled at him.

"Josie?" he felt his body shiver slightly "What, I don't, what?"

"Ben" she murmured smiling and kissing him on the lips.

"Josie, I don't, did we, have we, are we?" He mumbled, realising he was a naked as she, and she was smiling at him.

"Ben?" she asked stroking his hair "You've forgotten haven't you?" she looked into his eyes, "sorry do I need, do you want me to go?"

"Josie I don't remember, what, you are here, why are you here?" he moved his hand away from her skin fearing her answer.

"Are you upset I'm here? Do you want me to leave?" she asked him "I came to apologise, if you don't want to, if this was a mistake I'll go."

"No!" he put his arm around her "Oh God, I wish I remembered last night, are you OK?" he swallowed "I know I was drunk, did I, did we?"

"I may have taken advantage of you" she told him kissing him on the lips, and curling back into him, "am I forgiven still?"

"Oh God yes" he kissed her hard, running his hands all over her now trembling body, "I don't remember, why don't I remember?"

She placed a hand on his chest, pushing him onto his back, and started kissing down his chest, and continuing to his groin. She engulfed his semi erect penis into her hot mouth, sucking and mouthing until it stood hard and erect. Ben closed his eyes and moaned through his nose. He couldn't believe this is how he'd woken up, his hangover forgotten, he rested his head back. All thoughts vanished, except the feeling of her teasing and sucking him. She smiled at the look on his face, her stomach still tied in knots over the previous night, and she concentrated on the job in hand. His smell, the feeling of having his most intimate parts in her mouth, the heat of his belly by her head.

He watches her through partially closed eyelashes, unbelieving that she is here, where he woke a few
moments ago believing that he may have ruined his life and career, single and drunk like all good TV detectives. Now the woman he adored was knelt between his thighs, he groaned as he started to feel himself coming, she gently wanked him as he flooded her pretty mouth with come. He groaned and dropped his head into the pillows.

"Come up here and kiss me" Ben tells her, grabbing her hand and pulling her up his body. She follows the pressure until she is kneeling astride his thighs, looking down at him. He puts his hand to her head, bringing her mouth down to his. His tongue darting into her mouth, he swirls it round tasting himself. "I've missed you" he tells her eventually "I've missed you so much."

"I've missed you too" she told him wriggling her hips and feeling him react to her. "Am I forgiven?"

"You have nothing, nothing to be forgiven for, and I think you may have forgiven me. So where does that leave us?" He asked breathing hard as he became aroused again "are we even an us?"

She wriggled her hips again, and pressed her left hand into his right making sure he can feel her engagement ring sitting there, "I'm don't want to push you into anything Ben, but if you want, if you'd like, I want to go back to where we were."

He pulled her down towards him kissing her again, she moved so that she perched above his erect manhood, he let her go quirking his head "I love you, I'm sorry, if you'll have me, will you marry me?" She settled back impaling herself on him, moaning to feel herself stretched and filled, he moaned her name.

"Of course I will" she wriggled her hips and laughed as he gasped "but only if you're sure."

The next few minutes were taken up with exploring each other's body, becoming reacquainted. She finally collapsed flushed over his trembling body. Laying her head on his chest, while he placed a careful protective hand on her head. They'd lain like this before, legs intertwined her head on his chest their free hands gripped together, but somehow this was very different.

"We're going to have to go to work" Ben said after a long while lying stroking her.

"Give me your phone" she told him, and he reached vaguely behind him, she spotted his phone lying on the floor crawling towards it, she started flicking through the menu.

"What are you up too?" he asked, she hushed him with a little wave, naked cross legged on the carpet, and she dialled and rang.

"Hullo, Sgt Angel?" she asked "Hi it's TI Barnaby, Hi yeah I'm afraid it's Ben, DS Jones, he's caught a really nasty stomach bug, he won't be in for the rest of the week, no if you could pass that on, and too TC Carlton I can't really leave him like this." She smiled at Ben, and winked, "no, no everything's fine Sergeant, yeah, home, yes Causton Green, that's where we live? Thank you Sergeant, yes see you next week."

She crawled back into Ben's arms and he kissed her forehead, "Now Inspector Barnaby that really was very naughty."

"No Sergeant that was efficient."

Three Months Later

"I still don't understand" Sarah said putting her hand on Josie's "Do you think he'll be upset?"

"No, I don't think so, in fact I think he'll be delighted" Josie shrugged "I know he'll be delighted, but he can't
think it's, he can't think I've trapped him."

"Well this has put a downer on the evening" Cully said suddenly, "Gail any ideas how we can lighten the mood?"

"erm, eh, erm Any cravings?" The DC floundered and finally asked

Joyce burst out laughing, "Oh go on then, with Cully I fancied apricots, dried apricots all the time."

"I wanted 7up with Thomas" Cully added

"Well, nothing I can put my finger on, but I would kill every last one of you for Scampi." Josie burst into laughter, "I've been eating it for lunch, poor Tim I think he thinks I've gone mad, I keep taking him to lunch and naff little pubs, just so I can have scampi."

"What about Ben?" Gail asked "hasn't he noticed?"

"If he has he hasn't said anything, and he's always so busy, he may just not have noticed."

Sarah giggled "Detectives, they never notice anything do they?"

Eleven weeks earlier

"I don't want to go back to work" Ben complained, nuzzling her neck as she looked out of the large river facing windows of their bedroom.

She couldn't agree more "No I don't want to either" she laid her head back "I feel a bit queasy"

"You probably need breakfast" Ben told her kissing her temple, "I'll go and get you some cereal" he left her to padding to the kitchen downstairs, while she watched the trees sway in the March breeze. She listened to him padding about downstairs, happily singing to himself. Before the room started to spin, and she felt her brow prickle with sweat, she threw herself off the bed, and hurried into their en-suite. She retched slightly, grabbing the sink to steady herself. Splashing water on her face, she heard him walking back up the stairs, and she returned to the bedroom.

"Ben I really feel iffy" she told him sitting on the edge of the bed.

"Is Tim coming for you?" Ben asked coming and putting a gentle hand to her temple, she nodded, "well I'll wait here till he comes for you, eat something, have a shower, and you'll feel better. It's just Monday morning blues I'm sure."

"Why are you so happy?" she asked

"First day back, to a job I love, engaged to the woman I love, I am happy." He kissed her, "I've been thinking, I don't really want to string this out again, would you object if we brought the wedding forward?"

She looked at him for a moment, and then grinned "I'm off next Saturday?" she told him.

"Well that could well be a date, but I was thinking more next month or maybe May?" he nestled her into his arms "if you're happy with that we'll see what the registry office has available, and find a hotel for the reception?"

"Oh Ben, that's a lovely idea, if you're sure?" she held is hand close to her chest "it's not too fast for you?"
"Tomorrow wouldn't be too fast, I love you."

She went and had a shower, standing by the window naked drying her hair, water dripping of her arms as she did that. Ben changed into a suit and smiled as he watched her sway and move. He loved to watch her in these little movements and dances, when she thought he wasn't looking or thought he had left her alone. Unguarded, relaxed she was always happiest, she was a sweet girl, and the darkness of her past was etched on her face in company, when faced with other humans that look was there haunted, terrified. With him she usually showed insecurity, wonder and slightly fear. But when he made love to her, or when she thought herself alone, she was open and carefree, without fear.

All too soon she turned and faced him, at first her face was radiant and smiling, and she matched his vivid smile with her own, but then she saw her body reflected in his eyes, she realised her body was open to his gaze, her scars and wounds, her weaknesses and her past and her face fell. He still smiled, ignoring the look, letting her know she was safe, and allowed to be happy, but the moment had past, and instead she rushed to get dressed.

"I'm feeling a bit better now" she told him "if you have to go?"

"No I'm fine" he watched her dress in her uniform carefully "are you scared of me?"

She paused whilst tying her tie, "I don't fear you, I know you wouldn't, hurt me."

"but?"

"I don't want you to leave me." She said shrugging

"Can I prove I won't?" he came to her kissing her forehead "can I prove to you, that I will stay beside you forever that I will never let you go again?"

She smiled sadly and kissed his nose, "No, I don't think that will quite work."

Eleven weeks later

"So are we going back to Ben's?" Andy asked as the barman gave them another pass, glaring at baby Thomas in his carrier.

"I've got some beer?" Ben slurred, "It might not be such a bad idea?"

"Yeah aren't we all crashing there anyway?" Gavin asked "I mean Cully and Josie are staying at the Barnaby's." 

"Crash?" John asked, raising a laconic eyebrow, "I don't think I've crashed anywhere since university."

"I've gotta go home" Tim said "My Mum will worry if I stay out."

The table erupted into laughter, "You live at home lad?" Dave asked

"Yeah" Tim said "I'm only 21, can't afford a place of my own yet."

"Really?" Ben asked "I feel really sorry for you now, no wonder Josie scares you?"

"Should one of us take you home lad?" Dave asked
"No, no I'm fine" Tim explained "Erm, not quite sure how to get back to Moorfields." He giggled.

Andy wrapped a friendly arm around the young man, "come on you can phone your Mum from Ben's she'll be fine with you staying out I'm sure, you're surrounded by coppers."

The table got up as a man, stumbling over each other and scraping chairs, Simon carefully lifted the baby carrier, and they left the pub. Stumbling down the road, giggling quietly, and singing the men followed Ben down to the driveway of the Old Mill, setting off the security light, the walked across the gravel drive, and to the front door of the house. John opened the door for Ben, and the men filed in. Simon went and put Baby Thomas into the travel crib in the front guest bedroom, while Gavin walked to the now familiar kitchen and started pulling beer out of the fridge.

"Ben do you know there's a shitload of scampi in your freezer?" Gavin shouted.

8 weeks earlier

"Ma'am are you OK?" Tim asked his boss, they were sitting in their BMW interceptor in a layby just outside Causton.

"Yeah, fine" she said playing with a piece of quiche, Tim had just started seeing a girl from the vegetarian deli in the high street, and they had brought their lunch from there, "It's not scampi though is it?"

"Ma'am with respect if you eat anymore scampi, you'll explode" Tim said smiling, looking over at the driving seat, "we've had scampi every day this week, this is much healthier."

