

# AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

By : **Samson King**

This book was inspired by House Rules a book written about Aspergers Syndrome from Jodi Picoult. I contributed to the novel as she was writing as I myself this condition. The novel is set in the early 80's and the novel is centred a central character with Aspergers syndrome and their reactions to different situations.

Published on  
**Booksie**

[booksie.com/Samson King](http://booksie.com/Samson King)

Copyright © Samson King, 2013  
**Publish your writing on Booksie.com.**

## **Table of Contents**

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 1

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 2

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 3

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 4

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 5

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 6

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 7

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 8

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 9

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 10

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 11

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 12

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 13

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 14

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 15

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 16

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 17

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 18

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 19

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 20

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 21

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 22

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 23

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 24

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 25

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 26

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 27

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 28

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 29

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 30

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 31

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 32

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 33

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 34

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 35

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 36

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 37

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 38

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 39

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 40

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 41

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 42

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 43

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 44

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 45

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 46

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 47

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 48

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 49

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 50

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 51

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 52

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 53

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 54

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 55

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 56

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 57

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 58

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 59

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 60

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 61

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 62

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 63

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 64

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 65

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 66

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 67

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 68

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 69

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 70

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING Chapter 71

# Chapter 1

**Monday 15th January 1979**

## **CHAPTER 1 - PROLOGUE**

The cargo ship Athena sailed on the final leg of its journey from Libya to the Port of Livorno on the Italian coast.

A man walked silently along the middle of the ship. It was pitch black with only the lights of the bridge illuminating his surroundings and he heard the distant voices of the bridge overhead. He lowered quietly and carefully a rescue boat into the sea.

The boat powered up and it left quickly away from the ship and it was driven to a nearby beach. The saboteur watched calmly towards the windless sea with a pair of binoculars tracking the ships movements.

The Athena came parallel to where the saboteur was standing as a series of large orange lights filled the night sky. Moments later the thunder of multiple explosions ripped across the night sky and the Athena stopped as fires raged on the ship and it began to list to its port side. Black smoke began to billow from the middle of the ship as men jumped overboard eager to not be roasted alive.

Minutes later the creaking of metal could be heard coming from the direction of the Athena as it sank into the black mirky depths of the Mediterranean Sea.

The saboteur left on his black Honda motorbike into the Tuscan landscape with a menacing smile knowing that his deadly work was done.

## Chapter 2

Thursday 4th February 1982

### CHAPTER 2

Paul Spencer sat quietly and alone at the Universal Marina, Southampton. He sat in the restaurant drinking black coffee and he looked to his silver watch, it had gone ten o'clock. He noticed people passing by the café eager to dodge the incoming rain that had only started minutes before as Paul entered the restaurant.

Paul looked through the long slender windows that looked onto the River Hamble at passing yachts and fishing boats.

In the middle of the café a group of middle aged women sat. They talked with excitement as they swapped recipes and gossip. In the distant corner a man sat alone staring out of the window. Paul imagined that he was a widower reminiscing on days gone by.

Paul put down his coffee cup and he sighed as he recalled the events of a few hours earlier. He had returned home from his job as a trainee journalist on the Southampton Tribune. As he opened the door he saw on his welcome mat a note and he instantly recognised the handwriting, it was Kathleen, his girlfriend of four years. He put down his work bag and he read the note twice before reading it out loud.

"I am sorry Paul but it is over between us. Don't bother contacting me. I will be in touch. Kathleen."

Paul left the café full of anger and bitterness. He could not work out what had gone wrong and he drove back to his office at the Southampton Tribune.

Yet Paul realised this was a convenient excuse and his girlfriend could have left for other reasons. He wanted to see Kathleen and try to reason with her but he knew to leave her alone and to give her the space she needed to process things.

As he drove along the M271 looking across at cars and other vehicles whizzing by he saw the tall cranes of Southampton's western dock and the glint of large cargo vessels unloading.

He wondered if it was his Aspergic condition that had caused the downfall of his relationship. His mind returned to three years earlier when Paul had been referred to a psychiatrist, Dr William Griffiths, who was working in Southampton General Hospital. The psychiatrist told Paul that he had Aspergers syndrome and it was a condition of the brain that affected short term memory, social skills and it helped to explain the endless jobs that Paul went through from factory, cleaning and retail work.

Then Paul found journalism a year and a half ago after Kathleen saw an article in the Southampton Tribune. That was then Paul thought and he knew he owed her for giving him the support and the confidence to apply.

He got into the offices of the Tribune and walked to his desk in a quiet corner of the office. His mind turned to the present and there was a lot of outstanding work that needed to be done for his editor at the Tribune. He walked to his office and delved into finishing his latest article on the problems of public transport in Southampton.

The words came to him and he finished the article by saying.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

"Public transport needs to be better supported by the local council says Henrietta Stanley of the Women's Institute."

Paul looked to a note next to his left hand side that he had not previously seen. Paul picked it up and was curious as to who had sent it.

Meet me in my office.

He instantly recognised the writing and it was his editors. He walked into the editors office nervous and unsure of what the editor wanted.

The editor, Gareth Wilmaston, looked at him with a focused stare "Paul your a good journalist and you have a good eye for detail and I know that you are eager to break through into the bigger stories. Up to now I have had you doing small scale stories to see how you coped and you have proved yourself."

The editor knew of his Aspergic condition but he was sympathetic and had helped him out when Paul applied for the job.

Paul in his mind wasn't sure what the editor was saying but believed that he was about to get fired.

The editor continued warmly "That's why I am offering you an important job that has just come through and I can offer you a place as a journalist. You will cover some of the major stories. Call it a thank you for helping me out."

Paul knew the editor was referring to an incident a few months earlier. Paul recalled how he walked out of work at just after seven in the evening. The days rain had just cleared to be replaced by a late November chill. Paul looked over to his editors car and knocked on the window and saw that his editor was struggling to breathe.

The editor gripped tightly his chest as he moved over to the passenger seat and Paul got in. Paul looked to him and switched on the interior light of the editors Ford Cortina to see him in agony.

The editor looked to him and said "Drive, Hospital."

Paul got in and he drove to Southampton General Hospital. He arrived there quickly where waiting paramedics rushed him inside. Paul waited for a few hours and he read through a series of chewed up magazines until one of the nurses on duty told him that he had probably saved his editors life from a near fatal heart attack brought on by his asthma.

Now the editor was returning the favour and he continued to smile warmly and he sat in his chair as people buzzed passed his glass panelled office "You've done good here. I am offering you a newly created position as a journalist. Congratulations."

The editor shook Paul's hand. Paul's eyes beamed with delight and he smiled. The agony of the break up disappeared and Paul was jubilant. As Paul walked back to his desk people walked around the office typing and photocopying. Paul sat and looked to a distant picture of him and Kathleen together in Exeter on holiday a year earlier and he quietly said.

"Thank you."

## Chapter 3

### CHAPTER 3

In a car park in Town Quay only a few hundred yards from the Isle of Wight ferry terminal, Southampton. Giovanni Rosinni looked to the departure of the two o'clock ferry to the Isle of Wight. The mornings rain had cleared to be replaced by sun and partial clouds dotted across the expanse of a winters sky.

He sighed and he hoped that the person he was meeting would be able to help him out. From the distance he spotted a car parking up and wondered if it was the contact he was supposed to meet. However a lady dressed in a black coat walked away from him towards the ferry terminal.

Giovanni continued to look around and he spotted a tall, bald headed figure over six feet in height with stocky build and wearing a white t-shirt and black trainers.

Giovanni looked at the man for a moment "You know why we are meeting?"

The man smiled at Giovanni and nodded to indicate he understood "I can help you."

Giovanni followed Byron to a waiting car and he got in. Byron sat and smiled "My friends say they can help you out."

Giovanni nodded as he stared out of the window "Friends I thought we were doing this alone."

Byron shrugged his shoulders and sympathetically said "Your request needed to be looked at."

Byron walked out of the car out of Giovannis view and he quickly looked around. As Giovanni got out he heard a large boom from behind him. Moments later he screamed as pain seared through him. He quickly fell and he saw from behind him a second and final flash in the cars wing mirror as he fell. Byron placed a third and final bullet in his head to make sure he was dead. He grabbed Giovannis body and he looked around to make sure that the car park was deserted.

He heaved the body into his car and drove for about a mile to a place where he would dump the body out of sight. Byron stopped and looked around as he looked across the River Itchen. As he got out he pulled up the cars handbrake and he walked away from the scene. The car entered the river with barely a splash and it quickly sank as bubbles rose to the surface before the waters of the River Itchen returned to a cold stillness.

## Chapter 4

**Friday 5th February**

### CHAPTER 4

Paul returned the following day to his office at nine o'clock and to his new position as a journalist and he noticed that the editor was sitting at his desk and was studying the picture of Kathleen.

The editor looked towards Paul and said "This is your first big story and its an exclusive. The police have just fished the body of a French diplomat out of the English channel. The press are swarming all over this and I need you to go and talk to the police and to check things out. I have a friend, Detective Williamson. He will be waiting for you at the murder site. I'm giving you this story as a major break to help you out. Don't let me down."

Paul drove to the murder site on the Eastern Docks of the River Itchen and he saw a large canvas tent buffeted by a soft breeze. He walked to a gentleman in a long brown overcoat.

"Detective Williamson?" he said.

The detective turned around seeing Paul and said coldly "Southampton Tribune. Come this way please."

Paul followed the detective into a large tent and he saw the bloated body of a man in his fifties lying on a metal table and was covered over with a white sheet that went from his chest to his toes.

The detective looked to Paul "Is this the first time you have seen a body?"

Paul studied the body curiously "Yes it is. I am not that queasy. What can you tell me about him?"

Detective Williamson continued "Two gunshots to the back and one to the head, tests are ongoing to determine the size of the gun. The reason for his death is unknown and there are no witnesses at this time."

Paul wrote all of it down and he asked "Who is he?"

The detective looked over to Paul who was writing on his notepad "Giovanni Rosinni. He was a French Diplomat who served in Egypt for ten years and Italy for the past seven years. He has been stationed in London for two years. Before you arrived his sister, Isabella Rosinni identified the body?"

Paul finished his notes "Thank you."

The detective walked Paul back to his car. Paul was a buzz with excitement at his first story as he drove away.

He got back to his office and it was just coming up after twelve and he would be pushing the story for the evening edition. Paul walked into his office and typed the story on his black typewriter.

Today a dock yard worker working on a cargo ship on the Eastern Docks on the River Itchen noticed what at first appeared to be a floating log but turned out to be the body of Giovanni Rosinni, a French diplomat working in London. Police have said that he was killed by one bullet to the chest and two bullets in the back of his head and they are appealing for any witnesses to come forward'.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul Spencer

The article was short and to the point but there was little that Paul had to go on but he was pleased at his first major story being published and he got his first front page article.

## Chapter 5

**Monday 8th February**

### CHAPTER 5

Tyson Hulios read Paul's article sent to him by one of his business associates in the UK. He was pleased with the death of the diplomat but the envelope containing the newspaper also indicated that Paul maybe contacted by other people.

Overlooking Naples Bay Tyson raised a glass of whiskey to the death of Giovanni Rosinni "Good riddance traitor."

Outside the sun shone harshly intensifying the blues of the Mediterranean Sea and it produced harsh contrasty browns and greens. Tyson walked out onto the balcony.

Bella his mistress of seven years walked up behind and kissed him on the back of the neck "Good news my love."

Tyson looked to her his eyes were alive with joy "Very good. Giovanni is dead."

Bella nodded "He was a problem. It is good news that he is dead."

He returned to Paul's article but he continued to be trouble and he rang Byron on a secure line as he bit down on his cigar.

"I have got another job for you. We need to teach this journalist to leave things alone. Don't kill him just scare him enough so that he will back off."

The phone call ended. Byron sat at his desk looking out of his window in his apartment in St Helier, Jersey. He stared at the sunshine trying to pierce through overcast skies.

He grabbed his coat and headed to Jerseys airport located in St Peters only a few miles from where he lived.

Within two hours he was in Southampton. He looked around and made enquires with contacts who owed him favours and he eventually tracked down Paul's apartment.

He looked up and saw that no one was there. Byron buzzed one of the tenants and he pretended to be an uncle wanting to drop something off. Byron was let inside by one of Paul's neighbours. He ascended winding stairs until he saw Paul's apartment and he saw a letter wedged in Paul's letterbox. It was addressed to Paul from Kathleen. Byron opened the letter and read it.

*Dearest Paul*

*I know you must be angry and hurt. You must be blaming yourself but please don't. We need to talk. Contact me soon.*

*Love*

*Kathleen*

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Byron smiled as he turned the letter over and revealed that Kathleen was staying in London on business and had a number that she could be contacted at and that she was staying at the Dolphin Hotel. He put the letter in his jacket pocket and he drove away in his rented Ford Capri to London. He smiled and began to think how to send a message. Violence was his method but this required delicacy and he began to think of ways of devising something that would send a message for Paul to back off and go home.

## Chapter 6

### CHAPTER 6

A weekend had passed since Paul's article appeared in the Southampton Tribune.

It had gone eight o'clock in the morning when there was a knock on Paul's door. Paul got up putting on his dressing gown and he headed to the door.

As he opened the door he saw a man dressed in a dark blue uniform and a hat. He looked official whoever he was Paul thought to himself.

"How can I help you?" Paul said unsure of who this man was.

The driver looked to Paul coolly "Madam Rosinni at the French Embassy would like you to join her in London."

Paul shook his head in disbelief "This is a practical joke right, someone sent you here to wind me up?"

Francois looked at Paul and he said seriously "This is no joke."

Paul realised that this was for real and that this was no joke and he said to Francois "Give me fifteen minutes to get changed."

Fifteen minutes later Paul was changed and showered. He drank quickly luke warm coffee and cold burnt toast as he left his apartment. As he left he forgot the tools he needed and he ran back into his flat to get his notepad and blue pen. He knew that it wasn't everyday that you were going to the French embassy to meet the sister of a dead French diplomat.

Paul got into a stretched Mercedes W123 and was furnished with cream leather seats and wooden panelling. He sank into the deep leather chairs as the car left Southampton.

It was after eleven that the car pulled into the French embassy. Paul stared out of the window as the gates of the embassy were opened and the car drove across a cobbled surface till it stopped outside the main doors of the embassy.

The car door was opened gracefully by the driver. Out of a pair of double doors came a lady wearing a green suit, black shoes and long flowing brown hair. She shook Paul's hand.

"Good to see you Paul Spencer. I am Juliette Gamon, Madam Rosinnis secretary. Madam Rosinni will meet you in ten minutes. Please will you follow me?"

Paul said nothing but he was dying to ask questions but bit his lip. He knew he was being offered an exclusive and he followed the secretary down the hall.

Paul sat for thirty minutes watching people coming and going. Across from him was a painting of a waterfall. He got up and saw a caption and studied the painting and he stood admiring the contrasting whites and greys of the waterfall set with a mixture of dark greens of the hills in the background.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Then a group of people parted as Isabella Rosinni came into view she saw Paul and smiled at him and she said "Waterfall at Terni by Camille Corot. Its one of my favourite pictures. Its a painting done near Rome and the waterfall is called Cascade delle Marmore."

Paul turned and he noticed a woman standing by him was short at five feet wearing a long flowing ivory skirt with a cream shirt with a set of pearl earrings and deep green shoes. Her eyes where set close together with a short nose.

"Its a nice picture." Paul said.

She stood by Paul and looked to him and introduced herself "Isabella Rosinni."

Paul turned around and responded "Paul Spencer."

"Would you follow me please?" Isabella said inviting Paul to her office off the main corridor of the embassy.

She closed the door and studied Paul for a moment looking at his green and blue eyes "Your the want who wrote the article on my brother?"

Paul nodded warily and he sat down on a dark wooden chair "Yes I did."

Paul looked around the room noticing the views towards Hyde Park seeing trees and the Serpentine Lake in the distance. In the room he looked around and he noticed an eighteenth century desk and a black pen resting on a thick pile of papers.

Isabella looked to Paul with curiosity as she lit a cigarette and offered one to Paul but he refused "I read your article and it was concise and to the point. I also realise that there are lots of people demanding an interview. I thought I would seize the initiative."

Paul stared silently at Isabella and he tried to make sense of where he was and what this was all about "I was just doing my job" he said.

Isabella sat down and continued "Of course, the reason I invited you hear was for you to get an interview with me. The deal is that you get an interview and you get my side of the story. In return I want you to find out why he was killed. None of my people can do it and I need someone from the outside to uncover the reason for his murder."

Paul nodded "Thank you for having me here but I am no detective. Why me?"

Isabella nodded "I need someone on the outside. Mr Spencer my brother was killed and I do not trust the French or the British police their are to many people who would be looking to protect their own backs."

Paul sat still and said "Why not use one of your staff if you do not trust the authorities?"

Isabella sat and she responded by saying "Mr Spencer my own staff are loyal but I need an outsider. I tell you what I have a room at the Ritz that I rent for guests when they come to meet me. Sleep on it and come back to me tomorrow morning at eleven."

Isabella got up and she looked squarely at Paul "I want an answer Mr Spencer by ten o'clock tomorrow morning after that the deal is off."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Isabella walked towards the door and motioned over her driver who was sitting in the corridor. "Francois can you take Paul to the Ritz. You know what needs to be done."

Francois nodded and escorted Paul to a waiting Mercedes and drove him to the Ritz. A concierge escorted Paul to the Arlington suite of the hotel. Paul walked in and saw the floral carpeting, gold rimmed mirrors and a large double bed. The concierge left him and reminded him that they were on service if he needed anything.

Paul's mind was on the offer that had been given to him. Yet he walked to the window and saw the streets of London beneath him and noticed the toing and froing of taxis and people and wondered where they were going. The rain had come with him from Southampton and it began to rain outside. Paul was restless and it was the first time he was alone in days. Yet apart of him missed Kathleen and wished that she was here with him at the Ritz and would have loved all the opulence of the place.

Paul sighed and he headed out of the room and walked out of the hotel. He had some money with him and he ordered a taxi to take him to the riverbank close to Parliament. As he got out of the taxi he noticed that in front of him was Westminster Bridge and Big Ben to his right. The clock registered after five and the night was cold and pitch black with the surroundings lit by orange tungsten lighting.

However Paul's mind was elsewhere looking ahead and he walked to the river bank. He saw a familiar sight in the distance. He shook his head in disbelief. A figure, a figure he didn't think would be in London. To be sure Paul carried on walking till he was closer.

As he walked closer he saw a woman tall slim and athletic staring at across the Thames with a vacant stare "Kathleen is that you?"

The figure turned around. Her eyes lit up with surprise "Paul, what are you doing here?"

Paul smiled in amusement "Business, its been of those days."

Kathleen smiled at Paul "You got my note then?"

Paul shrugged his shoulders "Note?"

Paul shook his head "No I never got anything."

Kathleen sighed " I wanted to speak to you."

Paul responded and moved closer to Kathleen "What about?"

Kathleen turned to face him "Listen I am staying at the Dolphin Hotel up the road. I was on my way back you can join me if you like."

Paul nodded "Sure."

Kathleen continued to look back to him as she walked back to her hotel in Charing Cross "I have been here for a few days and I have been interviewed by Norwich University for a medical research programme. I have been applying for years and now I have got somewhere. They offered me a research job starting in two days."

Kathleen saw Paul's face and the sadness that he expressed "Listen. I am sorry we split up. You have nothing to blame for. I love you with all my heart and I always will."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul acknowledged and responded by saying "Can we at least be friends?"

Kathleen "Sounds good. I would like that. We can keep in contact from time to time and you can come up to Norwich once I am settled."

They continued walking. Night time had arrived and the Thames was lit by green, blue and yellow lights which illuminated the blackness of the Thames.

Byron walked into the Dolphin Hotel walking into a red carpeted reception area and he posed as a health and safety inspector.

"Hello their" the receptionist said.

"Hello I am looking for the room for a Kathleen Phillips."

Byron showed her a false ID. The receptionist bought it "I will need to speak to the manager to let him know that you are here."

Byron nodded and the receptionist left. As she did so Byron glanced down at the guest book and he saw Kathleens room number. The manager returned.

"How can I help you?"

Byron responded with a reassuring smile "Nothing to worry about but we need to check out reports of damp that have been reported to us."

The manager, a small bald headed man nodded and showed him the room number and gave Byron a spare key "Call us if you need anything."

Byron nodded "I will."

He ascended the stairs and walked to Kathleens room located on the second floor he found his way to Kathleens room by using the key given to him. In the distance he heard laughter and made his way inside hiding in a tall cupboard located near to Kathleens bed.

Paul walked Kathleen to her room. They were both full of laughter.

Kathleen smiled as they got closer to her room "Do you want to come in?"

Paul nodded "Sure."

Kathleen said as she opened the door "Wait in the hallway. Give me five minutes and I will call you in. My room isn't exactly clean."

Byron had been waiting for her to return to her room. He saw Kathleen entering the room through slats in the cupboard door. He breathed quietly and suddenly kicked open the door frightening Kathleen and she looked at him in terror.

Kathleen tried to run towards the door. Byron ran and grabbed her and he smiled "Don't scream, don't run."

Kathleen was frightened and she said trying to remain calm "What, what do you want?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Byron dragged her to by the window "Your boyfriend is trouble. Tell him to stop digging around in places he shouldn't."

Kathleen managed to wriggle free and looked at him confused "What are you on about his work on the diplomat. What's that got to do with anything, that's his job."

Byron walked closer "Listen tell your boyfriend to back off. This is a friendly warning."

Kathleen ran to the corner of the room trying to flee from Byron. Byron walked closer to Kathleen, their was a menacing smile on his face.

She looked around and saw a large green lamp next to where she was standing. She grabbed it and threw it at Byron sending him crashing to the ground. He got up full of anger as blood poured down his right cheek.

Outside Paul heard something smashing and opened the door to see Byron standing in Kathleens room. He could see that Byron was going to go for Kathleen and Paul stood between the two of them. Byron, knowing his cover was blown ran out of the room. Paul chased after him but Byron quickly disappeared down a long winding maze of corridors.

Paul ran back to see Kathleen crying and on the bed and in distress. He walked closer and held Kathleen.

"What did he want?"

Kathleen responded "He wants you to back off from your story."

Paul looked into Kathleens green eyes "I can't. He already has killed one person. You were lucky. This guy has to be stopped. Whatever he is apart of someone is desperate to keep things quiet."

Kathleen responded "He was serious. You go up against him again and you will be dead. I don't want you killed over some story."

Paul sat at a nearby chair full of disbelief.

By now security had arrived. A large square jawed security guard scanned the room "Their were reports of a commotion."

Paul and Kathleen gave their statements to a policeman who came within minutes of the disturbance.

Later Paul walked Kathleen back to her room. Their was a sense of finality and that this was the end of their four year relationship.

Paul leaned against the door beaming with a smile in spite of the nights events "Its been a lot of fun."

Kathleen nodded and opened her door "Yes it has and thank you for showing me things I never considered before. I will call you."

Kathleen entered her room and Paul left saddened returning to the Ritz.

## Chapter 7

**Tuesday 9th February**

### CHAPTER 7

Paul awoke at eight the following morning and he was still shocked by the violence of the previous night. He got showered and changed and he ordered two bowls of Cornflakes and a coffee. He had decided to treat himself.

Paul ate his cereal as he looked down from his hotel window onto the bustling street below. He reflected on the offer given to him by Isabella. Part of him wanted to walk away and go home, but he knew he had achieved a lot and had covered a major story that had helped start his new job. Yet parts of him were in conflict, his heart said to stay and check out what Isabella had to say, his head however said to run.

His notepad lay close to where he sat and reached over to it. He began to jot down notes on the things he wanted to ask but his mind was blank. His heart stung from his breakup from Kathleen. Part of him blamed himself that he hadn't seen it earlier and should have seen that they were moving to fast or something. Yet there was nothing that he could put his finger on. As Paul returned to his notes there was a knock on the door. He got up and answered the door and was surprised to see Isabella.

Paul invited her in "I am surprised to see you. I thought I was meeting you later."

Isabella looked to Paul in sympathy "I heard about what happened last night at the Dolphin Hotel."

Paul looked to her surprised that she knew what had happened.

Isabella walked into his room and saw Paul's second bowl of cornflakes. The sight amused her.

She turned to Paul and said with concern "I have friends in the police force who tell me things. Are you alright?"

Paul nodded "We are a bit shaken but we are both alright."

Isabella sat on a chair next to Paul. She glanced back to the second bowl of cornflakes "Do you mind I haven't had time for breakfast?"

Paul was surprised "Go ahead."

Isabella helped herself to the second bowl of cornflakes and she noticed Paul's surprise "Don't worry I have a bowl of these once in a while. Have you thought about my offer?"

Paul nodded "I am willing to interview you and I am willing to help you out. But I do not know where to start."

Isabella smiled and she said "I have a friend in Greenwich who can help you out. But first the interview."

Paul nodded and questioned her asking about Giovanni's life, what he was like and what he did at the French embassy. Isabella answered by saying that Giovanni had served in the French Diplomatic Core in Egypt and Italy for more than fifteen years. Before this he was a translator for the French government working out of French Guyana.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

In Paul's notes he wrote of Giovanni's love for the UK and it was his third posting and had been here for two years. He enjoyed playing golf and the piano. The interview lasted for fifteen minutes and was short and to the point. When Isabella was asked about the reason for Giovanni's murder she paused for a moment.

"Can we stop the interview?"

Paul looked to her and he said "Sure. Is everything alright?"

Isabella said and looked to Paul seriously "You asked me about why Giovanni was killed. This has to be off the record."

Paul put his pen down as Isabella continued to look at him "You ask me why he was killed. Giovanni was a good brother and he was involved in things that put fear into other people. I knew some of the things that went on but I chose not to say anything in order to protect myself and other people that I care for."

Isabella got out a piece of paper with an address on it. "This is the contact I promised you and he will help you out."

Paul took the piece of paper and looked at it curiously "Thank you."

Isabella smiled and she said "No thank you. It feels good to talk to someone even if it is a journalist. Go now he is expecting you."

Paul left the Arlington Suite of the Ritz and he was soon in the midst of bustling commuters on bike, foot and car making their way to work on a cloudy winter's day. It was bitterly cold in London as Paul arrived at Greenwich.

He found the Ashburnham Triangle area of the town and it was the location of Isabella's contact and he found the house. It was a bricked three storey town house set back from the road with a small front garden.

He pressed a buzzer and Paul could hear a man walking quickly down the stairs. As the door opened Paul spotted a man short in height with intense brown eyes which studied him for a second before the stranger's face lit up.

The owner smiled at Paul and shook his hand. "It is so good to see you. I have been expecting you."

They walked into the lounge which was small and compact with an L shaped brown leather sofa spread across two walls. The back of the lounge was illuminated by a large expansive window that looked onto a conservatory and onto a view of the terraced garden to the rear.

The owner stood for a moment "My friends call me Timothy Elmerston, you can call me Tim if you like."

Timothy left the room for a moment in the distance he shouted "Tea, coffee?"

Paul responded "Coffee please one sugar."

A black Labrador entered the lounge and began to sniff Paul checking out something new and different. Paul had an affection for dogs and cats and like the simplicity in expressing what they felt and needed.

Paul opened his right hand and the dog licked it. There was a glint on the dog's collar. Paul bent over and he saw that it was a dog tag, in large etched letters was the name Samson.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Timothy came back into the room laden with coffee and biscuits and he places the tray on a table next to Paul.

In his mind Paul had a thousand questions but only one that he was eager to ask "What is going on?" he said looking to Timothy.

Timothy sat down as the cold winters light lit up his face "What is going on is that you are waist deep into something dangerous."

Paul nodded "They came for someone close to me. I was investigating the death of Giovanni Rosinni in Southampton and then the events of the past few days happen."

Timothy sat in his seat and rested his coffee on the arm of the sofa "It is regrettable that you are caught up in all this. There are things I cannot tell you in order to protect you from further harm. What I can tell you is that the man who tried to kill your girlfriend is a hired gun who goes by the name of Byron. He has the nickname of the Hammer and he has a reputation for getting the job done. You're lucky to be still alive. A warning is not his usual style."

Paul was intrigued and got out his pen and began to write what had been said to him "This Hammer you mentioned, why is he after me I am just a journalist pursuing a story?"

Timothy knew that Paul was pressing for further information "I know Isabella sent you to me. She reckons I can help you to uncover the motive. The guy who came after you most certainly killed Giovanni Rosinni. The Hammer was probably hired by someone who doesn't want anything revealed. My advice is to back off and go home as you have been told. Pursue this and you may not see tomorrow."

Timothy got up shrugging his shoulders and he said "I can't help you and I am sorry that you have come all this way. My advice is to go home back to your girlfriend and your job in Southampton. You've had an exciting few days and that should be it. You must not continue to pursue this story as next time you may not be so fortunate. I regret I cannot be of further help."

Paul left Timothy's house five minutes later and he left angry and annoyed. He felt used but he had a story and knew he needed to get back to the Southampton Tribune. He looked to his watch and it had gone twelve thirty and knew that he had to get back and explain what had happened to his editor.

Timothy watched Paul as he headed down the street. There was hardly a breeze in the air but still the sharpness of the winters air had not disappeared. As Paul walked out of view Timothy walked to his telephone on a brown table close to where he stood at the window looking out onto his small garden of potted plants and short shrubs that lined the boundary line between him and his neighbours.

Timothy looked out of the window and narrowed his eyes as he picked up the telephone "You can leave Paul alone. He has gone home."

Tyson knew who the caller was "Timothy, why the secrecy? I know it is you."

Timothy continued as he stared out of the window "We have both an interest to keep the status quo."

Tyson smiled coldly "It is good to hear that you're working for our side."

Timothy said calmly "I am not on your side I am doing us both a favour."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Tyson replied mockingly "If you insist. But thank you anyway. Give our love to Isabella when you see her next."

Timothy ended the phone call and Tyson's last comment stung him. He knew of his own history and involvement with the Brethren and Isabella. His past had come back to haunt him, a past he had tried to put behind him. He hoped that Paul would stay well away.

## Chapter 8

### CHAPTER 8

Paul arrived at the offices of the Southampton Tribune at three o'clock and he had managed to draft on the train a short article based on the interview with Isabella. As the train got into Southampton he walked through the station to a waiting taxi on the forecourt and it drove him the short distance to the offices of the Tribune. Paul got to his desk and the office was quiet with only a receptionist and a handful of journalists around.

The editor walked over to Paul not knowing what had happened in London and wondered where he had been for the past twenty four hours. Paul looked to the editor and he explained everything that had happened with Byron, Timothy and the interview with Isabella. By the time he had finished the editor sat on a black plastic chair close to Paul.

The editor was sympathetic to what had happened and could see that Paul's face looked drained and his eyes had none of the fire that he had so often seen in him.

Paul handed his story to the editor. The editor glanced at it for a moment before returning his gaze to Paul.

"This will go in for tomorrow's edition. This is good work. This story with Giovanni is turning into something we hadn't expected. I want you to keep on top of this story and we may not have seen the last of it."

Paul took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes.

The editor looked at him and he said "Go home and rest. Come back to me in a couple of days. It seems this Giovanni story has taken it out of you."

Paul tried to object but the editor repeated himself "Go home."

Paul headed quickly back to his flat. As he entered his flat he felt claustrophobic and edgy. He didn't want to be there and needed to get away and he knew a place he could go to. It was a private retreat only his editor and Kathleen knew of.

## Chapter 9

### CHAPTER 9

It had gone late at Timothy's house as he sat in his conservatory listening to a Bach vinyl. There was a knock on the door. He walked through the hallway and saw through a diffused circular window on the door a person he knew and didn't want to see.

He opened the door to see Isabella standing in the doorway. Timothy said nothing as Isabella stepped inside closing the door behind her. She followed Timothy to his conservatory.

They both sat close together on cane furniture overlooking a small garden to the rear with a pond, grey paving slabs illuminated by the lights of Timothy's lounge.

Isabella stared out of the window and she was the first to speak "I see that you have told Paul to back off. I wanted you to help him."

Timothy looked to her coldly "It was for the best. We can't have people snooping around. I may not have liked Tyson's actions but Paul is dealt with and he has backed off."

Isabella took off her shades and looked at Timothy "Maybe I am sick of lying and what we both have lost. Paul didn't have to be targeted like that. He was just doing his job."

Timothy looked to her with intense eyes "So are we, the world does not want to know what happened nor the things we have done."

Isabella sat and fixed her eyes on Timothy "Tyson maybe happy but something like this was bound to happen sooner or later. Tomorrow another journalist may show up and start prodding around."

Timothy snorted "Unlikely the death of your brother was regrettable and he was a good man but the story will be filed away and forgotten about."

Isabella looked at Timothy disapprovingly "Don't be so sure. Life has a way of turning up things you do not expect."

Timothy's eyes narrowed "Don't threaten me."

Isabella responded coyly "No just an observation."

She got up slowly from her chair "Its good to see you again Timothy. You've kept the place the same."

Timothy walked Isabella to the door "Its a place your always welcome to come to."

As they approached the door Isabella turned to Timothy. Their eyes locked and for a moment the hurt, the lies, the deceit disappeared. They were younger and free of the cares of the world .

Isabella smiled and grabbed his arm "You haven't changed."

Timothy stood still not reacting "Neither have you."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

He opened the door and Isabella walked to her black Jaguar XJ and she drove into the night.

## Chapter 10

Wednesday 10th February

### CHAPTER 10

A gentle soft breeze blew all around Paul as he stood at the harbour at Bridport on Dorset's West Harbour. Fishing boats and small yachts came to and from the harbour. In the distance Paul could hear the cries of seagulls in the distance diving into the sea grabbing small fish.

Through his camera lens he saw white buildings with hills in the distance with the English Channel to his left. The weather was bitterly cold with a grey overcast sky that Paul liked due to the soft diffused lighting which subdued the natural whites and greens of the landscape that he was photographing.

Paul stopped looking through his camera and raised his binoculars to spot a person on the harbour looking at him. The sight made him uneasy and he worried that Byron was back.

He did nothing and stayed where he was. Paul told himself that he was being paranoid and that no one was out to kill him. He repositioned the camera so that the harbour was at the bottom of the camera's viewfinder with distant boats in the far horizon.

The stranger moved closer to where Paul stood and was amused by the sight of him photographing and she continued to walk towards Paul in the distance to confirm that she had found who she was looking for.

Paul picked up his tripod and began to pack away his camera and lenses when the stranger came to within earshot of him.

"Mr Spencer."

Paul turned around to see an athletic built woman in her early thirties, five foot in height with short black hair a pointed chin and a stubby nose.

Paul looked to her and he said, "Can I help you?"

The woman smiled and spoke with a Parisian accent "Hopefully we can help each other."

Paul stood for a moment unsure of what the woman wanted "Depends on what you mean?"

The lady could see that Paul was struggling with his camera bag "Let me."

Paul said "Thank you."

They walked to Paul's rusting Vauxhall Viva and he realised that he hadn't asked her name. "I'm sorry. I didn't catch your name."

The lady smiled "Jasmine Rosinni."

Paul recognised the person from a photo on a mantel piece he had seen when talking to Isabella Rosinni "Tell your mum I want nothing to do with the Giovanni business."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine was hurt but she kept calm "Mr Spencer my Mum doesn't know that I am in the UK. I have driven from Paris to speak to you and I need your help."

Out of her back pocket she showed her I.D. On it was her name in black letters, her police number and her photograph.

Paul leaned on his car and he was bemused "French police."

Jasmine nodded "Yes. Can we go somewhere and talk?"

Paul wanted to be left alone and away from people but put his annoyance to the back of his mind.

Jasmine followed Paul to a small terraced cottage a few miles from the coast and drove down winding lanes lined with hedges and rolling hills with views of the Dorset Coast in the distance.

They both arrived back at Paul's cottage. Jasmine followed Paul up a small front lawn and walked into a small lounge with a red brick backed fire place with two small chairs either side with a small chest of oak drawers by the window. There were tall shelves containing books written by Conan Doyle and vinyl's of the Beatles and the Monkeys.

The kitchen was long and slender and it had black acrylic tops and small wooden cupboards. It looked onto a rear garden which was bathed in a warm winters light. A mixture of daisy's and gnomes lined the narrow garden.

"Is this place yours?" Jasmine asked.

Paul nodded "My aunt left it to me a few years ago."

Jasmine responded "That's nice of her."

Paul walked to the sink and poured cold water into the kettle "Coffee?"

Jasmine looked towards Paul "Yes please."

They both sat together at a kitchen table. Jasmine sipped some of the coffee and looked towards Paul with curious eyes.

"Tell me everything that has happened."

Paul sighed and told her the events that had happened and took nearly an hour to describe. The emotions came back to him and as he was speaking he spoke with bitterness. When he finished Jasmine sat quietly.

"I need to visit someone tomorrow."

Paul was intrigued "Who?"

Jasmine smiled "A member of the family."

## Chapter 11

### CHAPTER 11

Juliette Gamon had been informed of Jasmine's arrival by a Brethren operative working at Dover Harbour. She rang Tyson from a quiet part of the embassy away from prying eyes "Just to let you know that the diplomats' niece is in the country and snooping around. It's likely she has gone to that journalist."

Tyson thanked the caller and ended the call. He was angry and rang Byron on a secure line as he looked across his desk full of papers "I asked you to take care of Paul. It seems he is now involved with the diplomats' niece. Get rid of them. They've had enough chances."

Byron was angry at the implication that he had been sloppy but he held his cool as he looked down from his flat window to the streets of St Helier, Jersey. "I will get it done."

## Chapter 12

**Thursday 11th February**

### CHAPTER 12

The following morning they drove to the morgue building in Southampton lit by an overcast sky. Paul parked up his car and they walked to the morgue reception. Jasmine showed her I.D at the female receptionist sitting at a desk and she was waved through. Jasmine asked to see the body alone with Paul.

The morgue was quiet with a handful of staff on duty. They both walked down the sterile white walled corridor to her uncles body. There was no sound but the buzz of overhead fluorescent lights and they continued to walk for about five minutes until they reached the room that held Giovanni Rosinni. Before they entered Jasmine froze. The reality of what she was doing was now upon her.

They were met by John Tople, the mortician on shift "I understand you want to look at the body?"

Jasmine nodded and the mortician obliged and he walked to the metal cabinet holding Giovannis body and pulled it out.

Jasmine stroked her uncles grey hair as she spoke with sadness "Uncle I will find out who did this."

Jasmine looked up at the mortician who was short, stubby and bald "How did he die?"

The mortician looked to her with sympathetic eyes "Three shots. Two in the back and one in the head."

Jasmine turned to Paul as she tried to contain her anger "Just like you said."

Paul said nothing and was quiet allowing Jasmine to take in the sight of her uncles dead body.

The mortician looked over to Jasmine "Are you family?"

Jasmine nodded and placed her uncle back into the cabinet "I am. My friend Paul is just helping me out."

The mortician left the room with Jasmine and he locked the room "Call me if you need anything."

Jasmine responded and nodded "Thanks."

Jasmine sat down and she lit up a cigarette, she hadn't realised how much her uncles death had affected her and there was a deep gnawing hurt. It felt as if something was missing. It wasn't physical like hunger just an emptiness where a space had once been filled.

Paul stood quietly unsure of what to say.

Jasmine continued "I have to find his killer. That is now my mission. To bring him or her to justice."

Paul stood a few feet from Jasmine "Where do we go from here?"

Jasmine smiled and looked towards Paul "There is someone who can help us. He is an old friend of the family's."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine saw a pay phone close to where she was sitting. The phone rang for a few seconds till it was answered "Old friend" she said.

"Good to hear from you Jasmine" the stranger acknowledged her voice.

She relayed to her friend everything that had happened and what she was wanting to do.

The contact "Is their one or two of you?"

Jasmine explained "Two. I have a friend I am bringing along."

The contact replied "Eight o'clock tomorrow night meet me at Hoole Hall, Chester. You will be booked in as a couple. I will be wearing a gold Loxex watch on my right wrist and wearing a black suit. It will be good to see you again."

The phone called ended as Jasmine turned and smiled at Paul "We're in."

They both left for their cars. As they approached the entrance to the morgue as large orange flames could be seen in the distance.

The receptionist handed Paul a handwritten note.

"You've had your chance."

Paul knew who had done it and he said angrily "Byron."

He showed Jasmine the note.

Jasmine looked to Paul before returning her gaze to the burning cars in front of her

"So it begins. Their's no going back."

They returned an hour later after the burning wreckage was put out. They walked up the steps to Paul's flat. Jasmine turned round to Paul "Is it alright me staying here? Maybe I should get a hotel room or something. I don't want to inconvenience you.

Paul looked to Jasmine and nodded. "Its alright."

As she entered Paul's lounge she saw numerous pictures on the wall, some of London, others of Cornwall. Her eyes scanned to the decor and saw a long three seater sofa, table by a window and a small TV in the corner. It was simple but comfortable and tidy.

Jasmine looked towards Paul "Do you mind if I use your shower? I didn't have time this morning."

Paul replied "Sure its down the hallway".

Jasmine nodded and she left the lounge "Thanks."

Jasmine got into the shower thinking of everything that had happened since last night. She turned on the shower as the warm spray hit her face. Her thoughts turned away from the case. As she stood in the shower staring at the blue tiles ahead of her she thought of her uncle and the times they spent together. Their was a

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

feeling of loss and hurt mixed with anger.

## Chapter 13

**Friday 12th February**

### CHAPTER 13

The following day Paul and Jasmine headed to Chester travelling by train through London Euston. On the journey there was little talking. Jasmine was deep in grief and hungry for retribution to bring her uncle's killer to justice.

They both got off the train at Chester train station and they took a taxi to Hoole Hall which was a couple of miles from where they were. The night was beginning to draw in and the temperature barely hovered above freezing.

Jasmine's eyes were intense as she turned to Paul as they left the taxi and headed into Hoole Hall "Follow my lead and say nothing."

The taxi arrived at Hoole Hall at five o'clock and a celebration of some kind was going on which Paul could not make out.

In the distance seventies and eighties music played none of which Paul could make out. Paul looked around the room and saw that the room was magnolia in colour adorned with vases and hanging chandeliers.

Jasmine however wasn't interested in the party. She wore a body length maroon dress that went from her neck to her knees. Paul was dressed in a simple three button suit with matching black shoes and trousers.

Paul walked in and noticed that they were registered as Mr and Mrs Jones, an ordinary name that would not stand out.

She linked her arm with Paul's "Act natural, as if we were a couple."

Paul said nothing as they both walked into the main entrance hall as people mingled in formal suits and dresses talking, laughing and drinking out of long thin crystal glasses.

Jasmine's eyes scanned the room and she saw Ryan in the distance looking out of a window onto green landscaped lawns bathed in artificial lighting. She tugged at Paul to indicate who the contact was. Ryan looked towards them before returning to the view.

Ryan turned around and saw Paul first with Jasmine by his side "Good to see you."

Jasmine pecked him "It's been a long time."

She looked to her long time family friend in his fifties with black hair and he had a large waistline, with short chin, narrow set eyes and a large buttoned nose.

Ryan turned his attention to Paul "I see Jasmine you brought a friend."

Paul wondered how Ryan was tied up in all this business with Giovanni Rosinni.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Ryan continued "I am sorry about your uncle. He was a good man. I cannot understand why he was killed. All I can do is tell you that he loved you and to give you this in case anything like this happened."

Ryan pulled out of his pocket a white envelope and he handed it to Jasmine "He asked me to give you this in case anything ever happened."

Jasmine stared at the envelope unsure of what was in it. She took the envelope from Ryan's hands. In the envelope was a folded note and a key.

As Jasmine began to read the note tears formed in her eyes. She glanced to the key before returning to the note.

*My darling niece if you are reading this it is because I am either seriously injured or dead. I gave this letter to Ryan so you can uncover who may have killed me. My niece do not worry and I am proud of everything you have achieved. The key with this letter is for an office I rented in the city of Chester. Their I hope you may find some answers.*

*All my love*

*Giovanni Rosinni*

Jasmine looked over to Ryan who remained silent as she composed herself.

"Do you know anything else?"

Ryan shook his head "No. This is everything. Why don't you stay and enjoy the party? You both look like you could do with a night out."

Jasmine responded "Really. I would love to but we had a long trip from London. I'm eager to get back to my room and sleep."

Ryan moved his head towards her and he said "Pity. But keep me in touch."

He left after Jasmine turned to Paul "Lets go."

Paul was quiet and he followed Jasmine to the taxi which had been waiting for them for five minutes.

They both got inside and Jasmine said "Shropshire Canal Hotel please."

Paul turned to Jasmine as the car drove them back towards the railway station "How do you know Ryan?"

Jasmine said "Ryan is an old family friend who used to work for my uncle when he was stationed in Egypt and we have kept in touch since then. "

For Jasmine it had been a long journey and she was still in grief with her uncle gone. Paul looked to the receptionist who had keys waiting for their rooms. Paul and Jasmine headed into the foyer and they got into the lift. Jasmine and Paul got out on the third floor and they both headed to their rooms.

Jasmine stopped and she walked back towards Paul with a reddened face and her eyes were full of tears "Thanks for everything."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul responded "Its okay I will be next door if you need me."

Jasmine nodded and she walked back up the long white walled corridor opening her room door.

Paul walked into his room and as he closed the door he could hear Jasmine crying and sobbing, she pounded on the door. Paul wanted to go and comfort her but he held back knowing she needed time alone. This made Paul uncomfortable and he hated it when people were hurt or in distress and would always try to help but had learned through his mums death that people needed time and space to process things. Paul walked to his bed placing his bag on the bedside table.

The room was small with a single bed, clean sheets and hot water, with views of the Shropshire canal and a concrete road bridge to his right and a bricked building of similar height on the opposite side of the canal. A small, thin elderly woman walked past in front of the hotel with two Yorkshire terriers.

The tears stopped and Paul reckoned Jasmine had gone to sleep. Paul walked over to his bag and took out a photo of Kathleen that had been taken only days earlier. Paul studied it intently, trying to make sense of where he had ended up and walked back to his bed and laid down, he shook his head in disbelief at the events of the past few days. Paul put the photo on the bedside table. He lay on his back and thought about Jasmynes uncle thinking to himself 'what were you into?'

This thought raced through his mind and nothing at all came to him only the onset of tiredness and the need for sleep.

## Chapter 14

**Saturday 13th February**

### CHAPTER 14

It had gone ten o'clock the following morning and it was a clear February's morning outside. The temperature was an unusual twelve degrees. The low pressure system had disappeared during the night to be replaced by a high pressure system from the Atlantic.

Paul got up and opened his eyes, he noticed the sun trying to pierce through the thin blue curtain on his window. He had a restful sleep and opened the curtains to see people walking by the canal coming and going. He got himself ready and walked down the hall. Jasmine was still tucked up deep in sleep dreaming about her favourite salmon dishes.

He knocked on her door. Jasmine woke up and looked to the clock it had gone after quarter past ten and she was surprised that she had slept so late. She put on her red dressing gown and opened the door to see Paul standing in the doorway.

"Good morning."

Jasmine smiled "Good morning. Come on in."

Paul walked in to see that the the room was exactly like his in dÃ©cor and furnishings.

"I see your not dressed yet."

Jasmine smiled as she walked to the bathroom before turning her head and smiling "Well at least one of us is. I found something on the back of the note last night."

Paul sat on the bed intrigued "What did you find?"

Jasmine stood in the bathroom doorway as she left Paul "Directions. I think. Look at it. I will be with you in five minutes."

He opened the curtains and walked over to the piece of paper and looked to the back of the letter given to Jasmine the night before. On it was an address, Steam Mill Building, Shropshire Canal, Chester.

Jasmine returned five minutes later changed and ready to go "Do you know where it is?"

Paul looked to Jasmine as they left the third floor "I think I do it was about ten years ago when I was last in Chester. I think it is close by. We will have to ask reception on the way down."

Jasmine nodded and they both stopped "First things first. I haven't eaten since leaving Southampton yesterday."

Paul frowned at her "What about those pizzas and two burgers you had."

Jasmines eyes narrowed and she pouted her lips "Are you saying I am fat?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul knew he had dug himself a hole "Lets go downstairs" he said eagerly.

Jasmine said nothing and was amused that she had caught Paul out. She walked behind Paul as they walked the short distance to the stairs and walked down to the reception desk which was manned by a middle aged woman with thick lipstick, black hair and a chubby face.

Jasmine was the first to speak "We are looking for the Steam Mill Building. Do you know where it is please?"

The receptionist nodded "Yes it is less than a half a mile from here. Go out of here turn right and walk across the bridge and take a left. Go straight on for about two hundred metres and go under a road bridge and it will be the second building on your right hand side.

Jasmine said "Thank you."

Paul was relieved that they wouldn't have too walk far. They both walked out of the hotel after a light breakfast of toast and coffee they emerged into the hotels car park. Across from them Byron stood watching and saw them leaving the hotel and he walked a fair distance behind them.

Jasmine walked with Paul along the canal. Paul recalled where he was and he had been photographing here for pleasure when he was twenty. He recalled drinking in Chester's bars and taking in the sites.

They walked underneath a road bridge and eventually got to the Steam Mill Building, which was a two hundred foot building that had been used for the storage of seeds during the time that grain passed through the waters of the Shropshire Canal.

Their hearts sunk when they saw the building. It was delapatated with windows smashed and the two hundred foot building had seen better days.

Nearby a janitor was locking up the building. Jasmine walked over to the building and she showed her I.D.

The janitor was amused "French police. You don't get that everyday. How can I help you?"

Jasmine smiled and charmed the janitor "We need to get inside."

The janitor obliged and he unlocked the door "I will be leaving here in thirty minutes before I lock up."

They both walked up a long dusty flight of stairs till they where on the second floor and walked through a brick lined corridor with multiple doors dotted along it.

Jasmine looked to the piece of paper and wondered which door it was. The note gave no obvious hint. She looked to the key and on it was inscribed, Ruby.

Paul looked to it "What does it mean?"

Jasmine looked to Paul before returning her eyes to a faded red door in front of her "That's what it means."

Paul turned to where Jasmine was facing and saw the faded ruby red door. They both walked the short distance.

Jasmine handed Paul the keys "You first."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul looked towards Jasmine "Don't you want to be first?"

Jasmine was uncomfortable and tense "No please."

Paul obliged and he opened the door. The room was full of dust floating in the air and the sun drenched a large expansive room in a bright winters light lighting a filing cabinet in the far corner. Jasmies eyes were immediately drawn to it and walked passed antique tables and chairs.

The filing cabinet was locked but Jasmine smiled as she knew a way she could open the filing cabinet, she undid a metal pin in her hair clip and used it to pry open the lock of the filing cabinet "This is a technique that I first used when I was locked out of my apartment in Paris."

Jasmine looked over to Paul as she opened all three drawers.

"Got it" she said as she peered into the third and bottom drawer.

Inside she saw a small black box and placed it on a nearby table. As the lid was removed a small note and another key was found inside.

Key for Apartment 16, Rouen, Dordonge Road.

Giovanni Rosinni.

Paul was intrigued and he said "What now?"

Jasmine replied "Its a key for my uncles apartment in Rouen. We need to get back to France."

Outside Byron walked down the corridor and he heard them in the distance laughing and edged closer and brought out his gun. Byron thought it quite fitting that the small gun he used to kill Giovanni would now be used to kill his niece.