"Did Abby tell you that?" she asked him smiling.

"No Ma'am it's the wisdom that comes with age" his laugh was interrupted by static from their car radio,

"APV, officer in pursuit of suspect heading South on the Causton, Badgers Drift road, assistance required."

"That was Ben" Josie told Tim, handing over the remains of her quiche, and putting on her seatbelt.

"We're not going? It's the wrong direction?" Tim told her, putting on his own seatbelt as she started the car.

Josie switched the siren and lights on, pulling out of the layby and performing a fast U-turn, "not anymore" she told him smiling.

As they sped along the country road, Tim radioed their intention to act as interceptor, and received information about the vehicle and occupants. While Josie's body thrummed with adrenaline, she was glad she was driving, the car reacted wonderfully and the feeling of driving fast, in pursuit was a massive high. Tim in the passenger seat, now watched the road her second pair of eyes, but she noticed somewhere on a subconscious level he was now humming ride of the Valkyries.

"Ma'am" he warned as a black police jaguar became visible ahead of them on the road.

"Dad and Ben" she told him, she accelerated again, catching up with the men at the next bend, just in front of them, was a bright blue Subaru Imprezza that they're suspect was driving. "Ready?" she asked Tim who nodded. She pulled out and overtook her father at speed, smiling as Tim raised a hand of acknowledgement as Tom pulled hard to one side. As she passed Tom pulled out behind her, following at speed but slightly further behind. Looking in the mirror Josie could see other blue lights, more cars now following, but she ran Midsomer Traffic, and they would back off till she needed them.
The Subaru had spotted her much faster car, and was now making every corner count, she had speed on him, but his car was designed for rally routes and his could take less care on the bends and banks of the country road. Tim was thrown from side to side as both cars accelerated, but Josie had been trained for this, and she was still gaining. Finally they got to a section of straight road that ran past a large country estate, ending in a short hill. She could see for a good half mile ahead, and through caution to the wind, changing down she gunned the engine of the BMW, working up through the gears she added 5MPH to her speed. At the bottom of the hill she caught the Subaru, and as they started to climb, she moved sharply across, making the driver swerve into the grass and gravel verge, pulling the wheel of the BMW hard to the left she skidded to a halt in front of the other car, blocking it effectively. As her father pulled up behind, and another TC pulled to the side, the passenger door of the Imprezza opened and the occupant tried to run.

"Constable?" She shouted as they got out of the car, and Tim went from stationary to a flat run.

At the same time Tom shouted "Jones?", and the DS ran off in pursuit.

Josie yanked the driver's door of the Subaru open, pulling the driver roughly out and to his feet. Spinning him round across the bonnet of his car, she pulled his wrists behind his back and cuffed him. Quickly making the legal requirements for arrest she pushed the man at her father.

"That was rather good" he told her smiling, over the suspects head.

"It is my job?" she said

8 weeks later

Tom Barnaby pulled into his drive, noting the scattering of cars parked carefully and precisely, giving him just enough room to park on the drive, without causing a hazard to their neighbours. He wondered if his youngest daughter had been out, policing this parking schedule precisely, or if she'd arrived and made order out of the usual party parking chaos.

Parking he crept to the living room window, peering through he smiled, the women were sitting in a circle on the floor, his daughters resting with their heads propped on each other, smiling and laughing and something the fair girl with her back to him was saying. DC Stephens he realised, from the pony tail. His wife sat with her legs stretch out in front of her, her arms splayed out behind her leaning backwards, her mouth open with laughter. He wondered if he should quietly slip away, find a pub with a late license and leave the ladies to it for a bit, he was just turning when Josie's eyes focused on him.

"DAD!" she squealed waving her hand

Soon the other women had stood up, and Joyce had come to the front door.

"What are you doing out there lurking Tom?" she asked a light scolding in her amused voice.

"I wasn't, lurking, I was just observing how the party went?" Tom explained. "Have you had a good evening?"

Before Joyce could answer both Cully and Josie had run at him, wrapping they're arms around him. He put his arms out and embraced them, noticing for the first time that Josie had put on some significant weight.

"Daddy" Cully said, "Daddy guess what?"

Josie slapped at her and shushed her, but Tom chuckled.
"Is this about Josie's baby?" Tom asked

"You know?" Joyce asked sounding terribly disappointed "Josie did you tell him?"

"No Joyce she didn't tell me" Tom said wearily, leading the women back into the house, "I am a detective."

"But how did you know?" Josie asked quietly, as the other women went back to the lounge and Tom hung his suit jacket on the back bannister.

"You're sober, and you've put on weight." He told her kissing her forehead, "Are you keeping this a secret till tomorrow?"

"I was trying too" she said smiling, rubbing the swell of her stomach, "I haven't told Ben."

He nodded "You should have told me, the last week, you should have told me." He said seriously.

"Would you have treated me any differently had you known?" She asked ribbing him.

"You wouldn't have been there at all." Tom told her kissing her forehead again, and not for the first time that week, cursing a job he loved, that put the family he adored in danger.

7 weeks earlier

Ben walked into CID, patting at his gravy covered suit and skin with a wet wipe from a small pack taken from Tom's car. He wondered how an earth these things happened to him all the time, today an angry chef had tried to drown him in a vat of beef bourguignon. He'd wanted to slip home, have a shower and get changed, but Tom had insisted he went back to the office and finish his report while it was fresh in his memory.

He had just perched on his office chair, carefully removing his suit jacket, but unwilling to lean in case he left gravy stains. Flicking his computer on, he started to fill out the pro-forma, when the door behind him opened. He ignored this but the footsteps came closer, and he looked up as the officer fell heavily into the chair opposite him, usually reserved for DC Gail Stephens.

"I've brought the report of last week's arrest" Josie told him from Gail's seat, resting her heavy boots on his desk, "what happened to you?"

"Argument with a chef" Ben told her smiling, and then continued with his report, while she lay back making herself more comfortable. "Why did you bring it down, we have e-mail over here you know?"

"Bored" she said, picking up a file from Gail's desk, "And Tim was moping after his girlfriend, so I sent him to see her, I think I told him to investigate traffic flow outside the vege deli?"

Ben looked up, "It's a pedestrian street?"

"Oh yeah" she smiled "must have forgotten, oh well I'm sure he'll notice after an hour or so."

Ben laughed and then went back to his report, while she was entertained with the file; they fell into an industrious silence. After a while Ben looked up and yawned, "I spoke to the Malham Hall Hotel, they have a Saturday free in about 7 weeks, the registry office is free at the same time, so I booked them."

She smiled broadly, "Wonderful, give me the date and I'll get the invites ordered tonight." When he smiled
back at her there was an odd look in his eye, "what?" she asked.

"You really don't mind?" he asked "You don't mind that I booked our wedding, whilst out on a murder case?"

"Course not, I'm sure you'll end up working the week before the wedding anyway" she laughed "I did grow up with Tom Barnaby; you don't mind me being here do you?"

"No, not at all, I was sitting here thinking it's quite pleasant." He touched her knee with his foot. "I've got to go home after I've finished this, to get a new suit, you could come with me, we could duck out for an hour or two?"

"I would love to, but I have to see Super Intendant Cotton" she frowned, and at his worried look she smiled, "Oh it's OK, it's about this Traffic review thing I signed up to do, apparently I haven't got the level of experience of the other senior Officers, and we have to have a strategy meeting about how I can increase my practical experience before the end of the year."

He put his head in his hands "Really? Really? Jack Cotton, a man who has trouble recognising the world outside his window, is telling you, a QPM you haven't got any practical experience?"

"I know" she giggled "It's because I'm only a TI, most of them will be TCI's or TSI's, I'm hoping he'll promote me, certainly it'll be easier than passing some weird CPD he sends me on."

"Really?" Ben leant forward "Can he promote you? Doesn't he have to pass it, further up the line?"

"Hey after what, further up the line, has put me through in the recent past, Chief inspector is the least they can do." She played with her epaulets "It'll probably be a brevet position."

"Well" he said standing up "If you're not coming home with me, I'll see you a bit later Chief Inspector Barnaby" he stood and kissed her head. "If you don't mind I won't walk up the stairs with you, my gravy covered suit isn't quite top floor worthy."

7 Weeks Later

Josie turned uncomfortably in the bed, although it was a large double bed, she was used to sharing an Empress Size bed with Ben, and sharing this double with Cully was uncomfortable. She felt tired and awake happy and nervous all at once, looking at the clock she sighed, in less than 12 hours she would be married. Married to the man she adored with a baby on the way, it was everything she had wanted, she knew she should be ecstatic, but there was a bitterness behind it all. That nasty niggling doubt about Ben's true feelings about marrying her.

Cully wriggled in her sleep, and Josie watched her for a while, her sister seemed to be sleeping peacefully, but then she had drunk a lot of vodka, and had no concerns about the morning. Cully would be a very capable matron of honour, having of course performed the role before, nobody worried about that. Married to the man she adored with a baby on the way, it was everything she had wanted, she knew she should be ecstatic, but there was a bitterness behind it all. That nasty niggling doubt about Ben's true feelings about marrying her.

She stared at her wedding dress hung in its bag, the mannequin bust making it looking slightly like a corpse hanging from the wardrobe. The bag hung from its neck contained her underwear and jewellery, her shoes sat beneath it, and her veil hung down, covering where the face should be. She wondered if it was that which was giving her a weird feeling, or maybe it was the tiny person growing inside her. A thought she still
had trouble with, she had in the last couple of weeks wished she could speak to Ben about it, she hadn't asked the sex at her scan earlier in the week, she didn't want to know. In the top of the bag she was taking away with her was a wedding congratulations card to Ben, with the scan photo tucked inside. When she gave it to him, she wondered if he'd be shocked, if like her Dad he will have worked it out, whether he'd be angry, the swimmy feeling behind her eyes, made her lock them on the dress again.

The dress was very different from her first wedding dress, so different that when they had gone to the second fitting, Joyce had asked her twice was she sure. Her first dress had been long white lace and silk, strapless with long gloves. This dress was a completely different matter; Ben would wear his full Police Uniform in the morning, so she would wear her medal, and her orders of bath as part of the dress. He had been let out for her expanding stomach and breasts, but still had a tight enough waist and style that hopefully no-one would notice.

She lay with her hand resting on the swell of her stomach, tomorrow Ben would know, and they'd be married, and they'd be on honeymoon. Hopefully 2 weeks together in West Wales would be perfect, she could explain, he would be delighted, they could return and tell people. She just wished there wasn't this nagging doubt. She had put herself in danger in the last week, she had put their baby in danger, she had found out about the baby 6 weeks previously and hadn't said a word to him. She felt sick and placed the pillow over her head, the day would bring either happiness or despair, and lying in her old room, tucked into bed beside her sister there wasn't a thing she could do about it.

Six weeks earlier

The phone was ringing at 8am, that was early in the Dixon house, and the noise woke Baby Thomas. Simon had been out with the band the night before and his head banged, Cully had been at rehearsals for Trollius and Cresida and had been looking forward to a lie in. She carefully picked up the phone, as Simon rocked Thomas' crib with his foot.

"Hello, Dixon household?" she croaked

"Cully, it's Josie" the voice on the end of the phone sounded thin and ready and Cully was immediately awake.

"Hunny, what is it?" she asked urgently, making Simon sit up in bed and give her an odd look, which she waved away with her hand.

"Darling, can I come and see you?" Josie asked quickly "I'm, I'm outside?"

Cully ran to the window, and saw a marked Police BMW outside, "Jeez, Josie what's wrong? Hang on I'll let you in."

She ran down the stairs, and opened the door to her sister, standing there in her full police uniform, pale as a sheet. Cully dragged the younger woman inside the house, holding her by the arms and staring at her.

"Oh Cully, I don't know what to do?" Josie said, and then broke into sobs, lying her head on her sister's shoulder.

"Josie, sweetheart, what is the matter? You and Ben, you've not split up again surely?" she asked, cuddling her sister, and bringing her closer to the sofa.

"Oh Cully" Josie sobbed "No, but I'm pregnant."

Cully swallowed and nodded, cuddling her sister close, "Is it? Is it? Is it Ben's?" she kissed her sister's
"temple, "I know you wouldn't cheat on him, but it's not, it couldn't be from before?"

"It's Bens." Josie nodded "it's definitely Ben's."

"So why are you so upset, he'll be over the moon?" She told her, rubbing her shoulders, "he really wants kids."

"He won't think it's an accident, he'll think I did it deliberately to trap him. I came to him naked, he was drunk and I seduced him. He'll think I tricked him, forced him to marry me." She sobbed again, and Cully cuddled her close.

"What do you want to do then?" Cully asked, "I'm sure you wouldn't want to terminate?"

Josie sobbed louder "No of course not, it's Ben's, part of Ben, I couldn't harm it, I wouldn't. But I can't tell him, not yet, not till I know?"

"Know what?" Cully asked

"Know definitely that he wants to marry me, for me, not because I'm pregnant." She sniffed "will you help me, keep this secret, till after the wedding?"

"If that's what you want."

Six weeks later

Ben woke with a start, it was a few moments before he realised he'd been woken by someone walking around his bed. After the last week, his immediate thought was not pleasant, and he reached out and touched the welcome weight of his Maglite.

"Who's there?" he shouted, flicking on the light, and dazzling Andy.

"Oi!" the mechanic shouted "I'm here doing my Best Man Duties and I get the full Blue Lamp treatment!"

"Sorry mate" Ben told him, "rough week, what are you doing?"

Andy laughed, and opened the curtains "Came to wake you up, can't be late for your own wedding."

Ben sat up, "Oh I knew there was something I was supposed to be doing today?" he laughed

"Yeah well I'm not facing three DCI Barnaby's to explain why my best mates shirked out on his own wedding, so get in the shower, and then come down for the best Groom's Breakfast EVER."

"EVER?" Ben questioned "I've had your cooking!"

"Yeah but little Tim is cooking, and frankly the boy missed his calling the day he joined the police."

Ben walked downstairs half an hour later, dressed in just his suit trousers, bare footed and bare chested, to find the rogues gallery from the night before, sat around his dining table. Andy hadn't exaggerated Tim's skill, the table was laid with crisp and soft bacon, fried, scrambled and poached eggs, brown and white toast, grilled tomatoes, and grilled mushrooms.

"I thought you'd gone Veggie Tim?" Ben asked through a mouth of bacon.
"No, no not at all, Abby is a Vegan but erm, I'm not sure" he looked down, "I can't live without Bacon, I've tried!" he wailed.

John intently read the back of an Orange juice carton, Ben, Dave and Andy burst into laughing, where Simon and Gavin just shared an amused look.

"Well look we've all been there" Gavin started, blushing slightly "but you know it's often best to come clean."

"She might be desperate for bacon herself?" Simon added, carefully feeding Thomas from a bottle.

"How did you know Josie was the one?" Tim asked Ben

"Oh erm I just, well she is, I just knew" Ben fumbled, "why don't you ask Simon or John, or someone who isn't about to get married?"

"You OK mate?" Andy asked Ben, "You look a bit pale?"

"Erm, can we, could we go a bit early?" Ben asked "I erm, I don't want to be late."

4 weeks Earlier

Josie realised she was going to start showing before the wedding, 8 weeks gone and already she could see changes in her own body. Her uniform seemed snugger, and her breasts now tipped out of her bra if she wasn't careful. Her first meeting with Cottom, had ended with him tentatively suggesting she take a brevet Chief Inspector Position, to show the forces faith in her, which she had readily agreed. He had also suggested she spent some time looking into the way other departments were run, this had at first seemed fun, but now she missed her own department.

"Chief Inspector Barnaby!" Jack Cottom greeted her as she walked from the control room, at Causton, back towards the canteen.

"Hullo Sir" she said, "Is everything OK?"

"Yes yes, I got your wedding invite; put the RSVP in the post yesterday." He told her smiling; "Now how is our little project going?"

"Fine sir, I've been shadowing Chief Inspector Gill in the control room, it's quite similar to Traffic." She smiled

"Can I be honest with you Josie?" The Super-Intendant asked "You are bored aren't you?"

"Oh yes Sir!" she laughed "I know you all think Traffic is boring, but at least we have actual Crims, and pursuits, and school visits!"

"I'm not a big fan of running about, and the hot end of the job, but I tell you what, I'll see what I can do."

"Oh THANK YOU Sir!" she called.

Ben had watched the whole thing from his seat in the canteen, and when she turned and smiled at him he waved, and she came and sat opposite him. "Creepy Cottom, and the plan for world domination?" he asked.

"The higher I rise, the better he looks" she told him shrugging "I couldn't live with Communication and
Control Ben, I'd kill someone."

"It can't be that bad?" he asked "I mean, it's quite a popular role for ambitious Sergeants?"

"Ben it's awful, they are all shagging each other, or have these really shit hobbies." She leant over and whispered conspiratorially "they go dogging?!"

Ben looked at her eyes wide for a moment, and then burst into hysterics. "Don't sign us up!"

She battered his hand "You know what's coming up don't you?" she asked him seriously for a moment.

"No surely not?" Ben asked

"Yep, CID" she smiled and he groaned.

"Oh no, don't make me marry DCI Barnaby, please, it's bad enough already" he laughed but her face fell.

"Ben you don't have to marry me" she said sadly.

He grabbed her hand "Don't be silly I was taking the micky, I love you I am desperate to marry you, I don't care, I was just being funny." He kissed her hand, "I want to marry you, please don't ever doubt that."

4 weeks later

Josie had finally given up trying to sleep at about 5am, and had gone downstairs to read over the table plan. The wedding was at 12, and she didn't think she could handle the prickling sweaty nervous feeling that was already causing through her body. She had thought to text Ben, but she thought he'd be asleep, and that would be unfair. He'd had a hell of a week, 24 hrs previously it looked unlikely this wedding would be going ahead, and now he should be asleep safe in their bed.

She sat with her head resting on the back of the sofa, her feet resting on the coffee table she watched the morning light creep up the buildings, listening to the dawn chorus. She laid a hand on her belly smiling.

"We'll tell your Daddy tonight little one" she patted the swell under her nightshirt "he'll love you I promise."

"Of course he will" Tom told her walking into the living room, "I assume you couldn't sleep?"

"No" she said stretching

"Nerves, or the case?" he asked, coming and sitting opposite her

"Oh nerves definitely" she laughed "the case didn't bother me at all, well not in a way to last." She looked at him, "Did it bother you?"

"Yeah" he shrugged "It shouldn't have, but you and Ben could have been killed, and I know that's the job but I can't quite get that out of my head, I think it might be time to retire."

"DAD!" she shrieked "surely not"

"Has to happen sometime" he shrugged "why not now?"

"Ben will be devastated" she said "he loves you, will you at least wait till this one is born?"
"Ha, I may change my mind in the morning." He told her.

"It is the morning Dad" Josie sad, "It's my wedding day"

"I know" he stood up and kissed her head "I've never seen you look so happy, I'm very glad for you both."

"I am Dad, I really am" she smiled, and stood up with him, going and getting a cup of tea.

2 weeks earlier

Josie sat at her desk, scampi and chips spread out in front of her, she wouldn't actually eat the chips, but somehow when the lads were going to the chippy, just asking for scampi seemed odd. She was dressed unusually in a uniformed skirt, it wasn't something she normally did, but her expanding stomach had more room, and she had paperwork to do. Sitting all day in an uncomfortable tight pair of trousers was unmanageable. She had to finish off a schedule of community workshops for the lads to do while she was on honeymoon, there were rotas to sign off, and a number of reports to read and stamp.

When her desk phone rang she stared at it for a moment, greasy fingers, she had a moment of panic. Why had her brain stopped working? Was it the wedding, the baby, the constant lying? After far too long she grabbed a tissue and wiped her fingers, picking the receiver up carefully, she cradled it between her shoulder and ear.

"Chief Inspector Barnaby?" the voice on the end of the phone asked.

"Yep" she answered still wiping at her fingers

"Causton CID on the switchboard for you Ma'am?" the girl continued "Can I put them through?"