Jasmies smiled turned to surprise as Byron walked into the room. Byron saw the black box and the key in her hand.

His attention turned to Paul "I thought I told you to back off."

Paul said nothing and he was scared. Byron's attention turned back to Jasmine "My boss would like you taken care of. But first put the key down and walk towards the wall."

Jasmine walked towards Byron "Why don't we think about this?"

Paul looked towards Jasmine and he said "Lets do what he says."

Jasmine continued to stare at Byron and she calmly said "Why don't you put the gun down and we can work through this."

However Byron kept his cool and he pointed his gun at Paul and fired. The bullet hit a nearby wall only metres from where Paul stood.

Jasmine shouted "Paul."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul covered his head with his arms.

Byron said "I missed your friend on purpose. Next time it will be for real. Get up against the wall and no tricks this time."

Jasmine looked to Paul and they quietly walked to a nearby wall. Paul was scared but an anger had been developing inside of him.

He saw a chair near to where he was standing and he grabbed it and threw it at Byron sending him crashing to the floor. Paul was ready to go down fighting. Jasmine was surprised at what he did but reacted and kicked Byron hard whilst he was on the ground.

Byron grabbed Jasmines leg and threw her to the ground and got to his feet. Jasmine got up with her fists clenched. Her eyes were stern and intense ready to fight.

Jasmine looked to Byron and knew he was bigger and stronger but she reckoned that she had the edge in speed and manoeuvrability. Paul stood back from the scene. Byron lunged at Jasmine but she managed to dodge him. They circled each other and sized each other up.

Jasmine stood firm not making a move "We don't have to do this."

Byron replied "Its my job. Your a threat to what we stand for."

Jasmine was intrigued "We?"

Byron again lunged for her and knocked her to the ground "Friends, employees. Your uncle was trouble."

Jasmine wriggled free and got back onto her feet full of anger "My uncle. So you did kill him?"

Byron smiled in delight "He was easy to kill."

Jasmine kicked him hard on his back with little effect. Jasmine realised she lacked the strength to defeat him and her thoughts turned to how to get out of the situation. She noticed to her left a piece of leg from the chair that Paul had thrown at Byron. She grabbed it quickly and threw it at Byron and grabbed the black box on the way out. He deflected it with his arm as Jasmine and Paul ran. He chased them and he picked up his gun. As they ran he opened fire with several bullets hitting the white plaster in the corridor.

They both emerged from the building and looked around. The canal was on one side and on the other a long street leading to a main road in the distance.

Paul was anxious and his heart pounded "What now?"

Jasmine was about to speak when she heard the echo of distant footsteps on the stairs they had just run down. She glanced back to where they had come from. Her heart began to pound in fear and anticipation.

Normally she would be chasing the bad guy and rarely was she on the other side and began to understand what it was like for a suspect to be chased.

Paul spotted a large black bin across the road "Come on."

Jasmine saw where Paul was looking and shook her head "To obvious."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

The sound of approaching footsteps made Jasmine react and she grabbed Paul's hand. They walked quickly towards the canal walking under an overhead road bridge emerging close to the hotel to where they had originally come from. Byron emerged from the Steam Mill and looked around and he instinctively ran after them. He caught a glimpse of the two targets in the distance and he ran after them.

Jasmine and Paul heard the sound of familiar footsteps and looked behind them to see Byron coming after them quickly and menacing. The face of a hunter poised and focused ready to deliver the final strike to its prey.

As Byron approached a car emerged hitting his right side square on and knocked him to the ground. Paul and Jasmine looked on in disbelief. A body emerged from the car, it was Ryan.

Jasmine walked over as Byron lay cold on the pavement "Good to see you."

Ryan was concerned and he looked at Jasmine "I thought you might need my help."

However Byron looked unconscious but was only playing and he got up behind Ryan and opened fire. Jasmine and Paul ducked behind Ryan's red BMW. Their were further shots fired but from a different direction. Within seconds the gunfire had ended. Paul looked over and saw Ryan's bloodied body on the ground. Jasmine stood out of sight behind the car.

Byron stood up bloodied and undefeated and looked at Paul. "Now its your turn."

Paul stood frozen as Jasmine emerged attacking him with savage ferocity and struck him hard on his chest.

Byron tried to counter and turned around. Ryan lay on the ground bleeding and he painfully grabbed Byron's gun and he fired two bullets at him.

As Jasmine stood ready to fight. Byron fell with his eyes open in disbelief and he slumped to the ground. Paul said nothing as the events made him freeze. Jasmine ran over to Ryan.

Ryan looked to Jasmine and he said dying "Your uncle is avenged. I knew about Byron and how he killed your uncle. Their is more you must do."

He breathed his last breath. Paul looked to Jasmine as she closed Ryan's eyes "What more is there to do?"

Jasmine shrugged her shoulders "I don't know but we need to go to Rouen to find out what's going on.

## Chapter 15

**Sunday 14th February**

### CHAPTER 15

After staying in Chester an extra night they both got the three o'clock ferry from Dover to Calais harbour. The wind whipped against Jasmine's face blowing her hair everywhere and she breathed a sigh of relief knowing that she was home.

Paul was close behind her as they walked onto French soil and looked around at large white ferries and cars of many colours coming and going. They walked the short distance to the harbour police station. In the distance they heard the horn of a ferry as it began to leave port.

Their attention was focused on the police station ahead of them which was constructed of grey concrete and it was single storey with large square windows. They both walked in and were met by a large forty year old woman speaking in French on the phone. Paul couldn't make out what was being said but he could tell that the conversation was jovial.

Jasmine showed her police badge to the lady. The receptionist glanced at it and nodded whilst continuing to speak on the phone. Jasmine was eager to leave and to get out of sight. She knew that her uncle's enemies could be at the port and the quicker they were out of sight the less exposed they would be. She waited for a moment as the lady continued to speak on the phone. Jasmine got annoyed bending over the counter and yanked out the phone cord. The lady behind the desk wasn't pleased and she looked to Jasmine as if something sacred had been desecrated.

Jasmine said insistently "We need to speak to the person in charge."

Jasmine returned the phone lead. The receptionist said nothing and pressed a black buzzer. Jasmine and Paul sat and waited staring at potted plants and a small table with displaced magazines.

Seconds seemed like minutes and as Jasmine glanced out of the window at passing cars and trucks a man in his late forties and of slim build with wispy black hair appeared.

"Jasmine Rosinni?"

She turned her head around and got up shaking the gentleman's hand "Thank you for seeing us."

They walked a short distance to a small tungsten lit interview room. Paul sat on the chair closest to the door and said nothing allowing Jasmine to speak. Jasmine saw him and smiled before returning her gaze to the man and she reckoned that the person opposite was in charge.

He sat for a moment and studied them both "My name is Pierre Coutreau and I run the port. How can I help you?"

Jasmine chose to keep what had happened to herself "We need a car no questions asked."

The guy laughed mockingly "You can't have a car without telling me why."

Jasmine tried to remain calm and she was eager to leave "I can't say why but it would be greatly appreciated."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Pierre folded his arms defiantly "Not without an explanation. We can't give even a police detective such as yourself a car without a reason."

Jasmine knew that she was being rebuffed "We are conducting an investigation that involves the UK and France."

Pierre leaned forward and he said "I am sorry. You know the paperwork that is required. Also I would have to contact your boss to authorise this."

Jasmine knew she was being played by someone who wanted to be more important than he really was. She gave the details of her police office in Paris. Pierre left five minutes later after placing a few calls.

"You can have the car. Your boss was insistent that I shouldn't stand in your way. There's a car out front waiting for you."

Pierre threw her the car keys.

As Jasmine left she turned around and said to Pierre "Thanks."

Paul and Jasmine walked through the main entrance and walked to the car, a black Peugeot 505 estate. Jasmynes eyes were narrow, confident and alert as she scanned around wary of her surroundings. Paul was oblivious and looked ahead getting into the car.

Jasmine got into the car and looked at Paul amused "Your sitting on the wrong side."

Paul looked to notice that he was sitting in the driving seat of what was the passenger side in the UK.

He smiled as he got up and slid over to the passenger side "So I am."

Jasmine got into the car and she adjusted the seat and mirrors. She turned to Paul who was staring out of the window and noticed that Paul was tense "Everything is going to be alright. We get to Rouen and my uncles place the answers should be there and hopefully we can begin to put this thing behind us."

Paul looked back to her and he gave her a weak smile "I hope so."

They were both silent. Jasmine drove quickly out of the port and they where soon on the motorway. Jasmine knew that it would be better to go via the country roads but she chose the motorway knowing that time was against them.

In the station Pierre Coutreau walked back into his office lined with awards and photos of his family. His office consisted of a half eaten sofa and a medium sized TV screen and he watched as Paul and Jasmine left the harbour.

He walked to his phone and it rang a couple of times and was answered by a female voice "Who is this?"

Pierre Coutreau. "They're on the move and they should be in Rouen by tonight."

Bella's voice continued "They don't suspect anything?"

Pierre Coutreau "No."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Bella ended the call saying nothing else.

## Chapter 16

### CHAPTER 16

The journey to Rouen took three hours. Paul and Jasmine remained silent on the journey saying little as Paul slept most of the way. Jasmine's mind was elsewhere thinking of who would want to kill her uncle. She knew she was in the eye of the storm and she could not see a way out. All her training and experience was being tested, she knew that whilst it had prepared her for this she would have to dig deeper to bring her uncle's killer to justice.

They arrived at her uncle's apartment in Seine Maritime on the edge of Rouen. The neighbourhood was lined with pink and white panelled tower blocks over ten storeys high set close together surrounded at their base by car parks, green fields and large mature trees. Paul was asleep in the passenger side and he woke up as Jasmine turned off the car's engine.

Paul looked around and saw towering apartment blocks dotted around the car park and his eyes scanned the unfamiliar surroundings "Where, where are we?"

Jasmine smiled at him "Somewhere safe for now. This is my uncle's apartment. No one knows we're here."

Paul yawned and stretched walking with Jasmine a couple of hundred yards to the flat and they both entered a lift. Jasmine looked ahead as the lift ascended she glanced back to Paul and believed that he should be at home rather than here. However she knew that she was glad of his company and she needed a friend.

They got to the fourth floor of the apartment block and they entered the corridor, it was dimly lit with a single window at the far end. They walked a few metres to apartment sixteen.

Jasmine looked to Paul as she opened the blue door of her uncle's apartment and they both walked in.

Jasmine had been to the apartment before and she hadn't been here in over twenty years. She recalled the smell of her uncle's cigars and the times they spent playing chess and going for walks around Rouen.

Paul walked in and he felt relaxed for the first time in days. He looked around and he liked the chocolate brown sofa, white walls and there was a TV and radio in the lounge and the flat was not as barren as he had been expecting.

The day was getting late and the winter sun had set low on the horizon and a deep red sunset shone through the sky.

Jasmine put down a carrier bag of produce on the kitchen counter top. Her mind was focused only on one thing, her uncle's paperwork and what he was involved with. She walked to his study located near to the front door where they had entered and spotted a large green metal cabinet.

The cabinet was locked. Paul walked from behind and leaned against the door frame saying nothing. Jasmine undid her hair pin and fumbled with the lock for a minute and the cabinet came open and she looked inside, but it was empty. She opened the remaining two drawers and again she found nothing. Paul walked over and he had an idea where the paperwork might be.

"Here let me" he said.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul took out the bottom drawer and tipped it over. The paperwork Jasmine had been looking for was there sellotaped. She tore off the sellotape and looked to the paperwork.

Jasmine sat in a dark brown chair. She turned on the main light and scanned the paperwork. A smile crept across her face.

"We've got it."

Paul's eyes narrowed as he sat opposite her "Got what?"

Jasmine continued as she flicked through Giovanni's paperwork "The paperwork doesn't say much. Its really a journal from my uncle . He must have known that his life would be in danger. The paperwork is really his private thoughts. He mentions something about the Brethren and repeatedly talks about a great sin but it gives no mention and then it stops."

Jasmine showed Paul the journal.

Paul grabbed it and he sat back in his chair and quickly scanned through the journal "It confirms what we suspect and backs up what happened in London. But does it really move us forward?"

Jasmine looked towards Paul "Not really but the fact that he mentions the Brethren. His fear over them and."

Paul looked to her unsure of what she was saying "And what?"

Jasmine took back the journal off Paul and she read it more it slowly than before and she raised her head towards Paul "I have just reread parts of this journal and I didn't see it on my first reading. I sense his fear and their are also pages missing."

Paul looked to her with concern "What next?"

Jasmine "I need to go to Paris tomorrow to speak to some people who might be able to help."

## Chapter 17

### CHAPTER 17

Oliver, Tyson's trusted friend sat silently waiting in Tyson's office in his Naples home.

Tyson looked to Oliver "Our contact says that Jasmine is back in France."

Oliver said "We should go after them and not take any chances."

Tyson lent back into his chair and his face was smug "Leave them for now. What do they know?" Only that her uncle was killed on the edge of Southampton but get our people in place ready in case she does do anything."

Oliver nodded and left.

Tyson got out of his chair and looked out of the window towards the blue stillness of the Mediterranean Sea. He knew Jasmine was dangerous and that she was a person seeking revenge. But Tyson knew he was not defeated. He had the men, the resources and he could deal with the avenging desires of Giovanni Rosinnis niece.

## Chapter 18

### CHAPTER 18

It had gone eight o'clock at night. Jasmine got up and she had fallen asleep without realising how tired she was. She looked around to see where Paul had gone and looked into the lounge and kitchen but she didn't see him. Jasmine was anxious and she ran to the window to see him outside standing still. Jasmine grabbed her coat and met him on the ground floor. Paul was standing on the edge of the car park when Jasmine joined him. They looked to each other and she could see that he was troubled.

Jasmine looked to him and said "What's up?"

Paul said looking at her "I am just a bit overwhelmed by everything that has happened. I needed some air, you were asleep and I didn't want to bother you."

Jasmine looked to him with sympathy "You need space to cope."

Paul looked to her with concern "Are you alright?"

Jasmine "Yes of course I'm fine. Listen we need to get to Paris tomorrow as I have said to you. I will put you in my apartment. Whoever has killed my uncle are not interested in you."

Paul looked to her unsure of what she meant "What makes you say that? I have seen a lot of what you have seen."

Jasmine looked to Paul as a cool breeze rustled distant trees "You have but I would rather keep you out of the picture for now, I need you to be safe. Tomorrow I need to speak to some people."

Jasmine walked over and faced Paul "Do you understand me?"

Paul nodded in agreement "Yes."

Jasmine continued "Lets go back inside I have got some stew on the go."

They both walked back into the apartment together. They both sat down to a beef stew. Jasmine switched on the TV and she found the film Monsieur Hulot's Holiday and it was one of her favourite comedic films by Jacques Tati.

Paul was intrigued as he sat down and wondered why she was laughing. Jasmine explained to Paul what the comedy was about.

"Its about the dimwit Monsieur Hulot who goes on a mandatory August holiday and it lampoons French political and economic classes."

Paul nodded as he sat watching the film.

## Chapter 19

**Monday 15th February**

### CHAPTER 19

It had gone nine o'clock in the morning and the mornings sun struggled to pierce through a thick haze. Paul and Jasmine drove from Rouen to Paris along the A13 the oldest of Frances motorways built in 1946. They were silent the whole way as they had been the previous day. It took an hour and a half to get to Paris.

Jasmine dropped Paul off at her apartment before ringing her boss to ask if they could meet in private. They both agreed to meet at eleven thirty at a cafe near the Eiffel Tower.

She smiled and changed her clothes and she wore black trousers and a dark blue top.

Paul looked to Jasmine with his eyes full of concern "Be careful."

Jasmine responded as she left the apartment "Don't worry about me and don't answer the door. I maybe gone a few hours but there is food in the fridge."

Her hands gripped the steering wheel tightly and she drove her black Peugeot through the winding streets of Paris. She was tense and eager to She got to the base of the Eiffel Tower and saw her boss, Marcus Holgar, a long member of the Parisian police force of thirty years. He wore civilian clothes and wore a long dark grey coat.

He looked to her as she got closer "Good to see you again."

Jasmine embraced him and she said "Likewise."

They both walked silently to Cafe De Mars located in the Latin Quarter and it was close to the Eiffel Tower.

People young and old walked passed by the cafe. There was an air of tension and unfinished questions. Jasmine looked around anxiously hoping that they hadn't been followed. Both of them sat silently as a waitress returned with their coffees. Jasmine stirred her coffee with her spoon clinking on the porcelain rim. Her boss could see that she was anxious.

Marcus spoke first "What's up?"

Jasmine responded "Its my uncle. I don't know if you heard he was killed a few days ago."

Marcus nodded "I know I heard."

Jasmine looked around as she sipped her coffee "I went to the UK and tracked down the journalist covering Giovanni's death." uncover why her uncle was killed.

The day was bright with a clear winters sky. The air was crisp and cold and people walked the streets of Paris wearing hats, scarves and gloves.

Marcus was intrigued "What did you discover?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine cupped her hands around her coffee cup as she sat back in her chair "At first nothing. The journalist I was working with wrote a piece in his local paper. When he started to dig further he was threatened."

Marcus face turned to surprise and concern "Jasmine who did this?"

Jasmine looked to him for a moment and she looked around warily "I rather not say but I need information on a group, they call themselves the Brethren. I know very little and all my research has turned up nothing."

Marcus put down his coffee and looked at Jasmine with a blank expression "The Brethren. I should have known. You are best leaving this alone. They are not people you want to get involved with."

Jasmine felt like she was being insulted "What do you mean?"

Marcus tried to play down her questions "You have to be very careful. They have people in Paris and throughout Europe and are an elusive group few know about. Those that do are either dead or lucky to be alive."

Jasmine continued to insist "I have to know why my Uncle was killed. We got his killer but it doesn't explain the reason why he died."

Marcus was eager for her to leave things alone "That as I said should be enough. Listen to me as a friend go home and take a few days off and please let this Brethren thing go."

Marcus got up and he was eager to finish the conversation "Listen I have to go."

Jasmine nodded "Okay."

Marcus looked to her in sympathy and he said "Come back to me in a few days."

Jasmine watched Marcus as he crossed the street towards the Eiffel Tower. She was disappointed and he had hoped the one person she trusted would help and wondered if he was holding out to protect her. This was a possibility she did not want to entertain but she knew it made sense. If her boss was reluctant to get involved then the Brethren must be more dangerous than she had first realised.

Jasmine stayed in the cafe for another ten minutes before heading back to her car. The air was still crisp with large looming grey clouds in the distant.

One of Tyson's Parisian contacts stood on the edge of the Eiffel Tower car park as Marcus walked passed her. She had sat across the table from Jasmine and had been told to keep an eye on her and to do nothing else. The contact had followed Jasmine to her car and remained in the distance as the black Peugeot drove off. The contact a large woman in her fifties reached into her bag for loose change.

She looked and saw a black phone box was nearby and rang a private number known only to a few people. The phone rang and there was an answering machine message. She left the details of the conversation and where it was held. As the woman spoke Oliver listened intently and his eyes narrowed but there was a sense of relief that Jasmine was not any closer to the truth and her boss still remained in the dark.

However Oliver knew she would be back and he sat in his London office looking out onto St Paul's Cathedral in the distance. He knew Tyson had asked him to take care of it. As he looked across white seagulls flew in the distance.

## Chapter 20

### CHAPTER 20

Jasmine drove back to her Parisian apartment along the edge of the River Seine down Boulevard Saint Germain located in Paris's sixth district. The apartment had been given to her by her mother.

It was a large apartment with narrow slender sash windows with small rooms accessed by a central corridor. The furniture was expensive and it was given to her by her mother and was made of expensive cream and blue fabrics.

Yet amidst this there were small personal things like her sewing machine in the dining room and a collection of Vogue magazines in the lounge. Jasmine liked the apartment and knew she was lucky to live in that part of Paris on the wage of a detective.

She got out of the car and she looked around to make sure that she hadn't been followed. It had gone one o'clock when she got back and walked to find that Paul wasn't in the apartment. Jasmine searched every room hoping nothing had happened. There was a knock on the door. Jasmine opened it and saw Paul standing in the doorway.

Jasmine was annoyed "Where have you been?"

Paul replied knowing he had been scolded "Looking around Paris. I didn't know how long you would be."

Jasmine continued to be annoyed "Paul you were supposed to stay here out of sight. You don't know who is out there."

Paul realised his mistake and he could have potentially exposed them "I am sorry. How did it go with your boss?"

Jasmine sighed as she continued to stand in the hallway "Not to well. He was reluctant perhaps even scared. Whatever this Brethren business is it's got him frightened."

They both walked to the lounge area and they both sat next to each other. The looming clouds had now started to rain.

Jasmine sat and she rested her head on the back of the sofa and ran her fingers through her brown hair "It doesn't make sense. I don't know what to do."

They sat for a while and neither spoke as they looked out of the window as streaks of water ran down the windows. Both drifted off as tiredness crept over them.

It wasn't until two o'clock till they awoke when there was a knock at the door. Paul woke Jasmine up.

She got up from the sofa "What is it?"

Then she heard the door. She opened it and urged Paul to stay where he was.

It was Marcus Holgar, holding a thin red file in his left hand. Jasmine invited him in.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Marcus saw Paul in the distance. They both exchanged hellos.

Marcus recognised Paul from his name in the article that he had written and from what Jasmine had talked about earlier.

"I read your article. Very good work, I was most impressed."

Paul nodded "Thank you."

All three sat in the dining room. Marcus opened the file he was carrying.

Marcus turned to Jasmine "I went back and thought about what you said. The truth is I was scared. But on reflection I dug out what we have on the Brethren. All we know is that they are a shadowy group and its influence grows in France, the UK and in Europe."

Marcus handed Jasmine the thin red file and a piece of paper.

Jasmine studied it for a moment. There is a name of a contact in French Intelligence known as Lima 1. The paper didn't say much more about him. Only where he could be found. There was no pictures. Jasmine handed the paper to Paul.

Jasmine looked towards Marcus's direction "Thank you."

Marcus got up slowly "This is all I have and it is the limit of what we know. Be careful. What I have given you is sensitive. If you get into trouble we cannot help you."

Jasmine nodded "I understand" and looked towards Paul's direction and saw that he agreed.

Marcus saw himself out as Jasmine and Paul waited until the front door was closed. The door closed with a gentle thud.

Paul got up and stared out of the window before turning his head back towards Jasmine "What now?"

Jasmine got up placing her hand on a nearby telephone "We get in touch with Lima 1."

Paul nodded in agreement "Lets do it."

Jasmine looked to the back of the paper and she saw a number had been provided. She rang the number and it rung four times before a gruff sounding voice answered.

"Yes. Who is this?"

Jasmine paused for a moment "I need to meet you."

The voice grew more suspicious "Who is this?"

Jasmine "Jasmine Rosinni. "

The voice interrupted her "I've been expecting your call. Meet me in an hour outside the Museum of Natural History. You know where that is?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine confirmed "I know it."

The call ended.

Jasmine and Paul arrived at the Museum of Natural History for four o'clock. The Museum of Natural History in Paris is located on the banks of the River Seine near to Jardin des Plantes.

Jasmine looked upwards before turning back to Paul "It seems you brought the English weather with you."

The rain had eased off but grey clouds lingered menacingly over the museum.

Paul laughed "It seems so."

As they talked amongst themselves. A man five foot tall and small in appearance walked up to them. He looked at them and put out his hand. The man was dressed in jeans and a thick black jumper.

"Jasmine and Paul it is good to meet you. Please follow me."

They followed the agent to a waiting car.

Paul was wary "Where are we going?"

The agent was insistent "Please get in."

Jasmine looked to Paul and saw his apprehension "Get in its alright."

Her voice reassured him and he got into a black Renault hatchback. The agent sat in the front and they were blindfolded and were told it was to keep their operations secure. They all remained quiet until they drove out of the city to a house in the town of Creteil on the south eastern side of Paris, located close to the banks of the River Marne.

The house was located on a narrow street. The car drove down a driveway and they where escorted to a room laden with electronics and agents. They where shown into a nearby room that overlooked the narrow street.

They sat quietly as Agent Lima came in and he took off their blindfolds. Jasmine and Paul looked at each other before returning their focus towards the agent.

"Sorry for the precautions."

Jasmine said "I would have done the same."

Agent Lima stood up "Paul Spencer, from the Southampton Tribune and has recently completed a course to become a full time journalist. You have something called Aspergers Syndrome, recently attacked in London and he has a small cottage on the south coast, near a place called Bridport, Dorset."

He turned to Jasmine "French detective, mother in the London Embassy, father died of cancer five years earlier."

Jasmine wasn't impressed, neither was Paul.

Paul cut through the false sense of politeness "What can you tell us about the Brethren?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Agent Lima sat next to them both "The straight approach. I appreciate that. We are aware of them. Their is a lot we don't know. Their organisation is elusive. We have lost agents trying to get into their organisation. We have an insider at the moment but he has manage to gain access."

Jasmine nodded and felt like she had gotten somewhere "Could we speak to him?"

Agent Lima shook his head disapprovingly "I am sorry. I appreciate your situation and I want to help. Really I do but you would be exposing our only asset."

Jasmine was insistent "Is their nothing you can do?"

The agent could see that she was searching. "He will be at Cafe De Mars located near the Eiffel Tower."

Jasmine nodded as she looked towards the Agent "I know it."

The agent continued "It is best that you, Jasmine go alone. He will meet you at seven but don't be to long. The Brethren will have people around."

After talking for a further two hours Paul noticed on a clock on the wall in the lounge that it was coming up to six o'clock. Jasmine was deep in conversation with Agent Lima and she looked over to Paul.

Jasmine looked back to him "Time for me to go."

Agent Lima "It is. We will drop Paul off at your flat."