"Yeah, do you know who it is?" Josie asked

"Yes, DCI Spellman" the girl said, "I'll put him through."

That explained a lot Josie thought, Ben, Gail or her Dad would have just texted her, or called the direct number. She didn't mind Martin Spellman, in the same way she didn't mind Jack Cotton, they weren't like her Dad, they didn't see solving crime as a duty and a calling. They saw their titles and ranks as ways of setting them apart, their place in society, and so their paperwork was perfect, the rose through the ranks swiftly, constantly looking for the next promotion. Josie realised that she did as well, and that is why she got on with them, she didn't automatically treat them with suspicion like the other Copper. She did however agree with the other, there was something about the men that was smarmy, a bit too slick and polished, false almost.

"Good Afternoon Sir" she answered the phone after the short ring and beep of the call transfer.

"Good Afternoon, Josie" the voice on the other end called, "no need for the Sir any more Chief Inspector."

"Oh Sir, mine is only a Brevet position, anyway I'm sure your about to be a DSI aren't you?" she giggled, flirting like a pro she thought.

He could hear his grin, "well you do flatter me, anyway I've been asked by Jack Cotton to give you a ring about shadowing our department. Obviously it would seem a little unprofessional for you to follow Ben and Tom about, so we thought you'd be better off shadowing my team. You've booked next week off, so I thought you could come down and shadow me from Wednesday."
The way he'd said it, gave her no chance to argue, on the face of it, it sounded a good idea, she could finish her paperwork and then be free to join CID for a bit, before going off on leave. However she had planned to spend the next few days tidying the department for the Sergeants, so the paperwork would be finished, and they could concentrate on coppering for the next month.

"That sounds great Sir, I'll come to work with Ben on Wednesday" she said

"Lovely, see you then, Good afternoon Josie."

"Afternoon Sir."

13 days later

Ben stood outside Causton Registry Office, bouncing from foot to foot in his dress uniform. Beside him Andy stood smoking a cigarette, fiddling with the wedding rings in his pocket.

"I wish you'd decided on a later time, Ben" he told the Groom, "I could do with a beer."

"Nothing to do with me" Ben laughed "she wanted an early appointment, something about not ruining the whole day?"

"She worried you wouldn't turn up?" Andy asked amused

"Don't laugh" Ben told him, "she's terrified I won't turn up, it's really sad, I think she won't believe me until she says I do."

"I will" Andy corrected "It's I will"

They stood there in companiable silence for a few moments, and Ben started pulling at his uniform, jogging up and down and fidgeting. Andy finished his cigarette and stubbed it out in the silver box at the top of the registry office steps.

"Andy?" Ben called

"Yeah?"

"She will turn up won't she?"

"Yeah, think you're screwed there mate" he laughed, then looked at Ben's face, "You soppy sod, of course she'll turn up. I've never seen someone give another human the look she give you, it's like her life is nothing without you."

Ben smiled, and then groaned as he recognised a group of people walking down the road, most of Causton CID were due to arrive, and a group of officers were now strolling towards them. Andy came and stood beside him.

"How many Coppers are actually coming to this do?" He asked

"A lot" Ben shrugged "Most of the station I think"

"Fuck, better not step out of line then, anyone got their handcuffs you reckon?"

"Andy mate, I bet the Bride has." Ben laughed, and they walked up the steps to wait inside.
Eleven days earlier

"Are you sure you don't mind?" Josie asked Ben for the tenth time that morning, "I know how the lads can be."

"It's fine" Ben groaned "while everyone else is panicking over two DCI Barnaby's, nobody will even notice me." He laughed

Josie giggled, laying her hand on his knee, "I do love you DS Jones."

Ben laughed "Do excuse me darling, but I'm not going to say I love you DCI Barnaby, even in the privacy of the car."

She laughed "Is this too tarty for CID?" she asked him, gesturing at her short skirted suit, "I didn't want to look like a slut, but you know I needed to seem like a strong powerful in control woman"

Now it was his turn to snigger "You didn't think DCI was a big enough clue?"

"Oh God you know how it is Ben? Also Mark Spellman is a bit of a creep."

"You look fine you look beautiful, I love you" he told her, "just don't pick up any pens or touch your toes, DS Inkpen will have a heart attack."

"Can I ask you a question Ben?" she asked in such a tight voice he looked across.

"Sure, you OK?"

"Yeah, erm. What do you do with your handcuffs?" He stared at her for a moment, and then returned his gaze to the road "I mean I haven't got a belt or anything, and it's too hot for a coat, and frankly I am unsure as to the practicality of this handbag?"

"Seriously, I don't think you'll need your bloody handcuffs, I'm hoping you'll sit in Spellman's office being bored rigid by his mountain of ridiculous strategies."

"But I'll feel naked without my handcuffs?" she cried

"Well can you just clip them to your knickers?" he laughed

"In this skirt? They'd show?" she giggled with him "They'll have to stay in my handbag then"

"Think so."

They pulled up outside Causton police station, and stepped out of the car together. She hurried round to the pavement, and looking up and down, kissed him on the lips. He dragged her close and kissed her back, holding her close.

"It's OK Ben" she told him pulling slightly away hoping he wouldn't notice the swell of her stomach, "I'll see you for lunch at some point, and then we'll arrange to meet so you can take me home."

"Jose, I love you look this job is really dangerous" he kissed her head "please look after yourself."

"Ben I've done this job for eleven years, I've been shot, Causton CID holds no terror for me."
"Yeah well it does for me, in 11 days time I'm planning on marrying you, and I expect you to actually turn up."

"You're an idiot, of course I'm going to turn up" she kissed him again and turned away "hell itself would have to go a long way to stop me."

11 Days Later

Joyce was the first genuinely friendly face Ben saw arrive, she had come to the Registry office with the button holes. She had kissed him on both cheeks and hugged him, it was so comforting that Ben hugged her back for a long moment.

"Are you OK Ben?" Joyce asked

"Yes, yes thank you Mrs Barnaby" he shuddered "it's just all a bit overwhelming."

"Oh I understand Ben" she smiled "I was the same before my Wedding, and goodness you should see poor Josie, she's a wreck."

"Really?" Ben looked sharply at her, worry filled his eyes.

"Oh don't worry about it, she was the same last time" Joyce covered her mouth "Oh Ben I'm sorry I wasn't thinking."

"It's OK, Mrs Barnaby, I'm sort of greatful to know that, gives me an idea she'll actually turn up." Ben laughed

"Oh she'll turn up Ben, she really hasn't much choice" with that she kissed him again, and hurried out to the street again.

After he'd watched her go he thought about that, of course she had a choice, she was as free as a bird, if she decided not to come, that she didn't want to marry him, Tom and Joyce could do nothing about it. He certainly could do anything about it, he'd lost her once and although he would spend his life trying not to do it again, if she chose to leave he would have to watch her go once again.

He was stripped of his revery by a howl from the vestibule, he recognised Thomas Dixon's dulcet tones, he smiled. He couldn't quite understand why but he loved that kid, maybe it was the fact that he'd been there at the birth, maybe that it was that Josie loved him, or possibly he thought it was everytime he saw Josie cuddling the child into her arms and chest he thought what a great Mum she was going to make.

Gavin walked up to him and smiled at the look on Ben's face, he looked at his watch 11.30pm. "You OK Sergeant, Half an hour to go" the DI said.

"Yeah, I'm fine, is everyone here already?" Ben asked

"Only us jealous ones" Gavin laughed

"Jealous?"

Gavin patted his shoulder "Seriously the Barnaby Girls, both married, it's a tragedy for the County of Midsomer. I had a thing with Cully once you know, between Nico and Simon, did keep up hope that Josie might see the light, but hey, good luck to you."
"Are you, are you trying to make me have a panic attack?"

"No you sod, trying to congratulate you" Gavin patted him again "Tom likes you anyway, that's half the battle won."

"Thanks Sir, Super Gavin"

8 days earlier

"It's not that I mind nothing happening, I like that nothings happening, it's just when you sign up for a fortnight of Causton CID, you expect well a murder or something." Josie told Ben on Friday Lunchtime, they were sharing their third quiet lunchtime together that week.

"You know it's not always murder central" Ben told her "Usually it's just boring paperwork."

"Come off it Ben, you have more murders in a week, than I saw during my entire Met career. Last month you had six in one village!" She teased, "Is it just Spellman's lot, do you and Dad keep all the murders for yourself?"

"What about the drowning? Surely you can't be bored with that already?" He asked her "Kid drowns in the reservoir, even the press are still going mad about that."

"Accident" she shrugged "Kid didn't know how to swim, crap instruction, nobody looking out for him I think the coroners are going to go for misadventure."

"You can't be that bored then?" Ben chewed thoughtfully on his sandwich, "otherwise you'd be taking this death to pieces."

"hmmm maybe it's the wedding, maybe my mind is elsewhere, thinking on our honeymoon?" She giggled "three whole weeks, you and me in deepest darkest Wales."

"Yes" he smiled "You know I'm still not sure you've thought that through, I know you think it'll be sweet to visit my Welsh relatives, but are you sure you wouldn't prefer somewhere sunny?"

"No darling" she rubbed her stocking foot up his leg under the canteen table, "anyway we'll spend most of the time in the hotel, I hope!"

"I do love you, for your wonderful dirty mind." He smiled and then started to blush as her foot climbed higher up to his crotch. "Urggh" he made a very undignified noise and she giggled quietly.

Suddenly the canteen awoke with the sound of mobile phones and people moving about, Ben and Josie looked around, "I think I'm about to stop being bored" she said, removing her foot and slipping her high heel back on "I think something is happening" she checked her on phone, as Ben answered his.

"Murder" they said together smiling.

8 days later

Getting into the car, Josie's stomach did a flip and she grabbed Cully's arm to support herself. A wave of nausea that had nothing to do with the child she was carrying hit her and she retched.

"God Josie are you OK?" Cully asked gripping her, and looking forwards to her father for support.
"Yeah yeah, I'm just, God I feel hot, I feel really hot, Dad can I have something to drink?"

The driver dumbly offered a glass of champagne from the tray he'd been holding since the Barnaby's had left the house.

"No sorry" Cully explained to the kindly man, "she's pregnant, do you have any water?"

The man carefully put down the tray, and while Cully and Tom supported the trembling Josie, brought out a bottle of evian from his glove box. "It's a bit warm I'm afraid" he told them breaking the seal and giving it to Josie. "Are you going to be OK? Do you need the hospital?"

"No!" Josie shouted "No, please, I'll be fine, Oh Ben, poor Ben." She sobbed "I'll be fine, it's just, I think I've just over done it, the stress and the last week, and I'll be fine."

"Look" Tom gently stroked her cheek and lifted her head "If you aren't well tell us now, but if you're sure you want to continue, we'll go past the Co-op, I'll leap out, get some cold water, and we'll go slowly to the registry office."

Josie nodded blandly, while Cully who was still supporting her, looked up at her Dad her face full of concern. "Dad, let's just get in the car, we can open the windows, I'm sure it's just nerves."

They driver opened the car door, and Josie slipped inside, with Cully pressed up against her side, cradling both bouquets as gently as baby Thomas. Tom sat the other side of Josie, behind the driver, his suit pressed against her white dress and he noticed the white material clung wetly to her flesh.

"I'm so hot" Josie moaned "I'm burning hot"

"It's OK love" Tom reassured her, stroking her hand "I'm sure it's just nerves."

"It's not the Baby?" Josie asked Cully, reaching out for her.

"No lovely, I think it's just a panic attack, after the week, and now the wedding, you're fine and safe and the baby is fine." She soothed her, as the car pulled up outside the supermarket and Tom leapt out.

"Oh God that boy" Josie moaned, "Oh Cully it was, Oh that face, I should of, Oh Cully."

"I know, I know, calm down it's really OK." She soothed her sister, and drew her sisters head onto her shoulder, "you'll make yourself sick, try to think of nice things, think of the honeymoon."

2 days earlier

"Jesus Christ, think of the honeymoon, think of nice things, thing, Oh shit Ben, the baby, the wedding, oh shit" Josie's brain kept repeating, looking at the boy and the gun, and trying desperately not to think of the drop behind her, the dark water and the breeze whipping around her legs.

"Josie" Ben shouted running up behind the boy.

"Ben" Josie whispered but her brain thought, "fuck Ben, you stupid bastard you'll get us both killed, I'm going to watch you get shot and then me and our child will die as well, oh bloody hell." Then her brain rebelled against her, and she realised what he'd done.

As the boy took the gun away from her and swung it at Ben, she watched in slow motion, lurching forward
she caught the boy in a fumbling rugby tackle. Feeling his body lurch and the gun discharge, she screamed looking up and seeing Ben fall forwards. She grabbed the boys head, and smashed it into the concrete below, knocking him cold, a bit of extra violence that would never be noticed.

2 Days Later

Tom handed Josie the cold bottle of water, as she opened it and sipped gently, Cully held another bottle to her head and Tom held another to the back of her head.

"You'll be absolutely fine" Tom told her "Ben loves you, and you love him, and the baby."

"Oh Dad, I'm so hot" Josie moaned again, but it was much more lucid than before "I'm feeling much better though, thank you."

"It's what we're here for" Cully told her "now smile, relax, look happy it's your wedding day."

Josie smiled weakly, still feeling the need to retch, last time, when she'd married Derrick she'd been nervous but it had been nothing like this, she shuddered, she didn't like thinking of Derrick, or any of her connected past. It was hard not to think of his ghost, the ghost of her biology when she went to get married to the man who'd saved her from it.

"I do love Ben you know" she said, stronger thinking of him, his smile, his voice, his daft grin when he thinks he's right. "I love him very much, I didn't do this to trap him, honest."

"We know, lovely" Cully told her "Don't we Dad?"

"Yes" Tom flustered "Of course, of course we know that, is that what all this is about? You think Ben would?"

"Yes, no" she lay her head back "I don't know why I'm so hot."

They sat in silence for a few moments, Josie could hear the loud beating of her heart, far to strong far too fast, bringing back the sound of the breeze on the water, the look in the boys eyes, the cold of the wind, and then in contrast to the heat, the cold of dark water in the black enclosed space. She gasped, and gripped Cully and Tom's hand, but they didn't notice, as the car drew up outside Causton Registry Office.

8 days earlier

Standing beside the boat shed, hands in pocket Ben Jones looked across the crime scene, such as it was. 48 hours after a 12 years old boy was dragged out of this reservoir dead in suspicious circumstances, CID had been called to another suspicious death, a fourteen year old from a different school, who had apparently fallen into the reservoir cracked his head and drowned. The problem being, one child wandering off, slipping and dying was as Josie had pointed out a tragic accident, two was suspicious.

The whole forensic team seemed to be wandering around the adventure centre and boatyard, press had now arrived, and as usual had brought various hangers on, butty vans and hungry coppers.

"Jones, sort that lot out will you?" Demanded Tom Barnaby, who was marching across the scene towards his DS, but gesturing out towards the edge of the police cordon

"Sir" Ben started towards him, pushing himself off the wall with his heel "What exactly have we got here? Surely this is just another accident, place like this bound to happen?"
"I don't like coincidences like this Jones." Tom told him, then looking down at George Bullard who was kneeling over the drowned boy, "hullo George, what have we got?"

"Hullo Tom, er yes like the last one, drowned head smacked on something hard, last one it was the reservoir walls but I'll know more when we get to the lab."

"Any signs of foul play?" Tom asked

"Well" George hesitated "it's nothing definitive, but there's some bruises on the boys arm here" he pointed to the forearm, just below the elbow, "they wouldn't be particularly suspicious but…"

"The lad last week had the same bruises?" Tom finished

"exactly Tom" George told him.

"Jones" Tom shouted causing the young man to start and come back towards him "Jones, who is the investigating officer on the other case?"

Ben laughed and then groaned "Josie, DCI Barnaby, Sir?"

"Good, get her down here will you?"

8 days later

Josie walked up the steps of the registry office, gripping onto Tom's arm, the photographer was standing at the top of the steps, and she smiled up at the man, still aware of the prickling heat on her brow. Cully brought up the rear, and the registrar stood on the top of the steps next to the photographer.

"Hello my dear, are we all ready?" The registrar asked

"I'm very hot" Josie told her

"We've had a few stops on the way" Tom told the registrar, "but I think we are OK now"

"You do look very pale?" The registrar asked "Will you be OK?"

"Yes" Josie panted slightly, "Ben is here isn't he?"

"Yes dear of course he is, don't worry you'll be fine." The registrar told her, gently taking the arm Tom wasn't holding and leading her into the cool vestibule of the Registry office.

8 days earlier

In the end Josie didn't go down to the crime scene, instead she had met Tom and Ben at the station, and gone through the case notes there, until George Bullard had done a full PM, there wasn't a lot to be seen at the scene. Josie hadn't seen anything in the original case that made her suspect foul play, the kid shouldn't have been on his own, the bruises she had put down to high jinx.

"You didn't ask any of the classmates, or the teachers about the bruises?" Tom asked.

"Not the classmates, I asked the teachers what sort of kid he was, they told me he was always getting into scrapes, the parents where proud of his rugby trophies, and he did Judo. Nobody remembered those specific bruises, but when pressed they told me he was always covered in bruises." She shrugged.
"How does this work then?" Ben asked "Is this Josie's case, our case, Spellman's case?"

"Oh I'm not sure" Tom said "I'm sure now there is actual work to do, DCI Spellman will be far too busy, and this isn't why DCI Barnaby is working with CID is it?"

"Oh please, I mean, it's SOOO boring in Spellman's office, let me tag along with you" she begged.

"Are you, are you actually begging?" Ben asked laughing "I never thought I'd see the day!"

"I think you underestimate the boredom of working with Martin Spellman" Tom told him gently.

"I have as it happens …. " Ben started and then looked at the two DCI's "Fine fine, I'm just a lowly DS, I'll shut up now"

Josie leant over and kissed his cheek, "I love you Ben Jones, would you mind awfully if I tagged along?"

"No, of course not" he smiled "anyway I want to keep an eye on you, don't want you ducking out before the wedding do I?"

8 days later

Standing in the doorway of the registry office room, still shivering, Josie peered past her father into the aisle, lots of the guests turned to look, and she waved nervously, smiling brightly at Simon who waved Thomas' tiny hand towards her. They seemed to stand there for an age and there was a moment when Ben knew she was standing in the doorway and couldn't help but turn to look at her, she smiled and they shared a look and a wink. Then the music started, and she turned to Cully.

"Ready?" she asked

"Of course, are you?" Cully asked

"Yeah" Josie smiled, gripping Tom's arm as the verse started.

"She
May be the face I can't forget
The trace of pleasure or regret
May be my treasure or the price I have to pay
She
May be the song that summer sings
May be the chill that autumn brings
May be a hundred different things
Within the measure of a day"

They walked down the short aisle, Josie still shivered despite the smiling happy faces, there was a lump in her throat and a pain in her chest. No longer aware of Tom's arm, she stared at the board of names above the registry table, it named the previous Mayors of Causton, she didn't know why but the dark mahogany board was comforting. She was so distracted it wasn't until Tom gently dropped her arm, and Cully took her bouquet from her unresisting hand did she realise she was at the front of the room, standing beside Ben.

"She
May be the beauty or the beast
May be the famine or the feast
May turn each day into a heaven or a hell
She may be the mirror of my dreams
The smile reflected in a stream
She may not be what she may seem
Inside her shell"

"Are you OK?" Ben whispered

"Hot" she managed back, and he nodded sympathetically

"Me too, you'd think they'd have air con?" he added

"Love you" she whispered.

"She
Who always seems so happy in a crowd
Whose eyes can be so private and so proud
No one's allowed to see them when they cry
She
May be the love that cannot hope to last
May come to me from shadows of the past
That I'll remember till the day I die"

As the registrar waited patiently for the music to end, they all stood uncomfortably fidgeting, aware of the heat and the gaze on their backs, Josie slipped her tacky hot hand into Bens, and felt the reassuring squeeze as he enclosed her hand in his. Somehow she felt hotter, a lot hotter now, but calmer definitely calmer because it was always so much easier when Ben held her hand.