Jasmine nodded and she was driven back to Paris at night and the city was flooded with rows of tungsten street lights. As she got out of the car she scanned the area where she was meeting the agent to make sure that she hadn't been followed. From what she could see she hadn't been followed much to her relief. She walked the short distance to the cafe as the agent read at a table window. Jasmine walked in and she saw the contact.

She sat for a moment. The contact said nothing thinking that someone might have sat at the wrong table. The man was old and in his seventies with balding hair and looked to her with curious eyes.

The agent smiled "How can I help you?"

In the distance couples occupied all the tables of the cafe. Their was a buzz of conversation and everyone was in their own worlds unaware of anything else around them.

Jasmine walked over and sat next to him "You have access to people and acquaintances that may have known my uncle, Giovanni Rosinni."

The agent nodded "I have heard rumours of someone dangerous and important being killed."

Jasmine sat closer and she was intrigued "What rumours?"

The agent smiled "I don't know just rumours. They heard that your uncle wanted out and so they arranged it."

Jasmine pressed for more "Why did he want out?"

The agent was eager for her to leave "I don't know. Listen to friendly advice. Stay away and go out of here back to your desk and leave things alone. You know your uncle was killed and you got his killer. Most people

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

never get that in life. Accept your lot."

Jasmine was defiant "Are you saying that you know something and you won't tell me."

The agent leaned closer and was becoming agitated "Listen Miss please go. My acquaintances are deeply suspicious of outsiders. They know who you are. You have been mentioned in conversation coming to France from England and asking questions. Best leave things be."

Jasmine left the cafe in a huff. She walked along the banks of the River Seine and lit a cigarette overlooking the tungsten glow of the city. She felt dejected as every lead had been exhausted and she walked back to her apartment. The warning from the agent and from her boss both urged her to stay away.

She looked into the blackness of the River Seine and she said to herself "Whatever, whoever did this uncle won't get away with this."

Jasmine flicked a half lit cigarette into the river and she headed back to her apartment dejected and alone and was unsure of what to do next.

As she walked back into her apartment she saw reams of paper on the floor with lists of names and things.

"Paul what is this?" she said bemused and irritated.

Paul got up and smiled. "A little bit of work."

Jasmine started to pick through the reams of paper that Paul had been working on and she could see he was working on her uncles life. Most it was brain storming with names, dates and what Paul knew.

Jasmines irritation died down and turned to amusement "You call this work. Is this one of those Aspergic quirks you warned me about?"

Paul nodded and he smiled saying "Yes sort of. I got fed up of staring at walls and I decided to look at what we needed to do. How did it go with the agent?"

Jasmine sat on a nearby dining chair and she peered out across the dark winter sky of Paris and sighed. "Not well. He has said that I should back off and forget about things."

Paul stopped writing and sat on a nearby chair. His face looked surprised.

Jasmine flung her arms wildly "I don't get it. French intelligence, my boss in the French police. All of them have said stay away from the Brethren."

Paul sat closer to Jasmine "What do you want to do?"

Jasmine got up walking over to the green avocado tiled kitchen to pour herself a coffee "You and me need to work to our strengths."

Paul was unsure of what she meant "What do you mean, work to our strengths?"

Jasmine waved the coffee pot in her hand "Your a journalist and you have a way of looking at things by uncovering facts by research and getting to the heart of things."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul was flattered "Your a detective. You investigate people and you know this city and who is who."

Jasmine sipped some of her coffee before sitting on the kitchen counter top and looked to Paul "Exactly, we both use what we know."

There was a phone call in the distance. Paul got up from his chair to answer it.

"Hello who is this?" Paul asked.

"Could I speak to Detective Rosinni please?"

Paul handed the phone to Jasmine and he leaned on a nearby door frame and looked towards her. Her eyes narrowed in disbelief.

"When?" Jasmine said.

The voice spoke some more and the phone call ended. Jasmine looked to Paul, her face was reddened and in a state of shock. The phone fell out of her hand as she leaned against the wall.

They walked a hundred yards to a nearby building close to Jasmines apartment. The night was bitterly cold as blue lights flashed in the distance. Police had taped off a narrow road close to St Germain des Pres. Paramedics swarmed around a long black object lying on the floor.

Jasmine walked closer and she bent down looking towards the object as she tried to remain calm "Show me."

A police officer half unzipped the body bag "Are you sure?"

Jasmine was insistent "Show me."

She stared at the face. The face who had recruited her, trained her and had been a friend in her work that was at times lonely and at other times dangerous.

Paul walked closer to within a few feet of Jasmine. They both looked at each other. "Its him isn't it?"

Jasmine nodded "My boss Marcus Holgar."

Paul nodded and he saw a single gunshot wound to the front of his head. Jasmine closed her boss's eyes.

A nearby detective, Jonas Viessman, was in his late fifties with grey wispy hair walked over "I am sorry. Your boss was a good man. Do you know who might want him dead?"

Jasmine knew who did and tried to remain calm "I have an idea. Can I have a minute please?"

The detective nodded "Sure."

Jasmine got up and she looked back to the body "Sorry I got you into this. Whoever did this will pay."

Jasmine knew that the body and its location to her apartment was a message. The Brethren had shown their teeth and were warning her to back off. Jasmine was determined to show them who they were dealing with.

The detective, Jonas Viessman, came back over. Jasmine and Paul both gave their statements.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Across the road a shadow lingered menacingly in a side alley. The gunman studied Jasmine and Paul. From a distance he smiled as he lit a cigarette with a silver plated lighter that had been in his family for generations. He puffed on his cigarette and walked on. The message had been sent, the job done. The gunman walked into the chilly night whistling.

Jasmine looked around and thought she heard whistling. A chill made her shiver. She knew the killer or killers could possibly be close by.

They walked a short distance to Cafe de Flors located on Boulevard St Germain and it was a short distance from the Rue des St Peres. She linked with Paul's arms.

Paul asked "What now?"

Jasmine replied "I need to go to the office tomorrow morning?"

Paul looked to her as they walked into the cafe "It seems our adventure is over."

They both walked into the bar as locals mingled in the distance playing cards and drinking wine. Jasmine sat at a table window as people walked past them outside.

She turned to face Paul.

"What do you mean?"

Paul looked at her "I have got my story and I have been on an incredible ride with you."

Jasmine looked surprised "I still need you."

Paul smiled "No you don't. I have got my story. My editor will be wondering where I am. I have to file my story in the next twenty four hours."

Jasmine shook her head "Your wrong. This is the tip of the iceberg. I know your scared, so am I. I have just lost my boss and my Uncle is dead. The story has only just begun."

Paul leaned closer to Jasmine "Your right. I am scared. Scared for myself with were this is going and I am scared for you."

Two glasses of Chardonnay arrived at there table. Jasmine shook her head unsure of what Paul was saying.

"Scared, what do you mean?"

Paul looked to her concerned "Your desire for revenge will consume you."

Jasmine said "So what if I do. You have been threatened and your girlfriend nearly killed in London earlier this week. That's got to mean something."

Paul wriggled in his chair. He knew he was being put into a corner and understood her argument.

"If I was to help you. Their are things we need to do."

Jasmine leant forward knowing that Paul had been persuaded "What things?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul looked to her thoughtfully and placed his elbows on the table "I will have to go back to London. I have made a contact in Greenwich who helped me out. You need to investigate the cities underworld. The Brethren exist in this city and it has eyes and ears everywhere. Someone must know something."

Jasmine pouted and sipped some of her Chardonnay "So your not giving up then?"

Paul responded "Lets say I have been persuaded."

Jasmine leant forward. For days she had gotten use to Paul and liked having him around. The idea that he would be gone made her uncomfortable and it was something she rarely felt.

Paul likewise had grown fond of Jasmine and the idea of them parting made him uncomfortable. They both stared at each other for a moment.

Jasmine leaned further towards him "When do you leave?"

Paul replied "I need to leave tomorrow. I need to work the next few days but I will arrange to meet my contact this weekend."

Jasmine leaned closer till they were only a few inches apart. Paul got uncomfortable and pulled back.

He put his hand on Jasmynes "I can't."

Jasmine was stunned "Why. Who will know?"

Paul continued to hold her hand "I can't, sorry."

Jasmine nodded and she said nothing.

Paul got up "Listen I am going to head back to the apartment. I think its best I get a hotel room and I leave in the morning."

Jasmine got up as Paul was about to leave "So this is goodbye?"

Paul got up "For now. I will be in touch."

Jasmine got up and pecked him on the cheek "Good luck. Take my key and leave it with the concierge when you leave. I will pick it up when I get back later."

Paul smiled and said as he looked at her "Same to you."

Paul turned on his heel and he walked out of the bar and he headed back to Jasmynes apartment. As soon as he left he looked back before going on.

Jasmine watched as he left and already she missed him.

She waited for an hour for Paul to get his things and she headed back to her apartment to see that Paul's things had gone as had his paperwork.

As she entered the kitchen she noticed a white note on the fridge. It read.

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

*"From Paul. Contact you in a few days. Best of luck. Paul."*

She picked up the note and she smiled.

## Chapter 21

**Thursday 18th February**

### CHAPTER 21

Three days had passed since Paul left. It had gone six in the morning and an alarm woke Jasmine up from her deep sleep. She gazed out of her green bedroom and noticed that there was only a few people on the street below.

She got up and poured herself an over boiled coffee, the coffee was bitter and made the night before but it did the job and it woke her up. As she stared out of the window she looked at a mirror on a nearby wall.

Her hair was sticking up and she sighed knowing of what the day was to bring. Today would be the day her uncle would be cremated at ten o'clock and their would be a memorial for her boss at one o'clock. She sat on the sofa and reflected on how quiet the apartment had been since Paul had left three days earlier.

She had gotten used to him being around and found the quiet disconcerting. Jasmine wondered how he was doing and what he was up to. The coffee was poured down the sink and she got showered and changed putting on a black skirt and jumper with a white silk shirt underneath before driving to Pere Lachaise Crematorium located on the Boulevard de Ménilmontant.

When she got to the cemetery the occasion was small as Giovanni had requested. Their in front of her was her mother Isabella who wore a dark blue suit. Jasmine hadn't seen her mother in weeks and they rarely saw each other.

The two looked at each other and they embraced.

Jasmine looked to her mum and saw that she was full of grief.

Jasmine spoke first "Is everyone here?"

Isabella looked to her daughter "Only a few people came. You know your uncle wasn't one to create a fuss or drama."

Jasmine nodded agreeing with her mother "I know I remember last Christmas. It was me, you and my Uncle."

Her mum smiled at the thought "That was a good time."

They walked together into the crematorium, the sky was clear blue with the winters sun piercing the tree canopy. Their was little sound with only the occasional wind blowing around them. Jasmine recalled seeing her uncles body a week earlier in Southampton but chose not to say anything to her mum.

Jasmine and her mother walked to where a few close friends and family had gathered. The priest began his eulogy. Jasmine wasn't listening as her thoughts were turning to her uncle and what little times they had spent together flooded through her mind. One memory was when Jasmine was nine and they where in Lyon and Giovanni showed her the city talking about its history and culture. She especially recalled seeing the Basilique Notre Dame with its twin turrets.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

After ten minutes the priest had finished his eulogy. They looked to each other and embraced before returning their eyes to the black panelled coffin as it entered the furnace.

Jasmine looked to her mother with concern "What are you going to do now?"

Isabella took her daughters hand and gripped it softly "Daughter don't worry about me. Its a pity your dad isn't here he would have loved to have been here."

Jasmine nodded "He would have. I miss him."

Jasmine recalled how her father had died from a long battle with cancer five years earlier.

Isabella continued as the first signs of tears emerged "As do I."

It was going on eleven thirty and Jasmine stayed a few minutes talking to a few people and drove her mum back to her mothers apartment in Montparnasse, Paris.

On the way to her bosses memorial Jasmine recalled how she walked into the office the day after her boss was killed and she saw how everyone was shocked by his death. She remembered walking into her bosses office expecting him to be their laughing. His death had come as a deep shock. Throughout that day Jasmine finished up her paperwork eager for her mind to be elsewhere and to keep her mind off things.

Jasmine left the office and as she left Francois Jupon stood in the doorway. He was Marcus's superior. He was six foot and he spoke with a Nice accent and he had lived in Paris twenty years.

Francois got a chair and sat next her "This is perhaps something you should know, Marcus was going to promote you to inspector and it was his last act before he was killed. You are now Inspector Rosinni."

Jasmine tried to smile but couldn't "Thank you."

That was yesterday and she arrived at the memorial half an hour later and walked into a crowd of faces. People she knew, people she didn't, but Jasmine got the sense they were all saddened and that Marcus was a popular figure. She sat by herself in the middle of the church next to her boss Francois and some of her colleagues.

The memorial was held at the Paroisse Notre Dame de Grace de Passy close to the Eiffel Tower and close to offices where Jasmine worked and it had wooden stalls, a large organ with white washed walls and stained glass windows depicting the Resurrection and other biblical scenes that Jasmine couldn't make out.

Apart of her was distracted thinking about how the Brethren had killed her uncle and boss and she was determined that they would be brought down. Whatever it took Jasmine vowed to sort it out and to bring whoever did this to justice.

In the crowds was Pierre Nopasni, a fifty five year old killer, quiet and methodical in his work for the Brethren. He knew of Byron's death and he had been hired to continue his work.

The memorial service started and Jasmine was the first to read out a eulogy where she talked of being a young detective seven years earlier and how she had the best training possible and that Marcus would be dearly missed. A tear formed in Jasmynes eye as she sat back down.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine felt like she was being watched. She glanced around and saw Pierre looking at her. His eyes were dark and featureless with no emotion. Jasmine scoured her brain and recalled seeing him moments before meeting Marcus at Cafe De Mars.

The service ended and Jasmine talked amongst her colleagues and friends. Many people asked who killed him and what had happened. Some asked her about her uncles funeral earlier that day.

She returned to her apartment later that afternoon. As she looked out of the window to a scene of cars and people, a shiver ran down her spine and thought about Pierre's cold eyes. She wondered if she had seen her bosses killer.

## Chapter 22

### CHAPTER 22

In the present Paul sat at his kitchen table, his mind whirred as images of Marcus, Giovanni and the events of the past few days melded into one. Paul knew that he had to get in contact with Timothy Elmeron and Isabella in order to uncover more about the Brethren.

Paul mumbled to himself as he thought about Giovanni and his life "Who are you and why are you so secretive?"

It was coming up after five o'clock and the sun was setting as Paul left his flat. In the distance a pair of eyes watched him and followed him onto the bus. The stranger kept his eyes on Paul as he walked to Southampton's Old Walled Town to the Red Lion Pub. It was a place Paul liked coming to by himself without other people around.

The Red Lion Pub was built in the twelfth century. Its claim to fame was that in 1415 it was the scene of the trial of Richard, Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scrope of Masham and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. They were accused of conspiring against Henry V before he went to Agincourt. They were found guilty of high treason and later executed.

He sat and breathed in the smoked filled night air. He sighed deeply.

The stranger sat in front of Paul. Paul looked in front of him and wondered who it was. But he realised that it was Timothy Elmeron.

Timothy smiled as he sat with a pint in his hand "It is good to see that your still alive."

Paul replied with a surprise on his face "I am surprised that your here."

Timothy shrugged his shoulders and he looked around "Its a nice place."

Paul sat and looked at Timothy "I come here frequently. How did you know I would be here?"

Timothy smiled "I have ways and means which are not important."

Paul put his pint of Dennis down "Why are you here? Last time I talked to you you refused to help me out."

Timothy continued "I have had second thoughts since the last time we met. I heard about Malcolm Hensley's death and the death of Jasmynes long time family friend. To many people have died already. Things have now changed. You are involved whether you like it or not."

Paul laughed agreeingly "Don't I know it."

Timothy continued "I can help you out with the Brethren and I can tell you certain things."

Paul was intrigued and locked his gaze onto Timothy "Such as?"

"The Brethren are a long established group. They are based throughout Western Europe mostly in France, Italy and the UK. They are a remnant of a small group of people who met at the end of the Vienna Conference

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

in the 1800's who met in secret to forge their own destinies. They operate as a clandestine group buying up politicians and police. They see it as their duty to keep the status quo and to keep people in their place."

Paul put his pint down "Then tell me this. They are scared of something."

Timothy smiled and he laughed "Mr Spencer. You don't get it. They aren't scared of you. Your like a fly that won't stop buzzing. Up until now you have been lucky."

Paul lay back in his seat "Where do I go from here?"

Timothy laughed "Mr Spencer consider me a source. As long as you keep my name confidential then I can help you out."

Timothy got out a black file "This will be for your editor. To keep him sweet and to keep you on the story."

Paul looked at the black file and he thumbed its contents quickly and it contained information on Giovanni's life. Some lines were blacked out and there was some information on Byron and his background.

Paul responded to Timothy as he finished his pint "Thank you. This will come in useful."

Timothy smiled "The Brethren grows in power and influence and it has become too powerful. You and your friend in Paris can do this. Your not alone and you have friends. Friends who have an interest in closing down this group."

Timothy got up and looked to Paul as he handed him a brown envelope containing a return train ticket.

Paul was intrigued by the envelope but was wary as he looked at Timothy "What is this all about?"

Timothy replied "We need your help. There are some of us gathering tomorrow at Dukes Hall in Penrith. Everything you need to know is in that envelope.

Paul said nothing as Timothy left into the blackness of the night. He couldn't read Timothy's body language but he was suspicious.

## Chapter 23

**Friday 19th February**

### CHAPTER 23

At seven the following day there was a knock on the door. Jasmine got up still in her black dress from the day before. She opened the door and a small petite woman courier stood there holding a large brown envelope.

"Jasmine Rosinni?"

Jasmine responded half awake "Yes."

She signed for it and closed the door and ripped open the envelope and looked at the note.

Dukes Hall, Penrith, 9.30 pm, Friday 19th Feb 1982.

Come alone

Jasmine scanned the front and back of the note and there was no indication of who had sent it and wondered if this was a ploy. However she knew that her own investigations had led to nothing and found it more than coincidental that a letter would come through for her.

Jasmine looked at the note and she looked to a calendar on a nearby wall. Today was the 19th. She got out a road atlas of Europe and she saw on the map that Penrith was a city in the North of England.

Jasmine looked inside the envelope and it contained two tickets. One for a flight to Heathrow airport and a train ticket to catch a train from London Euston to Penrith. The plane would be leaving at nine thirty. She looked to the clock and it was coming up to seven fifteen.

Her eyes narrowed unsure of who the message was sent from. She knew it could be a trap or an opportunity but she was willing to take a chance and set about packing and left her apartment still wearing the clothes from the day before.

Outside there was an overcast sky and a frosty two degrees celsius. When Jasmine arrived at Charles De Gaulle airport an hour later she was waved through. Jasmine knew she was getting specialist treatment but she was unsure why.

The plane left just after nine thirty on time and the plane touched down at eleven o'clock at Heathrow airport where a waiting car drove her to Euston train station. The train left after twelve pm and it headed quickly to Penrith. Her whole journey had been preplanned and arranged by who she didn't know. She tried to ask the driver who picked her up from Heathrow and was told by the driver that he didn't know. Jasmine was suspicious.

## Chapter 24

### CHAPTER 24

Paul got up the following morning at eight am and he headed to the office packed with weekend clothing. Grey clouds covered the sky and the air was chilly.

He raced to his office with the file in his hand and he began to write up on the information given to him. Paul looked to the clock and knew he had to leave by twelve thirty to get different trains to Penrith.

He wrote an article based on Timothy's file and this would be his third piece following the interview with Isabella Rosinni and it had turned out to be a feature. As the clock began to approach twelve o'clock. Paul handed the editor his story.

The editor checked the story nodding approvingly and saw references to Giovanni's life and how Byron was hired to kill him. Paul consciously kept out any reference to the Brethren and what had happened in Paris.

The editor looked towards Paul's bag "This is good, solid stuff. Where next on your travels?"

Paul smiled conscious of wanting to keep Timothy a secret "I can't say. This story I have written is just beginning. It goes beyond Giovanni and it has a host of other connections that I am only just beginning to uncover."

The editor nodded "This looks like it is becoming a feature. I will hold off on printing it and I will give you a month to wrap this thing up."

Paul got up and left saying hello to a few of his colleagues and he bumped into Tony Simpson, a journalist who he occasionally said hello to. There was a professional rivalry between them. Tony saw Paul as arrogant and brash and only got a lucky break because of saving the editors life.

Paul saw Tony as lacking a backbone and his work contained few facts, being more interested in suggesting personal opinion than any real journalism.

Paul left quickly the offices of the Southampton Tribune. He was unsure of why he was going to Penrith. He was calm but apart of him was nervous and unsure of what Timothy had setup for him in Penrith.

Paul arrived at three o'clock at London Euston after a claustrophobic ride on the underground from London Waterloo. As he got off the tube, he ascended up long escalators to Waterloo station and he put away his book on Hannibal. Paul loved the story of how Hannibal had sent elephants across the Alps to wreak havoc on the Roman Empire.

He walked to a coffee vendor located close to the platform for the West Coast main line. Paul picked up the coffee and nearly spat it out 'this is brown water' he thought but drank it anyway knowing he needed the caffeine to calm his nerves down for the long journey ahead.

A class 87 locomotive waited on Platform 1 waiting to go to Glasgow. The trains powerful electric motors shook gently the concrete platform as it waited to depart. Paul looked to the train and gladly chucked the coffee in the bin hoping that their would be better coffee served on the train. As he sat down he got out another biography on Winston Churchill. As he sat down he put the book on the table and looked out of the window at hundreds of commuters coming to and fro from different parts of London going all over the UK.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul imagined such a journey and he loved to travel eagerly getting away whenever there was an opportunity. These emotional wanderings were something he privately enjoyed and he reckoned that most of his friends didn't know about.

The train began to depart from London Euston as the guard blew his whistle from the platform edge. Paul returned to picking up his book on Winston Churchill. In the distance he could hear the shrilled calling of a woman shouting.

"Tea, coffee, biscuits." The ladies voice boomed down the carriage as she moved closer.

As the train stopped at Birmingham New Street Station Oliver walked onto the train and he saw Paul in the distance. He was wearing only a casual jumper and jeans and he sat opposite Paul.

Paul looked up to see the man sitting opposite him before returning to his book. Oliver said little as the train accelerated quickly out of Birmingham New Street.

Paul noticed him but said nothing. Oliver looked at Paul. They both returned to their separate worlds for over an hour before Oliver spoke.

"Mr Spencer."

Paul looked up surprised "Who are you?"

Oliver laced his fingers together and sat back into his chair "You know who we are. Killing Byron was a risky thing to do."

Paul felt trapped and unable to get out and he tried to remain calm "What do you want?"

The train began to approach Crewe station. Oliver looked to Paul with menacing eyes.

"We know your going to Penrith to meet Timothy. We are giving you two choices Mr Spencer. Go home and forget all about this or risk losing your life over something over which you have no control."

Paul said nothing as the train pulled into Crewe station. Oliver got up and as he left he turned to Paul with a menacing look "Think about it."

Paul sat on the train scared but he was now more determined to bring the group down and he wasn't willing to back down.

## Chapter 25

### CHAPTER 25

Paul got off the train four and a half hours later and his body ached from sitting down to long and looked at his watch and realised that it had gone seven thirty and he was not expected till nine thirty. He decided to grab a meal and walked into Penrith. He was glad of the time he had and he knew that it would possibly be his last moment of solitude for a couple of days.

He continued walking as he enjoyed the cold winters air and he walked the short distance to the station hotel and he sat at a window overlooking the station. He was unsure of what he would find in the next few hours and what Timothy had got ready for him.

Jasmine saw him from a distance as she sat at a late opening café close to the station. She was surprised to see him and she walked close behind him.

Paul sat as a hand rested on his shoulder and looked around and was startled when he saw that it was Jasmine.

"Surprise" she said.

Paul's face was one of surprise "What are you doing here?"

Jasmine sat opposite at a quiet table near a fire place "I assume the same reason that you are here."

Jasmine showed her invitation and Paul knew that this was no coincidence and that Timothy had staged them coming together.

Jasmine continued "You seemed a little jumpy."

Paul changed subjects "How was the funeral?"

Jasmine looked at him with saddened eyes "Sombre and short. As my uncle would want it."

She looked to the menu but wasn't sure what to get. Jasmine wasn't used to British cuisine and had heard many stories of English food being bland but she was here and intrigued to try out new things as she would always encourage herself to do. "What do you recommend?"

Paul knew what he wanted "Steak pie and chips."

Jasmine smiled and nodded "Make mine the same."

An hour later after they had eaten they were both stuffed. They had barely spoken to each other. Paul felt a little drained wondering if he should have had time alone. Jasmine was quiet and she would normally be at the centre of any conversation. She found Paul's lack of conversation difficult but wasn't sure if it was 'good different' but understood that not everyone was as talkative as she was.

They walked back to the train station the light had faded and the station was bathed in a yellow tungsten glow. Paul looked up as they walked back to the taxi rank and they both saw moths fluttering around the street lamps. Jasmine was further back and had been silent since leaving the hotel. Paul got out a ten pound note and they both got a taxi to Dukes Hall unsure of what they would expect.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

As they arrived Paul knocked on the thick wooden door and he heard the knock echo faintly behind the door and reckoned there must have been a hallway on the other side. The door opened and Paul let Jasmine in first.

They were met by the housekeeper "Hello and welcome to Dukes Hall let me take your bags and things. I'm Harvey Stone the housekeeper make your way through to the hallway where everyone is waiting for you."

Paul and Jasmine entered through the main entrance and Paul smelt the whiff of cigars as the housekeeper took their bags. In the distance laughter could be heard. The heavy wooden door shut behind them booming down the hallway. Paul looked around and admired the wide open hall way, with white and green tiles. Paul looked up the long winding oak staircase that never seemed to stop.

Timothy walked down the stairs and walked into the dining room and he saw Paul in the corner and shook his hand "Hello welcome, it is good to see you again."

Paul responded and he looked around saying "Thanks, lovely building you have here. "

Timothy responded "It is and it has recently been renovated. Its a bit of an indulgence for me at the weekends."

He sat on one of three sofas that were arranged around a large mahogany table. On the sofa opposite was Peter Lancaster and his girlfriend Linda Jensen.

Paul felt slightly uneasy unsure of why they were here. Jasmine sat down next to Paul and she also was unsure of the meeting. Both were tired and exhausted.

Timothy sat on a sofa opposite to Paul and he said "Jasmine, Paul it is good that you are here. We heard about the incident on the train."

Paul was unsure how they knew "How did you know?"

Timothy looked towards Peter "Peter and his girlfriend were on board and were watching to make sure you got to this meeting safely."

Peter looked straight at Jasmine "As you may or may not know Giovanni was a member of the Brethren throughout his adult life. He had been wanting to leave for some time."

Jasmine looked to him and the revelation did not surprise her "I had suspected with our investigation that he had a role in the Brethren."

Jasmine looked towards Paul with curiosity and a question had been lingering in her mind "Why do you need Paul then if its only my Uncle your interested in?"

Timothy looked towards Paul's direction before returning his hazel eyes towards Jasmine "By association really. His investigation into the Brethren and his encounters with you means he has experience of the Brethren and you Jasmine will need friends to fight them."

Timothy continued "I was a journalist for the London Gazette and there was rumours circulating around Fleet Street in 1976 of a French diplomat coming to the UK for a few hours before flying out. Then I began to uncover Giovanni's life from a distance and the occasional trips he made to the UK but no one knew what he did."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Peter's girlfriend Linda Jensen explained the story of how they all came together "When Timothy was working as a journalist, he got Peter to get close to Giovanni to get information for a story he was writing. Eventually he became Giovanni's driver for two years."

Linda Jensen continued "Then four years ago the story went cold and Giovanni disappeared before being stationed in the UK two years ago and he got in contact with Peter. Giovanni had suspected about Peter using him to get information and he had dropped hints about the Brethren during discussions they had when Peter was his chauffeur."

Timothy looked to Paul and Jasmine who were intrigued but he was willing to go only so far with what he knew "Then Giovanni disappeared four years ago for no reason and the story went cold until he was stationed in the UK two years ago."

Peter looked at all the guests "When Giovanni reappeared he tracked me and Timothy down and disclosed about the Brethren."

Timothy continued as he looked to Jasmine "We and a few of Giovanni's friends soon got together after and we began to plan a way to expose the Brethren. However Giovanni was already planning his exit from the Brethren. He was worried about being exposed to soon. He made contact with Byron who posed as a man who could help him out. However."

Jasmine finished the sentence "It was a trap."

Timothy looked to Jasmine as a tear formed in her left eye "He was worried about you and your mother's safety. We were beginning to make progress until he was killed. This is the first meeting we have had together in months. Now you and Paul are both involved."

Timothy looked to the clock and he saw that it was getting late "You will be here for twenty four hours. Tomorrow you will be met by a guest who is arriving at ten and will brief us about Giovanni's work."

Jasmine nodded "I understand the need for secrecy. Who is this guest?"

Timothy smiled knowing that she was digging "All in good time."

Guests started to head to bed after one o'clock in the morning having travelled from far and wide. Paul put his paper down as his body began to cry for sleep and bowed to his biological clock and set about heading to his room on the second floor and walked in to his bedroom. He had been given a double room with an en suite bathroom and toilet and thought the décor was terrible with flowery bed linen but the stone fire place and wooden fire surround made up for it.

Paul was about to sleep when he realised that he had forgotten his glasses and he headed downstairs snaking quietly down winding stairs and headed into the lounge. He spotted his glasses on the Times newspaper. As he walked towards his glasses he spotted the moonlight coming through the conservatory window. He stood there for a while absorbing the details of the moon looking at various craters and shapes and could make out the face on the moon. He was so drawn to the glowing intensity of the moon that he opened the French doors and walked onto the cold winter's grass that glistened in the moonlight and he sat on a long wooden bench.

As he sat down he could make out more of the night sky. He saw the Big Dipper. Paul marvelled at the night sky and he was grateful for the lack of street light that so hampered his star gazing at home.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

He returned to the conservatory when he heard a creak behind him. He turned and saw Jasmine behind him smiling. Paul was surprised to see her and thought that she would be fast asleep. Jasmine sat next to Paul on a three seater cane sofa.

Jasmine said as she looked to Paul "Cold night for stargazing."

Paul responded and he smiled "Just a little. I'm surprised your up. I thought you would be in bed."

Jasmine looked to him "I tried, I tossed and turned but I couldn't sleep. I dozed for about half an hour. Then I heard the creaking of the doors and I could see you out here looking up at the moon."

Paul smiled "I came down for my glasses but I was drawn by the clear night sky."

He could see that Jasmine was shivering and he went back into the lounge and found a blanket on one of the chairs and he wrapped it over Jasmine "Thanks" she said.

## Chapter 26

**Saturday 20th February**

### CHAPTER 26

The following day the guests started getting up around seven and the hustle and bustle of them woke Paul up and his head was sore.

Jasmine was still asleep and Paul woke her up "Time to get up breakfast is in half an hour."

Jasmine got up her eyes were bleary and she was sore from sleeping on a cane sofa all night. As she got up her hair was all over the place. Jasmine got up wrapping the blanket around herself and headed for the French doors but stopped and turned around to Paul.

"Thanks for last night."

Paul was unsure of what she meant "I don't know what I did."

After a breakfast of smoked kippers and coffee they moved to a small room next door to the lounge. Timothy was sat in the room. Paul and Jasmine walked in unsure of what to expect.

The speaker, Lucille Harrison had arrived and she smiled as she prepared her documents and thought to herself 'If only they knew.'

The meeting began as everyone sat close to the front eager to here information on the Brethren.

Timothy started and he looked around the room "Your here to understand the Brethren or what we know of them. We and someone who can't be with us are the only ones left who know about Giovanni and his life."

Paul was alarmed when Timothy mentioned that they were the last few alive.

Timothy continued "We are here today to meet to discuss on how next to deal with the Brethren. Their power and influence grows more each day.

Timothy continued as he introduced Lucille "Lucille is someone that works for French intelligence and is someone we met through Giovanni a year earlier and has been helping us to get information on the Brethren."

Lucille Harrison was five foot five with brown hair and sharp green eyes. She wore black trousers and a cream blouse.

"Hello I am here to tell you what French Intelligence has learnt of the Brethren."

The lights were dimmed and she started showing slides of key individuals. On the first slide was a picture of Tyson Hulios and his number two, Oliver Swanson. On another slide where photos of known employees such as Byron and the man Jasmine saw at the funeral and how his apartment had been found only yesterday but there was little to go on.

Other slides included the suspected areas that French Intelligence thought they operated in places like Paris, London and Rome. She showed pictures of brutal violence and murder and they showed that the Brethren

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

were are not afraid to get their hands dirty. The last slide was the most troubling showing how the group had penetrated police, army and governments.

Lucille finished her presentation by saying "It is likely that they know everything about you as well."

The lights came back on.

Lucille said "We suspect Tyson Hulios to be in charge of the operations of the group but we believe their is someone else higher up. Our information is sketchy at best and what we have shown you is the sum of what we know."

## Chapter 27

### CHAPTER 27

Later in the afternoon and a few miles away from Dukes Hall, Lucille stood looking at green fields and white sheep as she stood in a red telephone box and she rang a secure telephone number.

It rang for a second "Hello."

"The ball is in play" Lucille said.

Levette Golason, leader of the Brethren group responded "Good. You know what to do and the person we want."

Lucille nodded "They won't know what hit them."

## Chapter 28

### CHAPTER 28

Jasmine walked with Paul in the grounds of Dukes Hall. The day was warm for a February afternoon.

She linked arms with Paul.

Paul said as he looked to her "What's up?"

Jasmine sighed "I have just rung my office to check on my boss's killer. It appears they have uncovered a wealth of information about his aliases and jobs and how he was tied with Byron".

They sat on a bench close to a pond full of ducks, reeds and water lilies with dragonflies hovering on the surface of the water.

Paul looked into Jasmines eyes "What do you make of what we have just heard?"

Jasmine looked across the pond "Useful, your friend Timothy invited me from Paris to come here. You know we're going to have to act on this."

Paul looked across the Eden Valley "I reckon that this weekend their will be some thoughts on how to bring the group down. But I don't see how as this group is well connected and financed."

Jasmine smiled "We're not finished yet."

They continued walking. In the distance a pair of binoculars tracked them on the horizon. Behind the leader was ten men heavily armed and camouflaged. The leader looked to his watch and it was going on for four. They would move in three hours.

## Chapter 29

### CHAPTER 29

It had gone seven pm. Paul was in his bedroom and looked into his bag and brought out his Walkman. He started to play but the batteries had gone dead.

Timothy walked through the door and saw him holding his Walkman. He walked and looked at his collection of seventies music.

"I see your into Deep Purple and the Monkeys."

Paul nodded "I love Smokey on the Water. However I can't play them my batteries are dead."

Timothy looked to him as he left Paul's room "Lets go for a drive and get some batteries."

Paul nodded "I could do with a drive."

They both walked to Timothy's car, a black BMW. Paul looked at it admiringly.

"Nice BMW."

Timothy shrugged his shoulders "Its just a toy."

Timothy threw him the keys to the car and got in the passenger seat and looked at him. Paul got in and placed his hands around the black leather rimmed steering wheel.

Paul looked to him "Where to?"

Timothy looked ahead "Those batteries you wanted. Its best we get moving."

Paul noted their was tension in Timothy's voice. He thought nothing more of it and carried on driving and he heard an explosion and a fireball in the direction he had come from. Paul stopped and looked back as his face turned to one of terror.

Timothy shouted "DRIVE".

Paul did as he was told as adrenalin kicked in. They drove a few hundred metres to a lay by where they both saw flames licking the stone masonry and the sound of exploding glass.

Paul looked on in a state of disbelief "What happened?"

Timothy got out of the car "The Brethren. They knew we were hear. I don't know how. We kept this secret."

Timothy looked on in the distance and saw Lucille standing and talking to a group of soldiers, pointing and giving instructions.

Timothy knew he had been betrayed and that Lucille was working for the Brethren. Paul took the binoculars and saw Lucille in the distance.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul became angry "Who are you really. You say you didn't want to help and then all this happens?"

Timothy threw up his arms in anger "I am sorry that this has all happened. I truly am. Everyone is likely to be dead or captured."

They both left quickly.

## Chapter 30

### CHAPTER 30

It was night time as Jasmine looked outside for Paul when she heard an explosion from the hall. She looked back and saw more than half a dozen people storming the building.

"Paul" she shouted.

Within a few minutes the building was in flames. She knew she had to get out of the area. Jasmine saw Lucille only a few metres away lit up by the flames.

She walked towards her eager to leave "Lucille we have to go."

Lucille turned around and laughed at her "You don't get it."

Jasmine stared and looked backed to the hall "Don't get what?"

Lucille turned around with a gun and two other men dressed in green camouflage.

Lucille said "You. Where is Paul?"

Jasmine was angry "I don't know he was gone."

Lucille stood still and motioned over the two men "Never mind. He's probably in their right now. Take her."

In the distance there was the sound of a helicopter and whining blades. Jasmine walked to the helicopter handcuffed.

Jasmine said "Traitor. We all trusted you."

Lucille shook her head and walked to Jasmine smugly "I am not a traitor. You and your friends just picked the wrong side."

The helicopter took off as Dukes Hall was ablaze.

## Chapter 31

**Sunday 21st February**

### CHAPTER 31

Timothy drove for hours until he was clear and away from danger. He drove south till he was on a motorway service station south of Lancaster.

They stopped and walked into a cafe at a motorway service station that was open with no one around. They sat on brown plastic seats. Paul had remained silent and wondered if Jasmine was alright. He was alone, his only help a man he barely knew and didn't trust.

Timothy sat still for a moment and he looked around "We're safe."

Paul looked to him and his eyes were frozen in shock "What now?"

Timothy shook his head "I don't know. This weekend we hoped to begin recruiting you and Jasmine to help start bringing this group down."

Paul was angered and he did little to contain it "You brought me here wanting my help to bring down the Brethren and now that lies in ruins."

Timothy was equally angry "My brother, Peter, is caught up in this and is possibly dead."

Paul was taken aback "Your brother, Peter Lancaster. I didn't know."

Timothy replied "Well half brother. He had a different father but we were close."

Paul looked to him intensely "You know things and have held back. What is it that you are hiding?"

Timothy sat as two coffees were brought over by a freckled lady with ginger hair "I was like you once, a journalist investigating the Brethren."

Paul was intrigued "What happened next?"

Timothy continued as he began to speak with passion "During the time Peter was driving Giovanni their was a name that kept cropping up. That name led me to our friend. You've met her."

Paul's eyes narrowed and it came to him "Isabella."

Timothy continued "Her middle name is Patrice. Anyway as I was investigating the lead it turned out she worked at the French Embassy. I went to the embassy but there was no one there with that name and the trail went cold.

Then a few days later I got a knock on my door. I answered it and saw our friend standing there in the doorway. She came in and introduced herself as Patrice and warned me to stop looking for her.

Paul carried on listening as he stirred sugar into his coffee.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Timothy looked around and he continued "I asked her why and she said that people she was involved with wouldn't like it. That was nearly six years ago."

Paul replied "What happened next?"

Timothy put his coffee cup down "She said she knew that I was a journalist and she knew about Peter and that Giovanni was already suspicious.

Anyway she then disappears four years ago before coming back and she says that its time for things to change. Isabella told me about the Brethren and the horrors that they had done. She knew of the group because Giovanni was apart of it, though he kept out of the violence. He would help them out by acting as a go between using his diplomatic status to spy for them and to pass packages to different people."

Paul was intrigued as he sat back into his seat "Did you and Isabella become close?"

Timothy's face lit up "We began to see each other until about four years ago when she disappeared. The Brethren were always suspicious of her but kept their distance. That was until."

Paul interrupted the silence "Until what?"

Timothy continued "Giovanni started to put out feelers to leave about two years ago. The Brethren weren't happy and you only left when they decided. They staged a meeting in Southampton and the rest of it you know."

Paul drunk up his coffee "Why did you guys stop seeing each other?"

Timothy sank into his seat "It was Isabella's decision. She came to me four years ago and said it was over and she was afraid of something happening to me. Today proves her fear."

Paul "Its one of those things. Is their nothing left of your work?"

Timothy shook his head "I moved everything to Dukes Hall out of London. I only knew about the place as did Isabella. The only person."

Paul looked to Timothy sensing their was more going on "Who else knew?"

Timothy's face was one that look liked it had been betrayed "That Lucille. She came to me in London a year ago and Giovanni introduced her saying that she could be trusted to help us. We checked her out and she was clean and had worked for French intelligence and so we disclosed what we knew. I should have seen it coming."

Paul said "You can't see everything."

A few seconds later, Timothy looked around and saw a familiar face and smiled. They exchanged hellos. Isabella sat next to Timothy.

Her face was full of relief "It is good to see that your both alive."

Paul waited a moment still surprised at seeing Isabella.

Isabella turned to Timothy saying "He knows everything?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Timothy nodded in agreement "He knows."

Isabella's eyes locked onto Paul's "Mr Spencer. I do regret that you are involved in this. My brother was a member of the Brethren."

Paul replied accepting defeat "There is little I can do now if everything is gone."

Isabella smiled "Not everything."

Isabella pulled out of her bag a piece of paper and it was handed to Paul. Paul realised it was one of Giovanni's missing pages from his journal. He saw the word Athena and the mention of a great sin.

Paul looked to Isabella intrigued "What does this mean?"

Isabella lied and continued to use Paul "This is the extent of what I know about the Brethren. Mr Spencer my brother kept this under lock and key for fear of it coming out. This is why he was killed. I want you to go to Livorno and dig around."

Paul changed the conversation "I am sorry about your daughter."

Isabella said "Thank you Mr Spencer but she is still alive out there."

Paul didn't ask why.

Isabella continued "Listen to me carefully. Take Timothy's car to Lancaster. You are booked on the night train to London. You will then be driven to Heathrow. Once you land in Livorno wait for instructions."

Paul looked confused "Instructions. Why are you not involved with this?"

Timothy sat sternly "We are both too well known. There are only a few of us who know who you are, you will have to take care of yourself."

Isabella looked to Paul and her voice was urgent "Paul, go now."

Paul got up and he left. He was unsure of what to do or what to expect. He got into the car and drove to Lancaster station and he left the car park and headed south on the night train, the Caledonian Sleeper to London.

## Chapter 32

### CHAPTER 32

Jasmine woke up as a bright piercing light shone through a circular window. She got up and her head hurt and she felt nauseous and looked to her surroundings. In front of her was a large hill and dozens of white anchored yachts. Jasmine knew where she was and was in Monte Carlo and recalled her mum taking her here years earlier on a summer holiday.

Her cabin was twelve foot by eight foot squared with a six foot bed, table and a small TV. The walls were white washed and there was a black marbled sink and it was on the far corner by the door.

The door was locked and she pulled it with all her might and she could not get out.

In the room above Levette Golason, a politician in his late seventies sat at the head of a large conference room with twenty other people. They were the key players of the Brethren and consisted of influential politicians and businessmen.

Levette, the leader of the Brethren, bit down with his yellow teeth on his cigar "We have stopped our enemies."

Everyone nodded in approval.

In the far distance of the conference room a middle aged Greek ex politician, John Smith responded in caution "We must still be careful. Our enemy may have lost but we shouldn't be too willing to celebrate victory."

Levette's jubilant mood wasn't dented and he looked to the lone voice "I hear your concern. The enemy is alone, two were killed, one was captured and another two got away from Dukes Hall. We have dealt harshly with our enemies at Dukes Hall, on the river banks of Southampton and in the streets of Paris. We have further quashed such rebels all across Italy and Spain."

The meeting broke up after a further twenty minutes discussing strategy and finances. People disembarked off the ship and into waiting cars.

Levette remained on the yacht, Excelsior, and she was soon sailing away from Monaco.

Jasmine saw this and wondered how she was going to get off. There was a knock on the door and Tyson walked in.

Jasmine was not pleased to see him "What do you want?"

Tyson folded his arms and remained stone faced "The boss would like to see you."

Jasmine was escorted three decks above to a large lounge that was painted in white and the room had a large expansive window that looked onto Monaco in the distance. She sat down and saw a man in his late seventies dressed in white.

Levette's dark brown eyes locked onto Jasmine. For a moment neither said anything and they just looked at each other.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Levette got up and closed the door "Ms Rosinni. It is good to see you again."

Jasmine shook her head "Have we met before?"

Levette nodded "Many years ago. When you where four I came to your uncles house in Lyon to talk with your uncle."

Jasmine scanned her brain and remembered Levette "Yes I remember you."

Levette shrugged his shoulders "It is a pity you have got caught up all in this. Your uncles death was unfortunate."

Jasmine tried to remain calm but couldn't keep quiet her loathing of him "Unfortunate?"

Levette smiled "Unfortunate is the wrong thing to say. Your uncles death is a loss to us all. I have no desire to see another member of the Rosinni family hurt."

Jasmine tried to play him "If that's true than let me go."

Levette offered her a red wine but Jasmine refused "I wish it was that simple. We scoured the wreckage of Dukes Hall. Paul wasn't amongst the ruins. One of our people saw him leaving in a car."

Jasmine was relieved that Paul was still alive "What's that got to do with me?"

Levette raised his glass in defiance "Nothing. But I know your eager to see him again. You two together are a threat. A threat to this group."

Jasmine tried to defend Paul "Paul's just a journalist. What can he possibly do?"

Levette smiled coyly "Nice try. He maybe a journalist but with you in the picture he has access to Timothy and to us. I would like to make you an offer."

Jasmine was repulsed but said nothing "What offer?"

Levette sat down and he said "We know of your promotion in Paris to inspector. We have a lot of people in Paris. Your position would give us protection and an opportunity for riches."

Jasmine was defiant "Thanks but no."

Levette was angered but he got up "You can't imagine the wealth. The access to knowledge and money. You would have access to people in your government. A word here and their could make you rise further."

Jasmine continued to be defiant "Again, no."

Levette walked with Jasmine and looked to Tyson "Take her back to her cabin. Ms Rosinni please consider my offer."

Jasmine said nothing and was escorted to her cabin. The idea of helping the Brethren made her angry and she would not help them in any way.

## Chapter 33

### CHAPTER 33

It had gone night time when Jasmine's meal was brought to her in her cabin. It was brought by one of the Brethren guard. Jasmine didn't look at him and she had been secretly working on a plan to escape.

The problem was the door had a secure lock, she was in the middle of the Mediterranean miles from shore and there was a guard outside at all times. Not to mention the possibility of other guards around the ship.

Jasmine tucked into her meal of Pasta Carbonara and it was of good quality with rich tender beef mixed in with high quality sauce. She laughed to herself that at least in her confinement she would be eating the same sort of meal that everyone else was.

Levette sat in the dining room next to Tyson. The two rarely dined together and this was an opportunity they both needed to discuss events.

Tyson looked to Levette as he cut into his steak "What are we going to do with Giovanni's niece, she can't stay here forever."

Levette chewed on his steak "We will do something about it but not right now. I have offered her a job and a chance to work with us."

Tyson sounded surprised "Offered her a job?"

Levette nodded "She works for us in Paris and we help her out."

Tyson's face remained blank "You know she can't be trusted. She gets out of here she will come against us. You know what her uncle was like. That sort of thing runs in the family."

Levette listened and paused for a moment "Exactly, she works for us instead of against us. She is less dangerous on the inside than on the outside. On the outside she has her mother and she knows all of our secrets."

Tyson queried "Would you like me to deal with her mother?"

Levette "Do nothing to harm her. But rest assured my friend she will be dealt with."

Tyson nodded.

Then there was a dull thud two decks below.

Levette ran to the bridge. He rang his engineer, William Molyneux.

"What's going on?"

William Molyneux spoke with his face covered in black smoke and the kitchen full of people rushing around "The explosion came from the side of the ship. We're investigating now."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine felt the explosion and she knew that this was her opportunity to escape knowing they would want to keep an eye on her. She waited for a moment. The door opened.

Oliver looked to her "Miss, we need to move you for technical reasons."

Jasmine played along as she was escorted. She had roughly figured out the ships layout and as they walked down the corridor, she looked around. Jasmine bent down and pretended to do her shoe laces.

Oliver spoke with irritation "We can do that later."

Jasmine said "I know."

Oliver walked in front of her and she kicked him to the ground. Oliver got up and tried to fight back. Jasmine realised this wasn't going to be as easy as she had thought and Oliver was poised ready to fight. Jasmine didn't have time and every second was precious. She stepped a few feet backwards and allowed Oliver in front of her to come closer. There was a fire extinguisher nearby. She grabbed it and threw it at him.

Oliver fell to the ground. Jasmine ran to the rear of the ship. She was grateful when she spotted a boat mounted to the side of the ship. There was a winch close to her and she pressed a big red button.

She ran to the boat and jumped in as it descended. Oliver was close by but it was too late and saw the boat descend into the sea. He got out his gun and opened fire but the boat was gone and the bullets only hit the water.

Jasmine fired up the boat and fled at full speed. She could barely make out where she was and carried on until she was clear of the boat.

Levette was angry as Oliver told him of Jasmynes escape. His engineer was close by.

Levette looked to him "What happened?"

William "It was the kitchens sir. One of the chefs had left out some oil. It wasn't sabotage."

Levette was still angry "That's one piece of good news."

Tyson said "What of Jasmine Rosinni?"

Levette looked out to the night sky "Nothing for now. We haven't heard the last from her, we will see her again."

## Chapter 34

### CHAPTER 34

There was a misty morning in the city of Florence as the six o'clock plane from London Heathrow had landed. It had gone ten in the morning when the plane landed.

Paul got off the plane and he looked around unsure of who was meeting him and walked a short distance down the gangway. As he walked he saw people holding signs with peoples names on them. As he continued to walk he saw lovers in the distance embracing and people waving.

A middle aged woman with white hair, stocky build, wearing black trousers and a green jumper approached the barriers near to where Paul stood. Paul noticed her and he observed that she was smartly dressed.

The lady spoke with an English accent and was something that Paul wasn't expecting "Mr Spencer?"

Paul looked to her and he said "That's me."

The lady smiled at Paul and shook his hand "My name is Kim Sutton, but you can call me Kimmy."

They walked to the entrance of the airport as numerous taxis lined the road outside as people came and went out of the entrance. A black Lancia Delta was waiting for them. Kimmy got into the drivers side.

Kimmy shook his hands and laughingly said "Welcome to the resistance."

Paul was amused "Resistance?"

Kimmy smiled and drove out of the airport towards Livorno "Theirs a lot you don't know Mr Spencer."

Paul was intrigued "Call me Paul. What do you mean theirs a lot I don't know?"

Kimmy's voice turned serious as she drove on as they cleared planes the Florence into the Italian countryside "We have suffered a defeat, but their are more of us alive than the Brethren know."

## Chapter 35

**Monday 22nd February**

### CHAPTER 35

By the morning Jasmine was still in the boat drifting, she was tired and stressed but glad to be out of danger.

She looked around and saw that she was near the coastline of Monaco as she recognised mile high cliffs and small crested waves bouncing off large white yachts and concrete defences.

A small white patrol boat came along side her. She climbed aboard and she was soon at Monaco police station and she gave details that confirmed her as Inspector Rosinni.

"Can I use a phone" she said.

The receptionist, a small petite black hair lady handed her a telephone. She rang her mothers apartment in Paris but she got no answer.