"She
May be the reason I survive
The why and wherefore I'm alive
The one I'll care for through the rough in ready years
Me
I'll take her laughter and her tears
And make them all my souvenirs
For where she goes I've got to be
The meaning of my life is

She
She, oh she"

The Registrar asked them to withdraw their hands, they shared a look and after a few seconds Ben squeezed her hand harder, and then gently dropped her hand. The registrar smiled and whispered "It'll be OK, you look beautiful" to Josie

Ben looked at his bride, as the music stopped. A 1950's inspired calf length A-lined dress, a sweetheart strapped top the whole thing in white pleats.

"You look gorgeous" he told her "Like Marilyn Monroe."

5 Days Earlier

Having interviewed the classmates, and the workers at the site, Josie was forced to wait for the PM results before the case could continue. For Tom and Ben, this wasn't actually a problem, other cases took up there
time, some going to court, some on going, some being passed to the CPS, but Josie was stuck waiting for Dr Bullard.

Now Monday morning had come, and she was anxious to see the toxicology reports on the boy, on both boys. She was sure there was something missing, and when the report finally landed on her (temporary) desk, she read it in a state of utter excitement. She hugged the paper to her chest and ran to the office shared by Ben and Tom.

"Got something then?" Ben asked looking up at her flushed face

"the Tox report" she gulped "definitely foul play"

"Posion?" Tom asked

"GHB" she smiled

"Date rape?" Ben asked "the original PM didn't how sign of assault?"

"there wasn't any!" She shrieked, and then sat heavily on his desk "Person or persons unknown, fed them alcohol and GHB, dragged them to the water and they drowned."

"So we are looking for a murderer then" Tom said "Go on then Chief Inspector, what's your next move?"

"Erm, Anyone got form Ben? Erm DS Jones, erm Sorry?" She flustered, and Ben grabbed her hand.

"Not going to do you for Sexual discrimination" he laughed "erm nobody with form no, nobody with so much as a caution?"

"back to basics then" Tom said, sighing heavily.

5 days later

"Do you Josephine Eve Barnaby" The Registrar was speaking, but if she didn't read the order upside down on the kindly ladies pad, Josie wouldn't have been able to keep up.

She was aware of the prickles of sweat bubbling on her skin, she shivered totally unaware of the people behind her, just the warmth of Ben beside her. She heard his voice rumble, and her own felt so loud in her ears, and before long he had taken her hand and was pushing his Welsh Grandmothers wedding ring onto her trembling finger. She stared at it as he repeated his vows, the surreal feeling deepened, the rushing in her ears continued and the room swam so that if her hand wasn't held tight in Bens she would have fallen.

She heard the registrar gently say her name, and ask her to repeat her vows, she followed the words and repeated them slowly in a faltering voice. When she'd finished she looked up at Ben and noticed his own pale brow, the beads of sweat just above his eyebrows, he dropped his eyes from the registrars face to hers, and smiled. She attempted to smile back, but was caught in wonder at the moment, and instead the roaring in her eyes reached fever pitch, and she started to sway forward off her now stinging throbbing feet, leaning into Ben just as the registrar said, "you may now kiss your bride."

5 days earlier

"Definitely dragged" George Bullard confirmed "there are marks on the heels"

"Were they missed first time?" Ben asked "I mean with the first body?"
"No, well, yes" George explaining. Turning to Tom and Josie who were standing the other side of the metal slab from Ben and George, "they were there and noted but thought to be more damage from the time in the water."

"So they weren't wearing shoes?" Josie asked "neither of them?"

"No" George confirmed

"And what to the grazes tell us, apart from the fact they were dragged?" Tom asked

"They were dragged over gravel, and mud, and some grass and stones"

"so they were unconscious?"

"Oh no" George told him "clearly conscious, these heels have kicked and fought, and the bruises on the arms, they were drugged, but they weren't unconscious just sedated."

"and overpowered?" Josie asked

"and overpowered" George confirmed.

5 days later

"Are you sure you are OK my dear?" the registrar asked as she leant over Josie now sat behind the desk, and handed Ben the pen.

"Yes" Josie smiled broadly, she was still shaking, but the heat had mercifully dropped, she looked across at Ben, her husband as he wrote his name dutifully in the book.

"There are four signatures" the registrar reminded Ben, "it's a good job you didn't go over before the vows isn't it dear?"

There was an eruption of laughter from their friends and colleagues sat patiently in front of them "at least I didn't actually fall" Josie clarified

"Good job Ben's put on some weight" Andy laughed from his position beside Ben, "I wouldn't have liked to try and catch you both".

"It's contentment" Cully said, placing a gentle hand on her sisters shoulder

"It's canteen breakfasts" Ben laughed patting his tummy "isn't that right Josie?" he asked pointedly staring at her swollen stomach making his wife, her parents and sister all gasp.

"He's noticed then" Tom whispered to Joyce, rubbing his hands and giggling to himself.

4 days earlier

"Sweetheart, are you OK?" Ben asked grabbing her wrist as they walked across the open gravel drive of the adventure centre, he stopped her in her tracks with a gentle tug.

"Ben?" she asked turning to him.
"I asked if you were OK?" he repeated studying her face.

"Yeah, yeah of course, what's wrong?" she asked, ignoring the curious glances from the coppers surrounding them and forcing herself to smile at him.

"You look pasty" he smirked at her outraged look "Of course you look beautiful but you don't look well. If you don't want to be here, if you want to pass the case over, nobody will mind."

"Am I cramping your style Ben?" she asked playfully.

"Never" he pulled her closer a planted a chaste kiss on her forehead, "I'm concerned that's all, you've been quite a bit ill for a while and I know the wedding is stressful, and everything between us, if you want some time…"

"NO!" she pulled away from him "I'm fine Ben, look you're probably right, I'm just over tried, but I'm fine, honestly, it's great I'm having fun." She smirked "Anyway I'm looking forward to Saturday."

"Really?" he asked

"Yeah I'm fine, and I love you."

He smiled, squeezed her hand and let her walk away from him. She looked ill and tired and swollen, despite her protestations he could see something was wrong. He watched her greet the Centre Manager and introduce herself, barely being able to fit back into the conversation as she introduced him.

"Sorry Miss but I'm confused" The Manager asked "I was speaking to DCI Barnaby yesterday, and he was a man."

Ben choked but Josie just smiled "Yes Sir, it's a coincidence, there are 2 DCI's working this case, and we are both called Barnaby, no need for confusion."

"Is it serious then?" the man asked, "2 Chief Inspectors? Is it really serious?"

"Sir, 2 young boys have died" Ben told him "Of course it's serious."

4 Days later

"This is serious, stop giggling" Joyce scolded her youngest daughter, as they lined up outside the registry office for the photographer.

"Leave her alone Joyce" Ben teased back "I'd rather my wife giggled through her wedding photos than scowled."

"I'm your wife!" Josie giggled gripping his hand hard "I'm Mrs Jones"

"Yes darling you are" Ben soothed

"Oh dear you're in trouble now Ben mate" Andy teased from Ben's other side "she's got a liking for being your wife already."

After what seemed like hours, but in reality was only a few minutes, Ben accompanied his wife to their wedding car, and saw her carefully inside. Waving at their friends and family, they pulled off heading towards the hotel where the reception would be held.
"Excuse me Mr and Mrs Jones" the driver said after a few moments "but are we going straight to the reception?"

"Erm yes?" Ben asked "why?" shocked suddenly when his new wife burst out laughing.

"They always ask that Ben" she whispered, "in case we want to, well you know, consummate our marriage."

"Really?" Ben asked loudly "where, what? Where are you suggesting?"

"Oh Ben!" Josie battered him "You can't be thinking?"

"No one will mind mate, in fact I think most people expect it."

"NO!" Josie said firmly, one hand hovering over her expanded stomach "they'll be plenty of time afterwards."

"This is how it starts is it, the sexless marriage thing?" Ben teased

"You'd be surprised!" the driver told them.

"No it's not that, I just don't want to go to my own wedding reception looking and smelling like a street walker."

"OK, fine" Ben giggled "You are OK though aren't you?"

"Never better darling never better" she said kissing him "I'd like to go for a bit of a walk though, if that's OK, down by the river, just for a few minutes, just to kill a bit of time."

4 Days Earlier

"did you get anything from the Manager then?" Tom Barnaby asked as Ben and Josie came into the office hand in hand.

"Not a lot, he seemed more interested in when he could get back to normal" Josie shrugged

"SO why are you back here?" Tom snapped, startling them both. "You're skirting round the edges of this Chief Inspector, you need to be rattling at the windows, digging up evidence, you need to be walking the crime scene, running back and forward. If you want to run an investigation you have to run it, you can't just run back to the office, to the warmth when hit a stone wall, you need to smash straight through it."

Josie looked stricken, her stomach gave a lurch and she felt faint, her Father had never admonished her like that, he was always so calm and patient, and she felt ashamed. Feeling hot and cold all at once, she dropped Ben's hand sharply, turned and marched out of the room.

"Sir?" Ben asked quietly "Is everything OK?"

"Yes?" Tom looked up normal soft voice back in evidence.

"Did you not think that was, a tad harsh?" Ben prompted.

"She has to learn Ben, it's hard this job, and afterall that's why she's here , it's not a holiday, she's here to
learn how to run an investigation, we can't hold her hand. She has to learn."

"Sir" Ben said quietly

"Ben" Tom whispered "I know this is difficult, but at work, if possible she's not your Fiancee, she's not my daughter. she's a young Officer making her way through the ranks, we guide, we support, we do the best we can, and the best I can do is push her."

"I understand" Ben nodded, "Sir?" he asked

"Ben on Saturday I will be a very supportive and proud Father-In-Law to you, but at work I'm your boss. I'm proud of you, you are a colleague and a friend, but I will not hesitate to slap you down if necessary." Tom added "and I expect Josie to do the same."

"Ok then, if this was your case what would you do next?"

"I have no idea Ben, I would expect something to come up."