Jasmine put the phone down and sighed. She left the police station and she needed space to think.

There was little Jasmine could do and she headed into the city and walked to the shore. As she walked she noticed the tall hills in the distance and the curve of the bay edging away towards the Italian border.

As she sat on a bench looking out to the sea she was startled by a voice.

"Nice view."

Jasmine looked around and saw that it was her mum. They were both glad to see each other.

Jasmine smiled as they both sat at a bench overlooking the harbour watching people walking by "I tried to get hold of you but no one answered."

Isabella continued to look ahead before turning to face her daughter "At the moment I have to keep a low profile. I was in the area on business and I heard from sources that you had been picked up and I came straight away."

Jasmine put her hand on her mothers lap.

Isabella looked to her daughter "Lets go for a walk, we have much to discuss."

Jasmine nodded. They walked along the harbour to a cocktail bar that overlooked one of the marinas in the harbour.

Jasmine told Isabella of what had happened at Dukes Hall. Jasmine listened and she spoke about Levette. After they had finished talking Jasmine had only one question.

"Where's Paul?"

Isabella looked at her daughter and she said "He's in Livorno. I sent him there a couple of days ago."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Isabella handed her daughter an address in Livorno and she didn't say why he was there. Jasmine thanked her mum and headed to the train station. As Jasmine left, Isabella looked on and there was a motherly pride towards her daughter. Isabella realised her daughter was as resourceful as her uncle was. But she felt guilty not saying what she fully knew and the things that she had done.

## Chapter 36

### CHAPTER 36

Paul woke up the following morning close to the main harbour at Livorno. He looked to the notes on the Athena and the information that Isabella had given him. None of it made any sense. Many questions still nagged at him, what was the Athena and why was Giovanni here in Livorno?

He turned his head out of the window and noticed large cargo ships going past. Paul shook his head thinking it was too obvious and he drank some more of his coffee and his instincts told him to check it out.

He and Kimmy both walked on a foggy morning to the ships registry office. Kimmy asked a middle aged gentleman sat behind a dark panelled walnut desk about the Athena and they were told that no ship existed.

Then they walked to the local library and looked at microfiche's of local articles scouring for any mention of the ship. A couple of hours into the search Paul found a picture of the Athena.

The article dated under the 5th February 1979 mentioned the Athena. Paul looked to Kimmy. There was only two possibilities, that the records were deliberately missing or they had been lost due to clerical error. They then returned to the ships registry office and asked for details of the Athena. The middle aged man wasn't pleased that they had come back.

There were records and Paul looked at the Athena and saw that it was a registered cargo vessel owned by a private company called Mediterranean Shipping Services. Kimmy looked to the article and saw that the name looked familiar.

Paul looked to Kimmy "What's up?"

Kimmy "This name, Mediterranean Shipping Services it has come up before?"

Paul asked "Where?"

Kimmy looked at him "The company disbanded not long after the Athena sank. They operated out of the port for more than ten years and regularly had cargo coming in from Africa."

Paul was intrigued "What does this mean?"

Kimmy continued "This company is possibly a front of the Brethren. We had our suspicions but this confirms it."

Paul stroked his chin "If this is a ship carrying cargo. There would surely be records of what it carried and who was on board."

Kimmy returned to the shipping desk and requested the cargo and crew manifest for the Athena. Paul then heard a furious exchange in Italian that he couldn't make out. Kimmy returned to the room smiling.

Paul could see that Kimmy had a look of amusement on his face "What was that about?"

Kimmy "He complained to me by saying that the records would take days. I argued that they were urgent."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul said "He gave in just like that?"

Kimmy smiled "That and a bundle of lire notes."

Paul said nothing and Kimmy handed him the crew and cargo manifests. Paul looked through it and quickly found that the Athena was carrying nothing unusual apart from agricultural equipment bound for the Libyan port of Tripoli.

Their attention then turned to the crew manifest. There was a list of twenty people and two passengers were being carried.

Two names leaped out immediately and both had the Rosinni name. The name confirmed Giovanni travelling to Libya two days before the ship sank. The other name was Isabella's.

Paul scratched his head. He had seen Isabella only a few days earlier. How can there be two Isabellas?

Was this coincidence Paul wondered and he double checked the name and saw that Isabella went on the same journey with Giovanni to Libya. Two days later the ship went down with all hands and it sank because the Captain was drunk on duty. Paul's journalistic instincts kicked in and he could sense a story beginning to emerge as threads forged in his mind about Giovanni's death and the loss of the Athena. Yet still there were doubts and many questions unanswered. Paul scanned the paperwork and he found the address of the Captain's house located in Castiglioncello and it was fifteen miles south from Livorno.

The address was the most recent that was available. Paul hoped he wasn't at the wrong address. He knocked on the door and looked at the arched porch and admired the teak stained door.

The door was opened by an elderly woman in her late eighties. Kimmy translated but the lady spoke back.

Kimmy looked back towards Paul who stood silently "She's happy to talk and she speaks English."

Paul asked "What's her name?"

The lady smiled "Rositta."

They walked into a small cottage that overlooked crystal blue waters that glistened in the winter sun. The lounge was of a modest size with small blue furniture and jigsaws lining the walls. There was little in the way of comforts with only a radio on a corner table.

They all sat down as Paul got out his notepad.

Rositta "How can I help you Mr Spencer?"

Paul sat down and looked to Rositta his eyes were serious with a deep curiosity "I came about your husband, Captain Tiberius."

Rositta sat down and nodded "I thought as much."

She stared out of the window and returned her gaze towards Paul. "There's not much more I can say. Everything you need is in the press archives."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul responded with a serious look "I don't believe the records and I want to hear your story about what happened and what he was like."

Rositta paused for a moment and thought about what Paul said. "Very well. I will talk. I am getting old Mr Spencer. As you get older you think about things that have been done, as well as the regrets you carry. It is time for the truth. Were do you want to start?"

Paul was ready and he laid his pen on his notepad "Tell me about the night he died."

Rositta sat and stared at the unlit fire as memories of that night came sharply into view "It was a cool night. For winter it was still and calm. Tiberius walked out of this house and he said goodbye for the final time. Two days later I hear the ship had gone down with all hands. The inquiry said it was to do with Tiberius drinking."

Paul asked "Was it?"

Rositta replied "My husband did drink but at sea he didn't touch the stuff and he knew from other sailors the damage that alcohol could do on a ships crew."

Paul laced his fingers together as he paused for a moment "If the ship didn't sink because of drunken misconduct then what do you think it was?"

Rositta look towards Paul with an expressionless face "I do not know Mr Spencer. My husband had no enemies and no one had a harsh word against him. My guess is that it was sabotage."

Kimmy was intrigued "Sabotage?"

Rositta looked to Kimmy as her eyes narrowed "I have thought about this long and hard. It wasn't the crew but something about the ship."

Paul sat still for a moment "What about the ship?"

Rositta "A week before my husband sailed he noticed two people looking around the ship and thought nothing of it until he was approached by them. He talked to me about how they wanted to ship something over and they were willing to pay cash. My husband agreed as money was tight and agreed to ship them on Monday 15th Jan 1979 departing eleven am and he would return on the Thursday night. He said that they were odd but didn't say why. When you work on ships you see all types of people and my husband thought nothing more of it."

The interview lasted another hour and Rositta talked of her love of growing flowers and walking the local hills and she had a proud family with four grown up children living in Rome. Paul and Kimmy left the old lady and thanked her for the interview. Paul knew that the sinking had something to do with Giovanni.

For Paul their was only question. What was on the boat?

Paul wasn't sure what but he was determined to find out.

## Chapter 37

**Tuesday 23rd February**

### CHAPTER 37

The following day Paul set about to investigate more about the Athena and its captain. The interview with his wife had yielded useful information.

There were questions that gnawed at Paul as he walked to the café in the hotel he was staying at. The café was white washed with large round tables and pictures of Livorno on the walls.

It was quiet as Paul looked out to the port and he saw small and large ships. He sipped on his coffee and ate Italian pastries. But still there remained unanswered questions. Questions such as how had the Athena sank and if it wasn't the result of a drunken Captain then what else sunk the ship.

He wrote these questions on his notepad. He flicked back to the interview from the previous day and the notes he had made on the Captain. The Captain's record was impeccable and he had been sailing since the fifties with only time off for the birth of his four children and to attend funerals of both his parents returning only a couple of days later to work.

Paul bit on his pen and thought to himself "He is well experienced and he knows the seas".

Kimmy had given him a copy of the official investigation but it had yielded little information citing only that the ship had sunk with all hands due to the Captain's drinking. Paul was frustrated and the report gave him little that he didn't already have written down.

He glanced to the sea view in front of him and he was about to make some notes when he saw a sight that was familiar. Paul dismissed it before returning to his notes.

The person approached closer and walked into the café and looked towards Paul.

Paul continued to study his notes.

The person smiled "It is good to see that you're still alive."

Paul looked up to see that it was Jasmine. They were both happy to see each other.

Paul was surprised "I thought you might have been killed in the fire."

They hugged each other and they sat down together and both their faces were full of relief that neither of them had been killed. Paul quickly removed the paperwork on Giovanni and Isabella putting into his jacket pocket away from his notes so that Jasmine would not see what he had found.

Jasmine filled Paul in on what had happened with Levette.

Paul explained what he was working on and mentioned Giovanni's name but he kept back Isabella's name.

Jasmine was surprised "My uncle was on that ship. What was he doing?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul said "That's what I am trying to investigate. We need a boat. That I do know."

Jasmine nodded in agreement "Then what are we waiting for?"

They both left the café and walked a short distance to the pier. They walked around looking for a suitable boat. They saw a small sturdy black boat called the Florence.

Jasmine continued to look at the boat as a gentleman in his early fifties approached them and spoke quickly in Italian. Neither understood what he was saying. Jasmine tried to speak in French. The gentleman nodded and he knew a little bit of French as Jasmine explained that they needed to hire a boat and that they needed to go to the sight of the Athena.

Paul looked towards Jasmine "What did he say?"

Jasmine replied "Roberto, the ships captain, agreed but he said to come back tomorrow."

In the distance Paul saw Kimmy. She was not pleased that he had left the hotel unsupervised and walked towards Paul wary of who he was with.

Paul introduced Jasmine and explained that she was involved with the Brethren.

They went to Jasmine's hotel room and they began to set up a plan to explore the Athena.

Paul said little and allowed Kimmy and Jasmine to discuss the finer details of what to do next.

After an hour Paul was asleep and Kimmy got up and looked towards Paul.

"Poor thing. He shouldn't be here what can he possibly do?"

Jasmine responded "Paul's not stupid. He may not know how to fight but he has his uses."

Kimmy said nothing and left "I'll see you both in the morning. The boat leaves at ten o'clock."

Jasmine nodded "We'll be there".

Paul was still asleep when the door closed.

Jasmine looked over to him "You can get up now".

Paul shook his head trying to wake himself up "I must have nodded off".

Jasmine looked at him and laughed "Thirty minutes ago but you couldn't have done much. I studied your notes from the interview. I agree that there is something more going on here."

Paul agreed as he left for his room "However there is nothing we can do till tomorrow."

## Chapter 38

Wednesday 24th February

### CHAPTER 38

Jasmine didn't realise that she had fallen asleep till she woke up and looked at the clock on the wall. It had gone four in the morning and the hotel room she was staying in was quiet. Jasmine looked to the streets below and only saw the odd car passing and the streets were quiet with pieces of rubbish being blown on a winters breeze.

She noticed that Paul was fast asleep in his room. He had previously got up only to return to bed twenty minutes after Kimmy had left.

Jasmine wished she could be like that. Sleep was always a problem when working a case that involved long hours. However this case was taking its toll. Jasmine knew this and apart of her wanted to be back in Paris hunting her bosses killer and Paul should be at home pursuing his life.

Jasmine lay on her bed and tried to get a couple of hours sleep. Their was a big day ahead she told herself and needed her rest but it was no use. She continued to pace in the corridor outside Paul's room.

The pacing woke Paul up from his sleep and he put on his dressing gown and opened his door to see Jasmine pacing aimlessly.

"Can't sleep" he said.

Jasmine bit her nails "Something like that. I am sorry, did I wake you?"

Paul nodded and he tried to hide his annoyance "I am a light sleeper anyway."

He noticed Jasmine wasn't alright and was seeing for the first time that Jasmine was not being her positive self.

"What's wrong?"

Jasmine said nothing and they looked to each other silently for a moment. Paul invited Jasmine into his room. The room was slightly different to Jasmines and had a view of the seafront which hers lacked. Jasmine entered and sat on a dark green sofa with Paul sitting opposite on the edge of his bed.

"What's wrong?" Paul said again but was more insistent.

"I have been so busy caught up in this Brethren business that the emotions have suddenly come to me. That and the prospect that I thought I lost you."

Paul did understand and tried to be sympathetic but he struggled to read Jasmines body language "I understand."

Jasmine replied with anger "Do you? Sorry."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul ignored the anger "Your upset and hurt. You've lost two people close to you and you have been through a lot."

Jasmine looked towards Paul in sympathy "You have had it rough with Kathleen and Byron."

Jasmine leaned closer to Paul. Paul was wary knowing that Jasmine was hurt and vulnerable. He didn't want to take advantage of this and he edged away sitting further back on his bed. Close relationships and intimacy was something he was uncomfortable with. He wasn't sure if it was him or his Aspergic condition.

Jasmine was concerned and she put her hand on his left knee "What's wrong?"

Paul looked to her uncomfortably and shrugged his shoulders "I am no good at this intimacy stuff."

Jasmines eyes lit up and she chuckled "Neither am I."

She sat back and gave Paul his space "Your a good person Paul. I am glad that you are here on this case."

Paul felt more comfortable and moved towards to her and placed his hand on her right cheek. Jasmines skin was soft. Her green eyes no longer had the harshness of when they had first met in Dorset. These eyes were the same but were more vulnerable.

Paul smiled "Now I see you."

Jasmine was unsure of what he meant and grabbed his hand that was on her cheek "What do you mean?"

Paul replied "Your eyes and the mask you put on for others is gone."

Jasmine nodded "You've got me. My mask is gone. I am as you see me."

Paul said nothing and moved his hand off Jasmines cheek and placed it on her left hand.

Jasmine sat quietly for a moment and stared at Paul and scanned his eyes "I see through your mask. Beneath that clever veneer is a man who is vulnerable."

Paul acknowledged and he said "We both have our masks removed."

Jasmine agreed "Indeed."

Paul got up and walked over to get the duvet that was on his bed and sat next to Jasmine on the sofa. He looked out of the window and leaned back and turned his head towards Jasmine whose eyes were vulnerable and alert. He sat back breathing slower and placed a large soft pillow behind his neck. Jasmine got a pillow from Paul's bed and placed it on his chest and she lay on it. Both of their breaths slowed till they were one and asleep.

## Chapter 39

### CHAPTER 39

It had gone nine the following morning. Jasmine was the first to wake up and Paul was asleep. She looked to him and shook him.

"Paul we've got to go."

Paul got up and he stretched "I suppose we have to."

Jasmine looked to him and smiled "Thanks for last night. That's the second night we've spent together."

Paul smiled "Any time."

Jasmine looked to him mischievously "I'll hold you to that."

She left and headed back to her room. They agreed to meet in twenty minutes downstairs.

As Jasmine parted Paul was surprised at what had happened last night. They were getting closer as friends. How close he wasn't sure. A part of him still yearned for Kathleen yet Jasmine complicated things.

The day had begun with grey overcast skies yet there was no rain. At ten o'clock they met Kimmy on the small fishing vessel.

The wind was calm and there was barely a wave in sight. They arrived at the wreck of the Athena. Kimmy looked to a map of the area and they were halfway between Capraia and Gorgona.

Paul noticed that Kimmy looked concerned "What's up?"

Kimmy's face was one of worry "This boat shouldn't be here. Is there anything in your notes to say where it was heading?"

Paul looked at the map "It was heading towards the Libyan coast."

Kimmy looked to the wreck below and she said "It is not that unusual for ships to go to the Libyan coast from here and then go onto Tripoli."

The boat stopped and Kimmy looked over to the wreck of the Athena. All three of them could see the wreck below them. Jasmine walked closer and Kimmy looked to a map of the Tuscan coast and looked at the location from the description given in newspaper article in 1979.

Jasmine grabbed the map before staring out across the Mediterranean "We need to look at the ship from the inside."

Kimmy turned to face Jasmine and she had a look of concern on her face "If only we had the resources. Any large scale operation would draw the Brethren to us. That's the last thing we need to do."

Captain Roberto noticed the seas were getting choppier and he said with urgency "We need to go back."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Kimmy looked to Jasmine "What do you want to do?"

Jasmine wrote down the coordinates of the wreck "We head back."

The Florence headed back and arrived just in time at the harbour as large thunder clouds rolled in and large crested waves lashed against the shoreline.

Paul had remained quiet on the journey back. He was thinking of Isabella being on the boat. This he hadn't disclosed to Jasmine and he wasn't sure how she would react.

As they walked closer to the entrance of the harbour heading back to the hotel Kimmy stopped and looked to them both "Why don't you stay with me for a few days I have more than enough space for guests."

Jasmine smiled and looked to her "Better than sleeping in a hotel. Paul what do you say?"

Paul liked the idea "Sounds good."

They drove twenty miles south of Livorno to a hillside manor house close to Munchen. Within half an hour they arrived at a large house overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and it was a large two storey house set back in its own grounds with a large front garden with stone patio floorings surrounded by small trees.

Kimmy looked to Jasmine as they entered the house "We need diving and cutting equipment."

Paul looked at them both with concern "There is only one problem. As you said if we start ringing around for equipment the Brethren will know we are in the area and are digging around."

Jasmine agreed "Paul's right."

Kimmy looked to them both as they moved to the kitchen "What do you suggest?"

Jasmine sat down on a nearby dining chair and she said "We need to contact someone who is discreet and won't attract a lot of attention."

Paul stroked his chin "Couldn't we hire the equipment or hire someone to do it for us. We can say that we're doing a survey of the wreck site."

Kimmy nodded "That's a good idea. I know someone who I could trust. I should have thought about it sooner."

Kimmy placed a few calls and within an hour they had what they need to explore the Athena.

## Chapter 40

Thursday 25th February

### CHAPTER 40

It had gone eleven the following day on the Florence, a hired diver, Yusef Galos, an ageing friend that Kimmy knew dived down to the Athena.

Yusef radioed through to confirm his descent. Yusef dived down fifty feet into the clear blue Mediterranean waters. He saw the wreck of the Athena largely intact but it had a large hole in its port side.

Yusef crackled through on his radio embedded in his breathing mask "I am entering the wreck site."

Kimmy "That's great what do you see?"

Yusef moved into the ship and he said "Mostly containers, agricultural equipment and bits of large twisted metal."

Yusef glided down the central access between the containers located in the first cargo hold. "I have reached the edge of cargo bay one. I am proceeding down the entrance across a long corridor."

Jasmine said "Are you anywhere near the Captains quarters?"

Yusef "They are a few decks above. I am however quite close to the crew quarters. Would you like me to enter?"

Kimmy looked to Jasmine and they both nodded in agreement.

Kimmy "Go ahead."

Yusef entered a room ten by eight feet in size and it was one of the crew quarters on the Athena. It was largely intact and it still had pictures on the wall and the picture of faded photograph of a loved one. As Yusef looked around he spotted the circular window that the crew man would have looked out. He saw a safe located underneath his work desk. Yusef tried to pry it open and found that it wasn't locked.

Yusef opened the safe and he saw a suitcase "I have found a suitcase in the crew quarters that I am in."

Kimmy listened intently on the radio "What's inside?"

Yusef got the suitcase but he found that it was quite heavy. The weight took all his might and breathed heavily as bubbles escaped from his breathing mask.

"Its heavy. I can't open it."

Jasmine said "Can you bring it back to the surface?"

Yusef nodded as the weight of the suitcase was becoming too much "I can and I have an airbag with me to lift things to the surface."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Yusef left with the suitcase and it was heavy taking a lot of his oxygen supply. He approached underneath the boat. Up above he saw that the weather was bright and sunny. He checked his position and saw that he was underneath the boat and its propeller blade and he swam to the boats port side and attached the suitcase to an airbag. As it ascended to the surface Yusef checked his oxygen supply and he noticed that most of it had gone and that he needed to surface quickly.

Paul looked over the side and saw Yusef ascending. He knew nothing about diving apart from the odd photos and articles he saw on TV or in the National Geographic Magazine.

Yusef took off his wet suit and diving gear. Jasmine grabbed the suitcase with a hook at the end of a long pole. She couldn't lift the pole and Paul had to step in and it took the two of them to lift the suitcase. Everyone huddled around as Jasmine opened the suitcase on a sturdy table and she was grateful its lock hadn't rusted solid.

The suitcase was opened. Inside was something no one had expected. There was an analogue timer connected with wires to a small metal ball.

Jasmine looked worried.

Paul noticed her concern "What's up?"

Jasmine's face turned to worry "I don't think that this is any ordinary suitcase. I remember reading something about this only a few months ago. They call it a nuclear suitcase."

Kimmy looked baffled "Nuclear suitcase?"

Jasmine explained "Essentially a small nuclear device. These things were always supposed to be a myth like the Yeti. If this is what I think it is then we have a bigger problem than I first thought".

Paul looked at Yusef "Is there anymore on board?"

Yusef shrugged his shoulders "It would take hours to search all the decks and crew quarters. I would need people to help me out".

Kimmy looked concerned "We have got to be careful. We need to check this is what we think it is."

Jasmine nodded "I agree."

The boat arrived back to the harbour as night descended. They both agreed to meet the following day.

Kimmy looked to them both and she said "I have contacts who can confirm whether this checks out. You two go back to my house and lock the doors."

Kimmy threw her keys at Paul and she left as she got into her car with Yusef.

Paul drove back with Jasmine to Kimmy's house. The whole way back both were quiet. Jasmine knew what they had discovered was terrifying. As they drove into the house. Jasmine walked to the kitchen and poured herself some water.

Paul sat on the kitchen counter top "What does this mean?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine looked terrified "Those things shouldn't exist."

Paul replied "Forgive my ignorance but what are nuclear suitcases?"

Jasmine said with a fear in her voice "Imagine a suitcase and in that a bomb that could destroy a couple of square miles of a city."

It dawned on Paul what they had discovered as a thought crossed his mind.

"Yusef said the ship looked like it had been sunk deliberately."

Jasmines eyes narrowed "What are you saying?"

Paul bit his lip and knew that he could no longer hold back what he had discovered "I should have said this earlier. When I was looking at the people on board that ship it wasn't just your uncle. There was a name for Isabella Rosinni who took a one way trip to Libya on the Athena."

Jasmine was furious at the implication "Are you saying my uncle and my mother sunk that ship. That's outrageous."

Paul said nothing as he got the piece of paper out of his jacket. Jasmine took it as she read it with horror.

Jasmine felt disgusted "I can't look at you right now. You hold this back from me after everything we have been through."

She stormed out of the room. Paul said nothing and he bitterly regretted hurting her but this was the reaction he had expected.

Paul walked out to the balcony and he looked across to the Mediterranean Sea. He noticed that the moon wasn't as full as it had been in Dukes Hall and was only three quarters full. A warm breeze blew against his face as the stars shone overhead.

In the room above, Jasmine was calmer but still angry at the thought of her uncle and mother were involved. The thought that they had sunk a ship repulsed her. They were the closest people to her. Sinking a ship to prevent a greater evil didn't sit right with her. Yet she knew that it made sense. There were many times over the years that she would be left with her father and her mother and uncle would go away for days at a time.

To Jasmine she thought it was because they enjoyed each others company. But those memories that were precious to her were now tainted with the possibility that they had blood on their hands. Even if the Brethren had killed her uncle the sinking of a ship was a price too high even for her.

Anger and tears welled up inside her as she lay on her bed.

## Chapter 41

**Friday 26th February**

### CHAPTER 41

Early the following morning Kimmy got Yusef to drive her to Monaco with the suitcase in the boot. There was only one person who could help her with a thing like this. She walked to a secluded part of the city. Kimmy was eager to not be seen as she walked the last few metres to her contact.

The contact smiled back "Does my daughter know about this?"

Kimmy sat with her on a bench overlooking the harbour "She will have figured it out by now."

Isabella smiled "She will hate me and her uncle for this. Are there any more suitcases?"

Kimmy said with concern "We're not sure. The ship is vast. Yusef was only able to scout a small area."

Isabella looked to her with concern "I fear this will get bigger. What do you need to finish this?"

Kimmy replied "I thought you would ask."

She handed her a note which contained a list of things she needed.

Isabella read it carefully pausing for a moment and looked at it as people walked passed them by "This won't be easy. People in my government will ask questions."

Kimmy looked ahead and she said "With all the things you've done for them. Don't they owe you favours?"

Isabella nodded "This will use up all my favours. But it's worth it if these suitcases are out of the Brethrens hands."

Isabella drove with Kimmy to her car where Yusef sat quietly reading a paper. The boot was opened and he helped Jasmines bodyguard to place the heavy suitcase in Isabella's car.

"Give me a couple of days. Sit tight and do nothing. Keep Paul away from this."

Kimmy continued to look at her "I thought you sent him to me to protect him".

Isabella sighed "He has demonstrated a habit of getting into things that he shouldn't."

They both left and shook hands. Both were silent as they got into their cars.

Yusef looked towards Kimmy "How did it go?"

Kimmy responded as Isabella drove off in the distance "Alright. We should be able to get what we need."

Yusef turned the car around "Where now?"

Kimmy looked to Yusef and she sighed "Back home I guess there is little more that I can do."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Isabella returned to her private apartment in Monaco she had bought twenty years earlier. It was one she had bought for herself. The view overlooked the port of Monaco. It was small but luxurious and well appointed with its own concierge service.

Isabella knew her daughter would make the connection of her sailing to Libya. In her mind she recalled meeting a contact in Libya and how they met in a small town in the deserts of Libya three years earlier.

The contact looked to her "They won't know what hit them."

Isabella handed the contact a suitcase ignoring the statement "As we agreed."

The contact opened the suitcase full of thousands of US dollars.

Isabella nodded and looked to the Arabian contact "Two million as agreed."

The contact smiled and closed the suitcase heading back to his car "Its good doing business with you."

The contact left as Isabella looked towards the desert and flew back to Paris the day after.

"What have I become?" she thought to herself as her thoughts returned to the present.

She lifted up her phone and she contacted Agent Lima in Paris and he had been working for her in years gone by and Giovanni had helped him to get out of Egypt during a failed operation. She was collecting on an old favour.

Agent Lima "Hello."

Isabella said "That favour you owe me I am calling to collect."

Agent Lima sat looking at a cork board full of notes and wanted suspects.

He recognised the voice "I know I haven't forgotten. What do you need?"

Isabella was concerned "Is this a secure line?"

Agent Lima replied "If your concerned then fax me the details. You know the number."

The call ended and Isabella faxed through Kimmy's request.

Isabella knew that their was only one way to rest her demons. She knew where her daughter was and that she needed to explain herself.

## Chapter 42

### CHAPTER 42

Jasmine woke up after midday. The house was quiet and she headed downstairs to see that no one was around except Paul who was busy painting the sea view in front of the house.

"Where is everyone?" Jasmine said.

Paul responded "Out doing something. They promised to be back tomorrow."

Jasmine sat in front of Paul "Listen I am sorry that I overreacted yesterday."

Paul apologetic said "I."

Jasmine interrupted "Don't say anything. You were right to put those things together and its what your good at. I have thought about it. A lot of what I had thought about my family has been torn apart. My uncle and boss are dead and my mother had a hand in the destruction of a ship and the loss of so many people. I can only imagine what else they were involved with."

Paul looked at her feeling that he done wrong "I should have kept my mouth shut. I have a habit of saying things like that."

Jasmine smiled and sarcastically said "I've noticed that you do put your foot in it. But in this case you needn't worry. Friends?"

Paul agreed and they shook on it "Friends."

## Chapter 43

### CHAPTER 43

Agent Lima walked to his office in the centre of Paris amidst greying skies and early morning mist clearing.

He arrived at his desk and he looked at the list of things requested by Isabella. He scratched his head and this wasn't the sort of thing he dealt with. He muttered to himself.

Scuba Gear x 8

Cutting gear

Airbags

1 million francs

A diving boat

"What could you want with all this?" he muttered to himself.

Yet the agent knew he owed Isabella and she had got him out of Egypt and he owed her. He knocked on his boss's door. Agent Lima handed the note to his boss who was a large overweight man and considered him to be nothing more than a glorified pen pusher with no field experience. His only qualification was intercepting radio traffic from foreign powers. The agent's boss, Holaz Itor, he looked to the note and laughed.

"Are you planning a holiday for you and your friends?"

Agent Lima wasn't deterred "It's for a friend."

Holaz commented "Some friend."

Agent Lima said little "Let's say I owe her."

His boss smiled "Give me a week and I can get all this together. You will have to sign forms."

The agent was insistent "There can be no paperwork and I need it within two days."

The boss looked at him surprised "Your serious?"

Agent Lima sat opposite him and he said "Let's say this is needed urgently for operational reasons."

The boss's eyes narrowed "I'll see what I can do. Your friend will have what she needs and it will be delivered by tomorrow."

Agent Lima got up and turned to his boss "Thanks."

He left as his boss, Holaz Itor, looked to the note and he sighed before returning to his newspaper.

## Chapter 44

### CHAPTER 44

Isabella arrived at Kimmy's manor house as night time closed in. It had been a long train journey having left her car with her driver in Monaco. Isabella looked across the view. It was a view she hadn't seen in more than three years. A warm breeze fluttered amongst distant scrub that littered the hill side around the manor house. It was coming up late at night and she heard distant laughter knowing instantly that her daughter was at home. She knocked on the door.

Jasmine was wiping some green paint off her nose as Paul looked towards the direction of the door "Are we expecting anyone?"

Jasmine was concerned as she looked towards Paul and she said "No just stay there."

She walked to the door and adjusted her white T-shirt and straightened her green, emerald skirt and she opened the door.

Jasmine was surprised "Mum what are you doing here?"

Isabella stood stern faced "Let me in and I'll tell you."

Jasmine obliged as she opened the door. Isabella walked to see Paul sitting on the sofa sneaking the couple of wine bottles that he was clearing away.

"Good to see you again Paul. We have away of bumping into each other."

Paul responded "We do."

Isabella looked back to Jasmine "You and I need to talk, alone!"

Jasmine looked towards Paul's direction and she said "Paul knows. He was the first to figure it out."

Isabella was annoyed as she looked towards Paul "I suppose that is to be expected. Your a journalist after all. I was involved with one for nearly a decade."

Paul said nothing and he was unsure of whether he was being insulted or not. This was one of those times he wish that he could understand sarcasm from other people. Jasmine looked to her mum and back to Paul and saw that he was being made uncomfortable and defended him.

"We talk together or not at all."

Isabella responded "Fine, that's alright with me. "

Isabella walked with them to a covered walkway that looked to onto a light pinkish red cobbled surface lit by a row of wall lights.

"What you have discovered is a secret that I had hoped would never come out. Your uncle had been wanting to leave the Brethren and he had worked silently for nearly ten years undermining them and worked secretly until about three years go when the Brethren was getting to powerful. They had placed feelers on the black

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

market for nuclear suitcases. The Libyan government contacted us through a third party saying that they could get hold of what we asked."

Jasmine sat intrigued "What happened?"

Isabella sighed "Giovanni was sent to look at it. The Brethren didn't know we were beginning to work against them. I was told about it. I went with Giovanni to Libya. The suitcase was genuine. We bought one with a view to purchasing more."

Jasmine looked shocked "More?"

Isabella sat as Paul brought her a cup of tea "We bought an additional four."

Jasmine sounded surprised "Four."

Paul sat still and he said "If you and Giovanni went to see this suitcase. How come you didn't sail back?"

Isabella continued "We had a member of the Brethren on board pose as a new crew member."

Jasmine's face was one of disbelief "You blew up the ship!"

Isabella nodded "Giovanni did it himself and afterwards he came to me two days later when I was in Paris. The inquiry was a cover up, we bribed a judge who was investigating the sinking. The captain was a good man."

Jasmine shook her head in disbelief "Still it wasn't right to sink a ship."

Isabella was defiant "Would you rather have seen those suitcases in enemy hands. Its easy to cling to your ideals when your not in the front line."

Paul said nothing and he continued to stare at Isabella.

Jasmine continued to be in a state of disbelief "That's why my Uncle was killed. It wasn't just because he wanted out."

Isabella continued to be defiant as they sat in the kitchen "Your uncle knew that once the Brethren had found out they would come after him. They found out only two months ago and an order was made to take care of him."

Paul spoke for the first time "Why not you?"

Isabella looked to him "Because I have files and things against the Brethren set aside. Its my insurance policy if they come against me. They also know that because of my connections that my removal would be inadvisable."

Paul was confused "I thought all the documents where destroyed at Dukes Hall."

Isabella smiled and she said "Some were. But one thing you learn is to have back ups and copies. I am not going to say where and you are both in way beyond were you should be."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

"They will come after you. Files or no files. Your recovery of this suitcase has caused a problem I hope would have gone away."

Paul sat and looked to Jasmine and Isabella "What do we do now?"

Isabella looked to her daughter "As I said there are more suitcases on the Athena."

Jasmine continued "Kimmy said that she had received the order. We will be ready tomorrow."

Isabella yawned "Fine until then I am heading to bed. It has been a long journey from Monaco."

Jasmines eyes looked upwards "There's a spare bed upstairs."

After an hour Isabella and Jasmine walked together leaving Paul alone in the lounge. As they walked upstairs Isabella turned to her daughter.

"I am sorry I didn't say anything earlier."

Jasmine nodded in agreement "Its a lot for me to swallow. But whilst I don't agree with what you did. I can understand it."

The two stopped halfway across the upstairs hallway and they hugged each other.

"Your father would be proud of you. Your just like him."

Jasmine spoke with a saddened voice "Did he know what you were doing?"

Isabella replied "He discovered my relationship when I went to see your Uncle in London. He was furious but he never knew about your uncles work or what I did."

Jasmine nodded "You loved him?"

Isabella "Your uncle?"

Jasmine "Dad."

Isabella continued walking "Yes."

They walked into the spare room.

"You and Paul seem to be close."

Jasmine felt embarrassed "We have gotten to know each other."

Isabella was curious "Are you in love with him?"

Jasmine knew her mum was prodding and put her guard up "I trust him Mum."

Isabella said nothing as she headed into her spare room "See you in the morning."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine responded repeating her mothers words and walked back to the main part of the house. The night had closed in and the warm breeze had turned chilly. Paul was closing the doors and shutters as Jasmine came down the stairs.

"Mums gone to sleep."

Paul turned round as he closed the last of the windows "What now?"

Jasmine sighed as they both sat on the sofa in the main lounge "Tomorrow we recover those suitcases. We hand them to the authorities and we put this whole business behind us."

Paul walked to where Jasmine was "What will you do then?"

Jasmine shook her head "I hadn't thought about it really."

Paul eagerly said "I will have a lot to write about. Provided you or your mum don't object."

Jasmine bit her lip "You may not be able to write this."

Paul thought about it for a moment "To sensitive?"

Jasmine nodded "That and my mum would deny any involvement."

Paul "My boss is expecting something."

Jasmine tried to reassure him "He will get something."

She paused for a moment and looked around.

Paul noticed that Jasmine looked like she was lost as she had been in the hotel a few nights ago "What's wrong?"

Jasmine turned to face Paul "I look at the people who have let me down. The difficulties of the past few years and then you."

Paul shrugged his shoulders trying to deflect the affection "What did I do?"

Jasmine sat closer and grabbed his left hand "Nothing. You have just been there. When I saw you on the Dorset coast I didn't know what to make of you."

Paul sat next to Jasmine on the sofa "What do you think of me now?"

Jasmine moved closer to him "I know you have difficulties. I see that. But you have a good heart. You have been honest and it is something I rarely get or have ever had. Not to mention your a good kisser."

Paul looked surprised at the change in conversation "Kissing. We have never kissed."

Jasmines eyes gave little away of what she was intending to do "Not yet."

Jasmine grabbed Paul's head and they kissed passionately for what seemed like an eternity. It was the first time they had kissed and they didn't feel embarrassed. For Paul the room spun, his head was in a whirl. For

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine it was a release, emotions welled up, ecstasy flowed through every second they kissed. After they had kissed both of them said nothing as they caught their breath.

Paul was stunned "I wasn't expecting that."

Jasmine smiled "I needed that. Release the tension and all that."

Paul was taken aback "It certainly released the tension."

They both smiled and laughed.

## Chapter 45

### CHAPTER 45

Yusef sat at a bar in Livorno looking towards passing Italian woman that he enjoyed looking at.

Tyson walked towards Yusef and sat in front of him.

Yusef looked to the man in front of him "What do you want?"

Tyson smiled "You have something we want."

Yusef was intrigued "What would that be?"

Tyson moved closer "We know from various sources that you have recovered some suitcases that are of interest to my boss."

Yusef was wary "I don't know what you mean."

Tyson pulled out his jacket an envelope full of thousands of French francs "Call this a down payment."

Yusef looked into the envelope "I may be able to help. One suitcase has been recovered. There are possibly an additional four."

Tyson was intrigued "Give us three of them. Give one to Isabella so that she feels like she hasn't been duped. Once you have them get in contact with me."

Tyson left a number and left into the blackness of the night.

## Chapter 46

**Saturday 27th February**

### CHAPTER 46

The sun was high over head. The large white hulled diving boat, Caesar, hovered above the dive site.

Yusef dived at eleven o'clock with three other trusted divers with cutting equipment and they dived onto the Athena wreck. Within minutes Yusef had located the safe from the previous dive and he found within two hours an additional four suitcases located in a safe close to the bridge.

Yusef hid three of the suitcases out of site of the main dive team and he sought to make a profit for himself.

Isabella sat on a bench and watched what was going on. She was eager to retrieve the suitcases and to dismantle them.

The time past slowly as Jasmine and Paul said nothing still uneasy after the previous night. Isabella sensed there tension and she could tell that something had happened between them. She chose not to say anything knowing that they would work things out between them and it reminded her of the first few days when she had met Timothy Elmerson after she suspected Peter of being a mole.

Memories flooded back to her of 1975 when she had found Timothy using his brother to investigate her family. At first she had sought to make him go away but then one thing led to another.

Her thoughts returned to the present and knew that the tension between Paul and Jasmine was healthy.

After hours of searching the ship Yusef came to the surface with his team.

Yusef looked to Isabella and lyingly said "We could only recover one of the suitcases. The other three are not on board."

Kimmy looked to Isabella "Are you sure their was four others?"

Isabella nodded and she was unsure of where else they would be "Positive."

Jasmine looked to her mum "Someone's taken three of them."

There was a look of worry from her mum "We're in trouble. I need to get back to Paris urgently."

The boat was turned around and it headed back to Livorno.

Everyone left the ship as Isabella turned to her daughter.

"Jasmine get yourself and Paul somewhere safe. Out of site and out of the way I need to get back to Paris and tell them of what's happened. Sit tight and go back to your Uncles place in Rouen. The Brethren won't look for you there."

Jasmine and Paul looked to each other. The stakes had been raised and they got their things from Kimmy's house. Time was against them. Three of the suitcases could be anywhere.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

As they left Kimmy's house. Kimmy looked to them both and she saw tension on both of their faces.

"Where now?"

Paul looked to Jasmine and he said "Florence Airport."

## Chapter 47

**Sunday 28th February**

### CHAPTER 47

The following morning Yusef drove to Kimmys manor house in Munchen. He entered the house with a key given to him and he sneaked up to her room where she lay asleep. He shot her twice in the head as she lay on her pillow. He quickly left the house and he wiped down the gun before tossing it down the cliff edge as he drove to Livorno.

He used his own boat moored at Livorno port and he quickly got to the dive site and retrieved three of the cases he had kept behind.

He got back to the port and contacted Tyson on the number given to him. Within an hour Tyson docked at a small jetty close to the main port and he walked over to a waiting car. Yusef opened it and in it contained three suitcases.

Yusef looked to Tyson "I have done as you wanted."

Tyson nodded and he looked around. From behind Tyson three large men emerged and put the suitcases onto Tyson's boat.

As Yusef looked on Tyson motioned him over "My boss would like to meet you."

Yusef was intrigued and he locked his black Lancia Delta before walking onto Tyson's white hulled speed boat. They were soon speeding into open waters.

Within half an hour they were on board the Excelsior.

Yusef was escorted to Levette located three storeys up on the yacht and it had a view overlooking increasingly choppy waters.

Levette looked at Yusef approvingly "Thank you for such a wonderful gift. I wanted to thank you personally."

Yusef's face glowed in the praise but he could sense the betrayal. Tyson was close behind and he saw Yusef's reaction.

"You look like someone who has betrayed your friends. But this is a great day."

Yusef tried to bury his feelings "I have done what you asked. I believe that I was owed for my services."

Levette nodded and walked onto the wooden deck of the Excelsior "Of course."

Yusef walked behind Levette and he looked at him as grey overcast skies obscured the winter sun "I won't say anything about this arrangement."

Levette nodded as he bit down on his cigar "I know you won't."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Levette stood back as Tyson walked and placed a bullet in the back of Yusefs head before pushing him into the Mediterranean Sea.

Levette remained cool "I won't miss him."

Tyson looked on "What of the cases?"

Levette blew white smoke from his cigar "We keep them for now. They will come in useful."

## Chapter 48

### CHAPTER 48

A day later Isabella sat in a series of rooms used by French intelligence. It was situated close to the French Parliament.

At first they thought that what she was saying was a joke. However more senior government officials had caught wind of what she was saying and took it more seriously.

One of the ministers looked to Isabella in disbelief "Your saying that you obtained nuclear suitcases for a rogue group, sank a ship and tried to recover all four of them and now three of them are missing".

Isabella nodded "It sounds incredible I know."

The head of French intelligence was the next to speak "Where is the proof?"

Isabella smiled and was ready to give the killer punch. She opened a pair of double doors as two black suitcases where wheeled in on a large trolley. The suitcases where open and displayed the timer and plutonium casing. The room fell silent. Pairs of eyes looked towards the two suitcases in front of them. Isabella said nothing allowing the moment to settle in before speaking.

"You wanted proof."

The intelligence chief, Rene Zolas was the first to speak "This is genuine?"

One of the defence ministers from the military examined both cases.

"Its genuine."

Isabella was insistent trying to make them aware of the potential threat "Their are three more of these out there."

One of the Presidents senior ministers, Lou Maron, spoke next "Where are they likely to target?"

Isabella shook her head "I don't know. I wish I could tell you. I realise I have dishonoured this country but I am begging for you to be vigilant."

Isabella said nothing and was eventually asked to leave the room and she obliged. By disclosing what she had done she was liable to go to prison and her daughter disgraced professionally.

The meeting lasted for more than an hour as distant voices argued and debated in French. Eventually Isabella was allowed back into the room and she noticed a couple of new faces that where sitting next to the defence minister.

The defence minister Michael Gordon spoke first.

"You have said some serious things. Our discussions included what to do with you. Someone will have to answer for this. We have already lost a Parisian policeman to this and not to mention your brother. We are going to respond to this immediately and put our people on alert. Your diplomatic status is revoked and you

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

are barred from all our embassies. Criminal prosecutions will be discussed later. Please follow the two people sitting next to me."

Isabella then followed the two new faces into a corner room that was spartan with a single wooden desk and a few plastic chairs. She was to answer questions and to make a statement before Francois Jupou and a senior judge.

Everything was disclosed nothing was left or hidden. Isabella talked about the Brethren her history and how she was recruited at an early age when studying at a Parisian university she got a tap from the Brethren who were looking for intelligent people. She was later to learn her brother was apart of the group.

She went onto disclose what she knew and her concerns of her daughter.

Francois Jupou reassured her "Your daughter won't be affected by this."

Isabella was relieved "You know my daughter?"

Francois Jupou nodded "Yes, you where saying about Italy."

Isabella disclosed what had happened in Libya. The session took over several hours. By the end reams of paper containing important intelligence littered the room. Their was enough information on the Brethren and the people on their books. Isabella was tired and left the government building under heavy guard as there were fears over her safety.

Tyson looked on as Isabella left in a black tinted Peugeot.

He drove quietly leaving Paris and he headed north to Calais to a small terraced house overlooking the harbour, it was a Brethren safe house.

Tyson looked around as seagulls cried overhead. He opened the black door of the safe house and inside there was a table and chairs. The rest of the house was fully furnished and comfortable.

In his left hand was a brown document full of names and accounts, and French Intelligence operations. He knew the police would raid this address soon. Isabella would not get a chance to bring down the Brethren and would now be made a scapegoat.

Tyson placed the document on the table and he left the house quietly and quickly as he drove his blue Opel away from the house.

## Chapter 49

**Wednesday 3rd March**

### **CHAPTER 49**

Jasmine sat with Paul in the lounge working out how to get her bosses killer. Pierre's piercing eyes at the memorial haunted her.

She knew that she had to do something, anything. She hated waiting and it was not one of her strengths. Yet she was aware that the Brethren would be in Paris lurking in the shadows watching her mothers every mood and they would know who she was.

These thoughts crossed her mind as Paul sat on the sofa and he was busy reading some history books that he had bought on the way back from Italy.

Paul was oblivious to what Jasmine was thinking and was in his own world. He could not make sense of the French language and he put the book down. He rubbed his eyes before turning his attention to another book on Winston Churchill that he had bought at Charles De Gaulle airport. He looked to see a pair of eyes staring at him from across the room. They had been staring at him for more than a minute but Paul had been oblivious.

Paul looked up to see Jasmine staring at him "What's up?"

Jasmine responded and sighed as she got up and paced the lounge "I am trying to make sense of things."

Paul put his book down "What are you trying to make sense of?"

Jasmine stood still "My bosses killer. I have to deal with it."

Paul could sense her anger "We can't do anything. Your mum told us to stay here."

Jasmine walked to her bedroom emerging ten minutes later with a packed bag and looked to Paul with concern "Stay here. I'll be back in a couple of days."

Paul got up and he said "Where are you going?"

Jasmine didn't hear these words and walked out of the door. She had one thought and that was to get her bosses killer. She knew it was crazy even suicidal but she knew she had to do it and needed to do something to strike back and to not be on the defensive.

## Chapter 50

### CHAPTER 50

The following day Francois sat in a car with Agent Lima as he looked out across Charles De Gaulle airport at aeroplanes taking off and landing.

"Are you sure that Isabella's information was accurate?"

Agent Lima replied as he turned to Francois "Some of it was useful. Most of the addresses were bogus or had been cleared out days earlier. However at a raid in Calais we found these pieces of paper."

Francois looked to the slips of A4 paper "Are you sure?"

Agent Lima said with confidence "This is solid intelligence. Account numbers and history, some of it is to do with sensitive operations being run by our government. She is a mole there is no doubt, we checked it out as best as we could. It all fits."

Francois lip curled in disgust "I can't believe that she betrayed us like this."

Agent Lima said nothing. Francois thanked him and left getting into an adjacent car and drove away from the airport.

Within the hour he was at Isabella's apartment in Montparnasse. Francois ran up two flights of white tiled stairs and knocked on a wooden door.

Isabella opened the door and saw Francois and two other officers "Francois."

Francois said "Can I come in?"

Isabella replied "Sure come on in."

Francois walked into Isabella's apartment which was large, with wide windows, tall ceilings and it had white coloured walls. "I can't believe you betrayed your country. Your suitcases were genuine. Your story of phantom groups are all lies. It was a ruse for us to drop our guard."

Francois put down the pieces of A4 of paper on the table. Isabella picked it up and at first she didn't recognise it. The pieces of paper had a list of several accounts under false names and it all tied to Isabella. She recognised the account numbers and it had been what she and Giovanni had setup when working for the Brethren. The documents also showed her passing sensitive intelligence to the Brethren.

However Isabella knew different and that one of Giovanni's jobs with the Brethren was to pass documents in his diplomatic pouch between Brethren agents and he never compromised French National Security even when he was pressured.

Francois looked to his officers and barked "We are taking you in to custody. Get some things together."

Isabella said nothing and she grabbed a small bag with clothes in. She looked to Francois he shook his head in disbelief and couldn't believe that he and other people had been duped into her lies.

AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Isabella remained quiet as she was driven away.

## Chapter 51

### CHAPTER 51

Jasmine drove for nearly three hours during the small hours of the morning to her office in the middle of Paris. She knew she had to be careful. There was always the chance she would be discovered but that was a chance she had to take and she went to her office and walked in and saw a dozen faces looking at her. Most hadn't seen her in days. No one said anything but Jasmine could see on their faces that they were wondering where she had been.

Her small office was located on the second storey of an office block close to the River Seine. It had a desk, a typewriter and a phone and numerous pins in the wall of suspects and cases that she was pursuing.

She closed the door and changed into work clothes and looked to her in tray and saw a mountain of paperwork and was the one thing that never went away. As she looked outside of her window onto the Parisian landscape she saw a cold but sunny day, yet there was traces of snow on the ground. There was only one thing she wanted and that was to catch her boss's killer. She rummaged through reports and she saw a preliminary report on the apartment that had been raided a few days earlier.

She glanced through it but the apartment they discovered had yielded little forensic information. There was little on the owner except that there was a strong belief that this person was connected to the Brethren and its address had been associated with the murder of Marcus Holgar.

She sighed in disbelief as there was a knock on the door.

"Come in" she said.

It was Francois. She hadn't been expecting him.

"What can I do for you?"

Francois said nothing for a moment. Jasmine could see he was anxious but kept her thoughts to herself.

Francois sat on a chair "Your mum is in custody."

Jasmine tried to play dumb not knowing anything "What about?"

Francois could see that she was playing him "I think you know."

Jasmine kept what she knew to herself "Maybe I do. Why is she in custody?"

He disclosed some of what Isabella had told the government and that she was being held as a suspect. Francois told Jasmine that her mother was being held at a prison on the outskirts of the city.

Jasmine kept cool knowing there was little she could do "What about Marcus's killer?"

Francois was surprised at the change in conversation "Your mum is in custody and you're asking about your boss's killer."

Jasmine tried to remain focused "I know."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Francois replied "Very little. Whoever was in that apartment is now gone as is any trace of them."

Francois left after five minutes catching up with department business and Jasmine said little about her trip to Italy even though she knew Francois probably knew as much as she did.

Jasmine left a couple of hours later and drove to La Sante Prison where her mum had been imprisoned. The prison was built in the 19th century and it was built by Emile Vaudremer.

As Jasmine entered the building she showed her inspectors badge. The receptionist looked at it.

Jasmine smiled at her and said "Ms Rosinni please."

The receptionist pressed a buzzer and motioned her through. She was escorted by a burly security guard to the end of the corridor. The prison was smaller than most of the ones Jasmine visited. After a five minute stroll walking through wide fluorescent lit corridors she was shown to the visitors room.

Inside was her mum. The two said nothing as security left.

Isabella was glad to see her "I thought I told you to keep out of sight."

Jasmine said as they hugged "You know I couldn't."

Isabella looked on in surprise "You never listen."

They both sat together but Jasmine had only one question on her mind "What's going to happen to you?"

Isabella sighed and said "I don't know. I spoke to my solicitor and he told me that there was evidence connecting me as head of the Brethren."

Jasmine was angry "That's absurd."