4 days later

They had left the car, and walked hand in hand through the Park and to the little weir that separated Malham Parks lake from the main river. There was a soft spring breeze and the scent of May flowers filled the air, Ben grinned widely as his bride, replete in white dress walked with him through the park.

"Are you feeling better?" Ben asked her squeezing her hand

"Much" she smiled "Ben can I talk to you?"

"Of course, I'm your husband" he smiled looking at her face, but seeing the look in her eye he frowned. "Is there something wrong?"

"I've got to tell you something, and Ben, I'm terrified." She whispered

"Look darling, there is nothing you can't tell me"

She looked at him and smiled for a moment, squeezed his hand and then looked up at the trees they had just passed under. "This is where I first spoke."

"Huh?" Ben was shocked by the sudden change of tack.

"This spot, this was the first place I ever spoke" she pointed at a tree overhanging the river.

"Tell me" Ben asked, pushing her lightly down to sit on the grass "I want to know, tell me."

"It was about 6 months after Dad found me, it might have been longer? It was before Christmas, there were leaves on the trees, so possibly September? Not that it matters" she shrugged and giggled, "Mum and Dad and Cully would take me out, from the hospital, and then later they would rescue me from the childrens home…"

"I didn't know you went into a home?" Ben interrupted

"Yeah for a bit, a few weeks really, I wasn't ill, I'd recovered from the physical trauma, they couldn't keep me in hospital so they sent me to a home for children with special educational needs. They thought I was
sub-normal, I didn't speak, I didn't really interact, and I was scared of the dark, they would lock me in a bedroom and I'd stay staring at the door where they left me till the morning."

"Darling" Ben cuddled into her "I had no idea"

"I was locked in an ice house for the first ten years of my life Ben, I had no human contact but the dying deformed creatures my Mother gave birth too, I didn't get rescued and start a new life as a Barnaby." She scolded him but her tone was still light "Sorry it's not, I wanted you too, I've never told you, and I wanted you to know before, before I told you."

"Is everything OK, is there anything I can do?"

"Listen to me for a bit Ben, and then we'll go to our party and then later when we're alone we can start our married life."

Ben smiled, and kissed her "Go on."

"I couldn't eat, I couldn't talk, I couldn't play, I didn't understand bathrooms, or clothes or shoes, Cully taught me shoes." In her mind she drifted off 22 years in the past. "Dad wanted to bring me home with them, when the hospital wanted to discharge me, but Mum wasn't sure, she didn't think it would be easy to deal with me, that having a mute damaged child in the house would be unfair on Cully, so social services took me to this house, and it was horrid. There were all these screaming children and it was dark, and if you ask Dad I regressed almost entirely, and the only joy I got was when they came and took me out for the day."

"Did you remember then, did you know where you'd come from?"

"No I don't think I did, I think my brain had blotted it all out, I don't think I'll ever remember it, and Ben that scares me, I don't know what happened to me, other than the perfunctory, I'll never know what they did to me, if he, if they hurt me?"

"Oh God Josie" Ben looked at her, but noticed her eyes weren't focussed and he was suddenly chilled to the bone "I love you"

"I know, Mum and Dad and Cully and I used to come to the park, and Cully and I would play, and it was wonderful, you have to remember I didn't understand the concept of outside very well, the first time I'd been to the park was when I was in hospital, and Cully had begged Mum to let us go to the swings and that was it, I was hooked, so when they took me out, it was mostly here." She waved at the park with a wide gesture, "I like it here".

"Me too" Ben smiled and kissed her head.

"Well the day I spoke Cully was climbing trees and trying to get me to do the same, I was her shadow, and mostly would do everything she told me, but I guess it was the water, it wasn't that long since I'd nearly drowned after all, and I wouldn't climb these trees, and then she climbed this one, and I remember watching her, and she tried to put her foot on this branch that was hanging right over the river, and I saw it wasn't attached, It looked like the others, but it wasn't, it was just caught in the branches and if she put her weight on it, it would fall and she fall into the river and I screamed, and I shouted her name, and I screamed 'no, don't'"

"She didn't step on it?"

"No she just stopped and stared at me, and Mum and Dad came running, and Dad looked up at Cully and saw what I saw, and told her to come, down and Mum hugged me, because I'd saved Cully's life and I was
so shocked because I didn't know I could speak."

"You didn't know? You hadn't tried?"

"I'm not sure, I don't think I was allowed, I think I could, but I didn't think I was allowed, it's odd, they'd all tried to make me, but I didn't know I was allowed, and then I got all this praise and well, I've never really stopped talking have I?"

Ben laughed "what happened, how did you get to go and live at the Barnaby's?"

"Mum didn't want me to go back to the home after I'd saved Cully's life, she said I was part of the family, and I needed to come home with them, I remember it being later that day, but I think it was about a week later, Joyce and Cully came to the home and said I was coming to live with them, and that was it, I lived there till I went to University."

"you'd gone home, that's why you like it here, it was your first step on your way home."

"Actually it was my last, till I met you." She smiled and laid her head on his shoulder.

4 days earlier

It was several hours after Tom's angry words that Ben realised he hadn't seen Josie for some time, the last thing she'd said to him was she was going to the crime scene to talk to the employees again. He'd asked if she wanted him to come, but she'd said no, she'd be fine.

He spent some time going over case notes and a longer time going over his wedding speech. He hadn't seen his boss for several hours either, and so time had flown. He had watched the light pool on the floor of the office for some time before he realised it was getting Dark. He looked at his watch, it was past 8pm.

He picked up the phone on his desk and phoned the front desk, asking PC Angel if Josie had returned from the crime scene. It was always possible she was in he canteen, or chatting somewhere, or with Josie in the last few weeks sleeping in an empty cell. When Angel hadn't seen her, and confirmed that Ben's Focus was missing from it's usual place in the carpark, he picked up his mobile phone to see if he had any messages. He didn't.

He sent a text message just asking her to call, and then phone his boss, the phone rang once and was then picked up.

"Barnaby" Tom's voice answered

"Sir, It's Ben, erm, I know what you said but have you heard from Josie?"

"No?" Tom answered "No, not all day, is there something wrong?"

"She left here 7 hours ago, she hasn't checked in she hasn't phoned she hasn't returned, I'm getting concerned."

"She left alone?"

"Yes, she went to the crime scene she was going to interview the staff."

"I'm sure It's just taking her a while? Why didn't you go with her?"
"After what you said? I didn't dare!"

"Go down there, rustle her up and bring her home, it's getting dark."

"Yes Sir"

"Jones, I don't want to have to delay the wedding because you've lost the bride."

4 days later

"Come on sweetheart, we can't be late" Ben whispered into her hair as they sat together on the grass.

"Do you think Dad would send a search party?"

"He did before…"

"Ben I'm sorry" she started interrupting him suddenly

"It's over, try and forget it" he said quickly looking off.

"Ben"

"No, look we have a stupid terrifying complicated job and when something goes wrong it goes badly, I'm sorry, but can we just forget it and work, and concentrate on this being our wedding day?"

"Yes, yes please" she kissed him "I am so happy, really, really, happy."

"Have you told me what you wanted to?" he asked pulling her to her feet and wrapping his arms around her.

"No, but I have for now, I love you" she kissed him, he gave her a searching look.

"I want to know Jose, I need to know what's going on, tell me please tell me."

"Later, it's not bad, I needed to know you understood, I love you Ben." She ran to the car, and he followed her grinning.

"I'm going to spend the rest of my life chasing you aren't I?" he whispered under his breath.

3 days earlier

It was now 2am, and Tom stood beside Ben while forensics combed over the DS's car, looking for signs of the younger mans Fiancée. The car was parked neatly in the carpark of the Adventure Centre, locked and with no sign of it's driver. The Centre had been abandoned since the second death, and other than the representatives of the Midsomer Constabulary there was nobody about. Jones played with his mobile phone, pulling it in and out of his suit pocket.

"Do we send out a search party?" Ben asked looking at the dark water where two teenage boys had been killed that week alone. He shivered.

"I think its getting to that point I'm afraid Ben" his boss told him

"Where are the staff? She came down here to talk to the staff where the hell are they?" Ben started "Did nobody notice the car?"
"She spoke to the manager, came down here because he believed one of the helpers was down here tidying up."

"But he's not here now?" Ben asked

"No, and we've checked, he's not at his home either."

"well then she did what you wanted her to do then didn't she Sir" Ben snapped "she found your suspect for you, you must be so proud."

"Ben" Tom admonished

"No I'm sorry, but where's my girl? She went out she confronted a suspect on her own, and now she's missing and you can't tell me where she is?"

"Ben she's a good copper, and a sensible girl, we'll find her"

"Sir if anything happened, if she was, I couldn't I wouldn't want to…"

"I know Ben, but she's fine, I promise she's fine."

3 days later

"And so I'd like you all to raise your glasses for The Bride and Groom" Tom called across the crowded dining room.

"The Bride and Groom!"

Ben acknowledged the toast with a smile and a wave of his hand then after planting a kiss on his brides head he smiled and stood.

"Thank you Sir" Ben acknowledged Tom and was cheered raucously "Old habits die hard. First off I'd like to thank you all for coming, especially Josie." More cheers. "As some of you know that wasn't a full gone conclusion" he gave her a smile "secondly I'd like to thank Cully for acting as Maid of Honour, and Andy for keeping me sane over the last few days as my Best Man. There have been many times in my past that I didn't think I'd ever get here, I didn't see myself as the marrying type, but as you all know that changed when the wonderful creature next to me came into my life. I would like to thank Tom and Joyce for bringing up such a wonderful daughter, two in fact of course, and then graciously allowing an idiot like me to marry one of them. I'd also like to thank my Gran, who undoubtably should receive a medal of endurance for what I've put her through in the last 20 years. So for Joyce, my Gran and Cully please accept these flowers as a token of my or mine and my new wife's appreciation." At this point 2 waitresses came to the top table with 3 enormous bunches of flowers. "Unfortunately, it's not been possible to have everyone we love here with us today, but we know they're here with us in spirit and they're not only in our thoughts today, but more importantly they're with us in our hearts. So, with them in mind, would you please all stand, raise your glasses, and join me in a toast to absent family & friends."

"Absent Family and Friends"

"Now there is an unwritten rule of wedding etiquette that states that nobody should look more handsome than the groom and I'd like to thank our ushers Simon, Gavin, Tim and Dave for sticking to that rule to the letter. Finally, I would like to thank my wife for agreeing to marry me and for making me the happiest man in the world. I think you'll agree that she looks absolutely gorgeous today and when she walked up the aisle,
she took my breath away. If I had to single out one thing about why I love Josie so much, it would be the fact that she makes me feel happier than I ever dreamed I could be. And I intend to spend the rest of my life making sure that the reverse is also true."

"Here Here"

"My Best Man Andy has been there for me when it matters ever since we met in year 8 of Causton Comp, he is always ready with an encouraging word and a welcome bottle of beer when things are going badly. And, if I'm being honest, even when things are going well. However…, there is something that I need to make you aware of. Andy suffers from a strange condition that occasionally causes him to drift in and out of weird, strange flights of fantasy. He has been known to make up factitious stories, absolutely believing them to be true. As I say, he has been there for me and I wouldn't want you to go upsetting him, so if you could bear with him, even join with him on his journey of make believe, I would appreciate it. So, without further ado, I'd like to hand over to Andy."

Ben sat down beside the smiling Josie and looked across smiling, she ribbed him slightly, and then took a large swig of her mineral water as Andy stood up, hoping Ben hadn't noticed the untouched glass of champagne by her plate.

"Good afternoon, everyone. For those of you that don't know me, my name is Andy and I'm the best man. I would just like to thank everyone for coming here today, especially those of you who knew I would be saying a few words. It's very touching that you still turned up!" Laughter erupted "I was deeply honoured when Ben asked me to be his best man and I've been looking forward to this moment for weeks. This will be the first time since I met him that I'll be able to speak for 5 minutes without him interrupting! Now, they say that the Groom's worst 5 minutes of the day is the Best Man's speech. However, the Bride's worst 5 minutes come later on tonight!"

"And that's just when they get to Wales" Dave yelled from the adjoining table.

"On behalf of Dave, and the other Ushers, and Cully the most beautiful Maid of Honour, I'd like to thank Ben and Josie for letting us all be part of their big day. Of course, we are all eclipsed by our stunning Bride, who I think you'll all agree looks like one in a million. Ben on the other hand looks like he was won in a raffle!" Ben smirked "See! I'd like to thank Tom for giving the Bride away, for a man who probably knows Ben better than any of us, I have to say it seems a very brave thing to do. I'd also like to thank he Criminal fraternity of Midsomer for having a day off so he Wedding could actually take place, although I have been assured he Bride is carrying her warrant card and handcuffs just in case any of us get a bit rowdy later, and if not they'll just be for Ben's benefit." At this point Josie reached under the table, and placed her handcuffs on the table in front of her.

There was another cheer and Ben whispered "where were you hiding those?"

"I had pockets put in my dress" she giggled back

The speech continued apace with a number of stories Ben would have preferred his colleagues, his wife and especially his Gran had never heard. Mostly however the gentle ribbing was good natured enough, and it was clear that Andy was very proud of his mate. By the time he'd finished his speech, Josie had tears in her eyes, Ben was red faced but beaming and the wedding party was clapping.

"Well, I'm sure that by now you will be glad to hear that I'm almost done. All that remains for me to do is to ask you to charge your glasses, stand and join me in wishing Mr & Mrs Jones a long, prosperous and happy life together. Ladies and gentlemen – to the Bride & Groom, Josie and Ben!"

3 days earlier
"SHHHHH" he whispered harshly into her ear, tightening the gag around her mouth, "if you are quiet, if you are really quiet it'll be fine, nobody will hear you and it will be fine."

Josie struggled against him, as he pushed her down on the floor of the hut. He was younger than her, so much younger and flabby with it, but she was strong and fit, why couldn't she push him off?

"You're friends aren't very persistent are they?" he taunted her "you aren't my type, but you're nosy and I'm going to kill you"

She struggled harder, aware she couldn't scream or make a noise she felt heavy and woozy, she could hear the sounds of the police searching for her, but it was so far away and she was starting to panic. Her head hurt, she kept thinking about Ben and the baby and the wedding.

Suddenly the door rattled, as one of the officers tried the locked door, the boy grabbed Josie's hair and slammed her head into the floor knocking her cold.

"Sir" the young PC shouted "this ones locked" he went to the side and looked through the window, he saw nothing and tried the door again. "I think it's empty" he called the the Sergeant who was hurrying over

"Hmmm" the Sergeant looked through the window "yeah we'll move on, the owners are coming down, they'll have a key, we'll search it then."

They both moved away and the boy breathed out, he needed to get rid of this woman, he needed to get rid of her before anyone else came looking for her.

3 days later

Ben was dancing with Cully, laughing at some private joke while Simon and Josie sat chatting and watching.

"You're sure about telling him now?" Simon asked her watching his sister in law nuzzle his sons head and hair.

"Yeah, I'm sure" she smiled "I'm positive, it'll be fine I'm sure I'm fine" she smirked and laughed "I'm I foolish Simon?"

"No" he watched Cully laughing with Ben "no, I think you're scared, and in love and mixed up, but I don't think you're foolish."

"and what about Ben?" she asked him seriously.

"Oh I think he's a fool for you, a fool in love." Simon laughed

The song ended and Cully and Ben walked back towards their spouses, Cully came and cuddled into Simon, Ben went over to his new wife and placed a kiss on her head.

"You nearly ready?" he asked

"Yeah, is it late?"

"Not very but we've got a long drive ahead of us, and if we want to get changed first it's probably a good idea to get going."
"OK" she says handing the baby back to her sister "I've just got to tell Mum and Dad, then we can sneak off upstairs, get changed and be off."

"When you say sneak off upstairs?"

"I'll leave that to your imagination."

3 days earlier

"So they went through the huts and the various buildings but they found nothing?" Ben asked his boss, his blood shot eyes and pale ghostly face looked out on the CID office unseeingly.

"So it would seem" Tom told him gently, "but they'll look elsewhere, they now who their looking for now, it's not like he can get away."

Ben nodded sadly, putting his forehead on the cold glass. He looked up as they door banged, a uniformed Sergeant came hurrying into CID, his head darting from side to side. He came into the cubical office and coughed.

"Sorry Sir" he started

"Yes Sergeant?" Tom queried.

"It's just, did anyone look in the locked hut?"

The Sergeant explained that he was looking for Josie with a set of uniformed constables, they had found one of the huts was locked, but before they could investigate they'd been called away, he'd only just remembered nobody had actually looked in the hut.

Ben and Tom exchanged looks, and before they could annunciate their thoughts they had grabbed keys and coats and started hurrying out of the door towards the carpark leaving the uniformed sergeant alone and stumped mid sentence

The wind whipped around her legs, her skirt had been ripped and now she stood in just her underwear petticoat in the cool of the afternoon with the wind whipping from the reservoir. She shook unsteadily her head still woozy focusing on the young lad had levelled at her.

"Jump!" he screams "If you don't jump I'll shoot"

"Is this what happened with the others?" she shouts back "You threatened them either they jump or you shoot?"

"Shut up and jump!"

"I can swim!" she shouts, "Unlike the two little boys you murdered, I can swim"

"Won't matter, that waters freezing and you won't survive the fall, JUMP!"

"Jesus Christ, think of the honeymoon, think of nice things, thing. Oh shit Ben, the baby, the wedding, oh shit" Josie's brain kept repeating, looking at the boy and the gun, and trying desperately not to think of the drop behind her, the dark water and the breeze whipping around her legs.
"Josie" Ben shouted running up behind the boy.

"Ben" Josie whispered but her brain thought, "fuck Ben, you stupid bastard you'll get us both killed, I'm going to watch you get shot and then me and our child will die as well, oh bloody hell." Then her brain rebelled against her, and she realised what he'd done.

As the boy took the gun away from her and swung it at Ben, she watched in slow motion, lurching forward she caught the boy in a fumbling rugby tackle. Feeling his body lurch and the gun discharge, she screamed looking up and seeing Ben fall forwards. She grabbed the boys head, and smashed it into the concrete below, knocking him cold, a bit of extra violence that would never be noticed.

3 days later

"You can't possible be nervous?" Ben asked her as they walked hand in hand towards the honeymoon suite.

"why not?" she asked giggling

"because we, because this, because" he told her, giggling back "anyway you're shaking".

"Pick us up and carry me over the threshold." She told him kissing him as they reached the bedroom door.

Obligingly Ben opened the door with the keycard and opened his arms to let her in between, then carefully lifting her legs and back he backed open the door and carried his giggling wife through. They tumbled onto the bed giggling and kissing.

Ben started to undress Josie, as she lay beside him.

"Ben stop!" she struggled away from him.

"What is it, are you OK?" he asked urgently, sitting up as she skirted across the bed and started to fiddle in her over night bag.

"Here" she said, smiling and proferring a sealed pink envelope.

"Whats this?" he asked

"Wedding present!" she said, then chewed her fingers as he smiling opened the envelope

He pulled open the envelope and found a wedding card, "to my husband" it said on the front smiling he opened the card a small black and white picture fell out, he picked it up and studied it. It was a sonogram picture, he stared at her.

"Is this? Are you? Are you pregnant?" he stuttered

Josie nodded

He smiled and studied the picture "that's, why didn't you tell me? How long have you known?"

"6 weeks" she smiled "are you pleased?"

"of course I'm pleased" he kissed her "I'm going to be a Dad, how long, when is it due?"

"I'm 13 weeks pregnant" she said, "so I'm due in Mid-December"
Ben's smile faded as he did the calculations, "Josie? Is that why you haven't told me?"

"What do you mean?"

"Is it mine?"

"Yes, of course it is."

"It's just 13 weeks ago, we weren't together."

She smiled "yes sweetheart, and I stopped taking the pill, because we weren't together."

"so?"

"So when I came to you soaking wet and naked, and we spent the week in bed."

"we weren't careful."

"No"

"So it's mine, it's really mine, we're having a baby!" he kissed her and pulled her down onto the bed, undoing her dress he exposed her naked swollen stomach. "Oh God I love you."