Isabella "I tried to tell them that. However I gave them addresses of key people within the Brethren but all the addresses were bogus. In one of the addresses they found evidence of bank accounts and intelligence I allegedly passed on."

Jasmine sat back in her chair "How deep were you with the Brethren?"

Isabella sighed "Fairly high up. I knew everything or at least I thought I did."

Jasmine looked at her Mum "It seems that they have had their revenge."

Isabella wanted to change subjects "How are you?"

Jasmine sighed "Stretched. I came to Paris to find Marcus's killer and I came here as soon as I heard."

Isabella knew her daughter was avoiding something and she knew what it was "What about Paul?"

Jasmine's face turned guilty "I left him in Rouen. I said I would be back in a couple of days."

Isabella shook her head in disbelief "You left him alone?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine tried to justify herself "Paul can take care of himself."

Isabella replied with disbelief "Maybe but you cannot do this alone. You have always been head strong and going about doing your own thing."

Jasmine was uncomfortable "I don't want to put him in harms way."

Isabella said nothing. There time was up and they both promised to keep in touch.

Jasmine returned to her home to find her door was off its hinges. She walked in to see a wealth of destruction. Sofas tipped over and vases smashed. She raised her gun and stepped in and checked all the rooms but whoever had been here had long gone. Jasmine was about to grab her phone but it was smashed to pieces. This was something she wasn't expecting and was shocked.

Outside Pierre Nopasni had been given instructions to take care of Jasmine and had a tip off that she was back in the area. He sat motionless as he saw Jasmine rushing through the apartment. The sight amused him. It wasn't every day he trashed an apartment. He had chosen to stir up things and to let her know that she was next.

Both their eyes met as he looked to her apartment window. Jasmine recognised them instantly from her bosses memorial. Pierre walked away quickly and blended into the crowd. Jasmine ran out of her house to the caf   but Pierre had long gone. There was a note where Pierre had sat.

Jasmine opened the envelope and there was a message.

See you soon

The note had been typed and had nothing else on it. However the message sent was loud and clear. She was a target.

The caf   owner, a middle aged man, wearing a white apron walked over to Jasmine who was a regular customer "Good to see you again."

Jasmine turned and she said "Nice to see you again Marc. Can I use your phone please?"

The caf   owner agreed as Jasmine phoned Francois.

## Chapter 52

### CHAPTER 52

Pierre walked down a side road and he saw a telephone box and he placed a phone call to Monaco.

Levette answered "Yes."

Pierre sat as he looked down the street at bustling traffic "The message has been sent. What next?"

Levette knew he had to act "Take her out."

The call ended. Levette looked out to the other members of the Brethren.

Dotted around on his private yacht in a large conference room where senior members. Their faces were tense and anxious.

A lady in her seventies spoke first "Where now. You kill another policeman and you will have everyone after us."

Levette nodded and knew the risk he was taking "Maybe, but we have to strike back. Our homes have been raided. Our operations were nearly discovered."

The lady continued "We do commend you on your efforts but we still have the problem of the suitcases."

Levette shook his head "We wait. There is too much heat. We will take care of Jasmine first."

Tyson voiced his concerns "What if he fails?"

Levette looked to him with a focused stare "The problem is out of our hands. Pierre is expendable. Tyson burn all the records on him."

## Chapter 53

**Tuesday 2nd March**

### CHAPTER 53

The following day Jasmine woke up to see the apartment was still a mess and she had to sleep on a sofa. The bed had been trashed and most of her things were broken or on the floor. She looked to the broken vases, ripped clothes and trashed furniture and she knew that the person that she saw the previous day would go after her. The one thing that she had learned was to not wait for your enemy but to go after them.

Jasmine wasn't sure where he would be, she looked out of the window to the cafe below to see if she was being watched but the table was empty.

However Pierre was watching but not out on the street but in the apartment across from her and he sat quiet and still and had sneaked back several hours earlier after the police had left. He was planning a quick kill. In the place she would least expect it. In her own home and he knew that she would be thinking he was out somewhere.

Jasmine however got about getting changed and she returned to work. She had rent to pay and to shop for broken furniture. Pierre was determined to wait patiently until she returned.

Jasmine sat in her office thinking how she could draw him out but nothing came to her.

The day went relatively quiet as Jasmine investigated cases and wrote reports catching up on her paperwork. By the end of the day she was tired and fed up and went home. As she entered her apartment Pierre watched across from the hall way staring as he waited for her to come back from work.

He was silent as Jasmine walked into her apartment. It was getting late and the night had set in. Pierre waited for ten minutes and grabbed a gun with a silencer. A quick kill was what he wanted. He knocked on Jasmynes door and he stepped to the side out of view.

Jasmine opened the door and she saw no one around and walked back into her apartment. However Pierre was waiting. He rushed down the hallway and he kicked open the door.

Jasmine was startled as Pierre raced in.

Pierre mockingly said "I said I would see you soon."

Jasmine said nothing and she knew she couldn't move. Her gun was in her jacket which was on a chair only a few metres from where she stood but she couldn't get to it.

Pierre noticed that she was itching to get her gun and he could predict her actions "Don't move. Lets make this easy on the both of us".

Jasmine was defiant "Why should I when you killed my boss?"

Pierre laughed "He was a wimp. He squealed one to many times. You know he worked for us for many years passing on intelligence and keeping us out of trouble. Then you come along and he has suddenly a change of heart and we're supposed to forget. It doesn't work like that."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Pierre inched forward and Jasmine stood still "Your lying, my boss didn't do those things."

Pierre laughed at her ignorance "You are so blind and stupid."

Jasmine looked down the barrel of the gun yet she was calm. She inched backwards. Pierre cocked his weapon and placed his hand on the trigger and was looking forward to an easy kill.

Jasmine looked to her surroundings but there was nothing that she could do.

Pierre aimed at her ready to fire "Get on your knees."

Jasmine was defiant "No."

Pierre motioned for her to. Still she wouldn't. Jasmine continued to deny him the perfect kill. Pierre was getting angry. Jasmine had wanted this and she wanted to throw him off his routine.

Then there was suddenly a loud explosion from behind Pierre and he fell as his eyes shone in surprise. Jasmine was splattered in blood and looked over to see a face she hadn't seen for years. A small red haired lady stood in the corner of the room. It was her sister and she had gone missing whilst backpacking in Southeast Asia.

Jasmine was surprised "Sister is that you?"

Helena's eyes lit up "Its me."

Helena looked to Pierre's body "Friend of yours?"

Jasmine was still in a state of disbelief and she said "Not really. We need to talk."

Helena nodded in agreement. Jasmine placed a call to Francois explaining that Pierre had been found.

Within thirty minutes Francois walked in and he was relieved to see Jasmine was alright. Helena kept out of the way saying she had killed the person in self defence.

One of the police officers found Pierre's apartment and motioned Jasmine and Francois.

They both looked into the apartment surprised at the proximity of Pierre. The flat was identical to Jasmines and it was fully furnished in black leather furniture and cream walls. There was little evidence of personal artefacts on the shelves or walls.

Jasmine said in a shocked voice "He was waiting for me."

Francois looked to the body "This guy was a pro. But you got Marcus's killer."

Jasmine said relieved "That is one ghost settled."

All three went back to the police station and statements were given. Jasmine was glad that her sister was not going to be charged. They both left the station a few hours later. They both went to the Cafe De Mars and it was where Jasmine had met her boss before he was killed.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

They sat with a bottle of red claret. Jasmine had a dozen questions but only one that really mattered "Where have you been the last time I heard from you was in India?"

Helena was the elder sister by five years "I am sorry I came back as soon I heard about our Uncle."

Jasmine was hurt "But not Dad. "

Helena's face was full of regret "I wish I could. I came back to France. I knew you were in trouble. I was on the trail of Pierre Nopasni for years going from country to country tracking him down."

Jasmine was intrigued "Tracking him down. Your working for French Intelligence?"

Helena laughed at the idea "Not really. More of a mercenary. I track people down for a price."

Jasmine was dismayed "A hired gun, as the Americans would say."

Jasmine disapproved of such people and she had a healthy distrust of mercenaries being only interested in money and not letting the authorities deal with it.

Helena saw her disgust "I can't make you understand and I can't take back those lost years but I am here."

Jasmine was suspicious and knew that her sister was the wild one and she always stayed out late when they were growing up and she often got into fights at school.

"Why are you hear?"

Helena knew her sister was pressing but she only had one answer "Tracking Pierre down for a client."

Jasmine looked to her and sipped some of her coffee "Do you know what he was involved with?"

Helena said "Some of it, he was responsible for killing several African politicians and he helped to supply arms to Bolivia, Paraguay and Nigeria. I was hired by your government to sort him out."

Jasmine sipped her wine "Who hired you?"

Helena replied "I can't say my friend needs to remain out of this but lets say he cares that you are safe."

Helena changed subjects "I hear on the grapevine your seeing some journalist from England."

Jasmine laughed "Sort of."

Helena knew she had cornered her sister "Not sort of. You are or you aren't."

Jasmine said nothing and they talked through the night as they left the caf  they both walked back to Jasmynes apartment talking the whole night of Helena's cases.

Jasmynes love for her sister came back but she knew that none of Helena's wild streak had disappeared.

## Chapter 54

### CHAPTER 54

It had been nearly two days since Paul had heard from Jasmine. He had spent the time walking the streets of Rouen seeing the Cathedral and the narrow and intricate medieval streets with buildings that tilted and looked as if they were about to fall over.

As he sat in Giovanni's apartment reading, the phone rang in the distance.

It was a voice he wasn't expecting "I need to see you."

Paul knew nothing of what had happened to Isabella "What about?"

Isabella said nothing and told him that they needed to meet.

Paul nodded and he agreed and he got a train to Paris and connected to La Sante Prison using a taxi. He was surprised the address was a prison, he walked into reception but he was expected and was waved through without checks. For Paul he felt odd and wondered why he was meeting Isabella here. He was escorted to a small side room.

He walked in and saw Isabella smiling. Paul sat opposite her and he was tense and unsure of what Isabella wanted.

"What do you want?"

Isabella responded "What I am about to say to you stays between us. My daughter mustn't know of our conversation until the right time. Do you agree?"

Paul was wary "Why don't you tell your daughter instead of me?"

Isabella continued to spin her web "You care for my daughter and I trust you."

Paul nodded agreeing to Isabella's conditions.

Isabella leaned forward "You're the only person who I can tell this to. My trip to Libya didn't just uncover suitcases. There were other things discussed, things traded and conversations that took place".

Paul was intrigued "What do you mean?"

Isabella continued "The Athena was only one of a number of ships the Brethren hired to trade with. We exchanged other things such as weapons and gold."

Paul leaned back in his chair "Your saying that the Brethren are gun runners."

Isabella nodded "That's only half of it and there are records of this trading going on. In it are key people behind companies authorising the shifting of money and accepting favours."

Paul narrowed his eyebrows "Paperwork?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Isabella explained to Paul what had happened and how she got to be in prison.

Paul continued to be wary "How do I know this isn't another trap?"

Isabella knew she had him in his web "You have no choice. In time they will come after you. You know too much and have seen too much. You either wait for them and allow them to come after you or you can help me and go after them."

Paul realised he had no choice "Okay."

Isabella gave instructions to Paul.

Paul nodded agreeing and left getting the first flight out to Southampton and got back to his office.

## Chapter 55

### CHAPTER 55

At ten o'clock Paul sat in his Southampton office as a courier arrived with a package. Paul was expecting it and he signed for it. He opened it to see the paperwork that Isabella had talked about. Their was only one problem, how to use it.

He needed Jasmies help but wasn't sure how to contact her. There was suddenly a loud bang near where Paul sat and he dived under the desk thinking he was under attack.

The editor walked in and laughed as he put the brown paper bag into a nearby bin "Your jumpy. It is good to see that your back."

They exchanged hellos and Paul placed the paperwork in his drawer out of site. When the editor left Paul looked to the paperwork and there was more than thirty pages with names, companies and lists of cargo ships. On other pages there was notes of meetings and account numbers in various countries and banks.

Some names were familiar and some were alien. Paul reckoned the list covered more than half a dozen European countries from the UK to the south coast of Greece. The Brethren where everywhere and it had connections to politicians, police and army as Lucille had described at Dukes Hall.

Paul wasn't sure who he could trust and knew he needed help. He knew there was only one person who could help, Timothy Elmerson.

## Chapter 56

### CHAPTER 56

Levette learned of Pierre's demise as he sat in his office on the Excelsior as it sailed into open Mediterranean waters "Casualty of war" he said to Tyson.

However the other bit of information he had received made him worry.

"Are you sure about this?"

Tyson nodded "Our source at La Sante prison confirmed it. Isabella has given Paul Spencer the paperwork on us. Its only a matter of time before they come after us."

Levette banged his fist on the table "Its time to strike back. We go on the offensive. Get our people in position. Are the suitcases in place?"

Tyson nodded "As you ordered."

Levette smiled "Make sure no one finds out."

Tyson nodded and he left the room.

## Chapter 57

### CHAPTER 57

Helena and Jasmine spent the day walking in Paris catching up and talking. Jasmine was mostly quiet as she learnt about her sisters travels and wasn't sure if it was made up or truth but her sister was always a good story teller.

Together they cleaned out the apartment and Jasmine bought brand new white sofas, green vases and other furniture had been ordered as well as bringing in the decorators. This meant Jasmine was homeless for a few days.

She felt she could trust her sister and together they drove back to Rouen arriving at six in the evening. Jasmine walked into the apartment and she saw that Paul was missing. She looked around and saw a note on the kitchen worktop.

"I had to go back home."

Paul.

Jasmine was furious and hoped he was alright and she had not expected him to disappear like that. She was concerned and Helena noticed. Helena knew nothing about the Brethren only that she had been pursuing a known criminal. Jasmine knew she had to let her sister know of everything that had happened.

Helena walked up behind her sister and asked "What's up?"

Jasmine said "I haven't told you everything. There is a lot you don't know."

Jasmine spoke for over two hours explaining about what had happened going from her uncles death, to meeting Paul, to their uncle sinking the Athena and their mum being in jail. By the time Jasmine was finished Helena said nothing having listened intently.

She said as she look towards her sister "What do you want to do?"

Jasmine shrugged her shoulders "I don't know."

Jasmine looked to her sister when she heard some commotion outside in the corridor. There was a knock on the door.

It was one of her uncles neighbours, the neighbour a gentleman of similar age to Jasmine looked distressed "Have you heard?"

She shook her head. Helena joined her sister in the corridor. Helena knew what she was looking at and she had seen it a dozen times before as had her sister. Their faces were full of fear and distress.

Jasmine asked "What has happened?"

The neighbour struggled to get his words together "Paris has been hit."

Jasmine looked surprised "What do you mean Paris has been hit?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Helena turned on the TV to see a helicopter flying over Paris. The Eiffel Tower had been reduced to twisted metal and the surrounding buildings were reduced to ruin. Some buildings had walls half missing and others had glass windows that had been shattered. Then the camera panned to the horizon and there was a two further large explosions. Then the camera went dead. The news anchorman tried to sound calm and professional but he was clearly distressed.

The newscaster said "Three bombs have gone off in Paris. The Eiffel Tower and surrounding district are destroyed as is the French parliament. Casualties are as yet unknown."

Jasmine and Helena looked to each other in disbelief. Jasmine realised that one of the bombs had struck close to where her apartment was on St Germain de Pers. It dawned on her how close she had come to being killed.

Desperately she tried to ring her offices but the line was busy "I can't get through."

Helena tried to reassure her "I don't think anyone can the cities in chaos."

Jasmine looked to her in shock "I am going to be needed."

Helena said "That won't be necessary."

Jasmine responded "Why do you say that"?

Helena motioned her to the screen to Jasmines police station. It was located close to the church which had held Marcus's memorial service. She looked in shock as the area was completely flattened with burnt out buildings and twisted cars.

The neighbour stood at the doorway searching for answers "Who would do this to us?"

Jasmine said nothing and her mouth was open in disbelief and knew who had struck. It dawned on her that they were biding the time, the Brethren had struck back.

\*\*\*\*\*

Levette looked at the screen towards Tyson "Move to phase two."

Tyson said "Our people are in place."

Levette nodded "Good".

Across the English Channel. Paul saw the news coverage and was in the office readying to leave when his editor called him in.

Everyone stood aghast as the RBC showed large swathes of Paris destroyed. The casualties were estimated in the thousands. No one knew who or why the city was struck. The RBC reported that three massive bombs had gone off incinerating people and that they had destroyed entire parts of the city.

Paul's instincts were telling him that this was the work of the Brethren. Paul ran quickly back to his office and got the paperwork Isabella gave him. He got a taxi to the train station and got the first train he could to Greenwich. Only Timothy could help in this situation, he wasn't sure how but he urgently needed his help.

## Chapter 58

**Monday 1st March**

### **CHAPTER 58**

As Paris was burning the French government met on the outskirts of Paris at unused offices at Charles De Gaulle airport.

The French President was distressed as he heard his city had been devastated. Senior cabinet members sat alongside him. Security had been enhanced and there were three times as many bodyguards nearby.

The President, Nicholas Hozay look to the room eager for answers "Who did this?"

No one said anything. The President looked to the head of French Intelligence.

"Do we know anything?"

The head of intelligence, Rene Zolas, sat in his chair and shook his head "No idea. This wasn't expected."

However not everyone agreed.

A lone voice spoke "There is a possibility we know. But we have to be careful who we disclose this to."

President Hozay was hungry for answers and he angrily said "Well speak up."

The lone voice "For years we have heard rumours of a secret group. No one knew anything. But there was evidence of their growing power and pulling levers behind the scenes. We call them the Brethren although they sometimes go by a company name. They are always shifting and keeping one step ahead."

President Hozay said "Never heard of them. Can we do anything?"

Lone voice "We are stretched. There was a lot of police killed in the third strike. Our emergency services are stretched and we have no more resources. Other regions are offering assistance but they won't be ready for a couple of hours."

President Hozay was insistent as he got up to go to other meetings "Get on this as quickly as possible."

The lone voice, Minister Jaro, left with half a dozen security cars following him as he was driven to the Interior Ministry.

## Chapter 59

### CHAPTER 59

Paul arrived at London Waterloo at eight o'clock in the evening. As he got off the train he noticed a lot of people huddled around a distant TV screen. He also noticed that there was a lot of security at the station. He reckoned it was to do with what had happened in Paris. Paul walked to the station's entrance and he grabbed a taxi to Greenwich and he knocked on Timothy's door.

There was a pause and Paul heard the sound of clattering behind the door. The door opened and Timothy was surprised to see Paul expecting him to be still in Italy. Yet Paul could see relief on his face.

"It is good to see that you're still alive."

Paul walked into his house "I need your help."

Timothy nodded and invited him in. They walked to the lounge. Both sat opposite from each other and both of them were silent for a minute. Paul filled him in with what had happened in Italy and how this tied with the bombing of Paris.

Timothy wasn't surprised by the time Paul had finished.

"My sources in France say this bomb contained radioactive elements. It is being suppressed to make sure that the public doesn't panic".

Paul disclosed what they had discovered in Livorno and Isabella's involvement with nuclear suitcases and the sinking of the Athena.

By the time he had finished Timothy said "That doesn't matter now. The Brethren have used violence to get what they want. It doesn't surprise me that Isabella did the same. She was always passionate about her country and about protecting her brother Giovanni."

Paul sat in his chair and laced his fingers together "What do we do now?"

Timothy's face turned grim "We need to get everyone together. Apart we are vulnerable. There aren't many of us left."

Paul was worried "What do you mean when you say that there are not many of us left?"

Timothy said as he shifted uncomfortably in his seat "I have heard rumours that a number of our friends helping us are dead. You, me, Isabella and Jasmine are the only ones left. My brother is now confirmed dead, as is his girlfriend and Kimmy who you met in Livorno only a short time ago."

Paul looked to Timothy astonished "Kimmy."

Timothy nodded as he sat in the lounge "She was found dead at her home in Munchen. Her friend, Yusef was found floating in the Mediterranean. He was found yesterday dead on a beach close to Nice."

It dawned on Paul what Timothy was saying. "How do we contact those who are left?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Timothy waved his finger in the air as an idea emerged "Do you still have Giovanni's telephone number for Rouen."

Paul nodded and sounded surprised "How do you know about that place?"

Timothy smiled "Lets just say I know. I will make a few calls. We need to move as well. We don't know who is watching us or who is after us."

## Chapter 60

**Thursday 4th March**

### CHAPTER 60

Tyson looked across from the island of Ile D'Yeu across the Bay of Biscay towards the Loire Valley. The sun was rising and most of the senior Brethren had been put under his care. He had placed more than thirty people around the castle watching people coming and going and knew that their island position meant that they could be cut off in bad weather.

A part of him regretted that so much death and destruction had been caused by Levettes own hand. He believed in the Brethren and he was a loyal member but their latest actions in destroying Paris had pushed him over the edge.

A bitterness formed in his throat as he stood on the western shore at the rear of the castle where no one was looking and no one would be up.

White seagulls cried in the distance as Tyson looked on as a boat he was expecting came into view as dawn was beginning to break over the Bay of Biscay. Tyson had managed to send out a message requesting that he needed to leave the island. The Brethren weren't suspicious and trusted him. Yet Tyson knew that it was their mistake.

He was going to defect and betray his group. The Brethren was no longer what he thought it was. Assassinations and killing enemies was one thing he thought but targeting civilians going about their business was a step to far.

The small fishing boat, La Fayette, came into view and a smaller boat emerged to pick him up. The morning haze obscured Tyson's departure as he got to the shore, near La Rochelle and he looked around to make sure that he hadn't been seen or followed.

He walked to a parked car that he had planted on the shore days before. Tyson knew he was vulnerable and he drove to Paris. It was a risky move but he knew he had to make it.

Tyson drove his car to Charles De Gaulle airport and parked his car. Here was where he knew the interior minister would be as the government had setup a crisis response centre to deal with the Paris bombing. Tyson was eager to speak to Minister Jaro and he had left all his weapons behind and walked to a checkpoint. Security was tight and guards checked cars and people for anything explosive.

A large security guard looked to him warily as jet engines whined in the distance and distant clouds start to drizzle close by "Please state your business."

Tyson smiled "I would like to speak to Minister Jaro please."

The guard laughed at him mockingly "Do you have an appointment?"

Tyson had anticipated this and he brought out a piece of paper with him explaining the type of bomb used in Paris. The piece of paper contained details that few would know about.

"Show this to your boss."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

The guard looked at Tyson and wondered who this guy was but he obliged. After a few calls, a dark tinted black saloon emerged minutes later and out came two large security people wearing wires and they both had a focused look. Tyson smiled knowing he had got their attention. He was motioned over to the black saloon. The window wound down and inside was Minister Jaro.

Minister Jaro recognised him and he was stone faced "Please get in."

Tyson got in and the saloon was soon driving briskly through the French countryside and away from the airport.

Minister Jaro looked at him and said "Your lucky my guys didn't shoot you on sight."

Tyson knew he was being played "Why didn't you?"

Minister Jaro explained as the French landscape of fields whizzed passed them by "Because of the boldness that you showed walking up to a government building like that. Your either stupid or courageous."

Tyson opened his jacket pocket and he brought out a thick brown file. The minister looked at the papers and it contained details of the Brethren. Included in the file was the Brethren's activities, key people and everything needed to bring them down.

"You want to defect?"

Tyson said "That and to warn you that the Brethren are expecting to be stormed by a large number of people. We've got thirty people now but we could have two hundred tomorrow."

The minister could see what Tyson was saying. The idea of their being more casualties wasn't appealing and France had suffered enough.

Minister Jaro said "What do you propose?"

Tyson said "Two people are enough to get inside without being suspected. The Brethren are meeting in three days and they will put in place plans for further strikes and operations."

Minister Jaro wasn't convinced "Two people. What can they possibly do?"

Tyson suggested "I propose you have your men ready to go and drop in by plane under the cover of darkness."

Minister Jaro looked to Tyson as the black saloon headed back towards the airport "Why not you?"

The car stopped as Tyson smiled and he said "Because I'll be at the meeting. The Brethren don't know that I am here. I have said to my people that I needed to talk to my contacts. I will return tomorrow morning and wait for your call. There is a boat that leaves every morning for the island at eight o'clock dropping off supplies. The meeting will take place two hours later. Get your people ready."

Tyson handed him a note with a number that he could be contacted at.

Tyson got out of the car and he said nothing. Minister Jaro drove back into the airport and he knew that he needed help and he knew who could help him. He knew where Jasmine was from conversations he had with her mother and knew she was the best person to help and ordered his driver to make an unscheduled trip.

## Chapter 61

### CHAPTER 61

The following day after midday Helena sat in her chair glued to the screen as images of the destruction of Paris were shown on every channel. Jasmine tried to make calls with no success. Everyone she knew was busy or dead.

Helena looked over as Jasmine sat in the chair "What now?"

Jasmine curled up her legs "I don't know."

There was a knock at the door.

Helena was wary "Are you expecting anyone?"

Jasmine shook her head "No."

She walked towards the door and opened it surprised to see a man she recognised from the TV.

"Minister Jaro".

The Minister nodded "I need to speak to you."

Jasmine invited him in.

The Minister walked in alone. Security was waiting downstairs. As he walked in he was surprised to see a red headed woman in the corner of the lounge and he was expecting Jasmine to be alone.

"Jasmine I need to talk to you alone."

Helena left the room without Jasmine asking.

Jasmine sat with the minister unsure of why he was here and not in Paris "What can I do for you?"

Minister Jaro "I know you've been trying to get through to Paris."

Jasmine said insistently "I have a job to do. I need to get back."

Minister Jaro said firmly "Right now stay away. Your mother is a problem and your presence would complicate things."

Jasmine stared at him for a moment "What are you saying?"

Minister Jaro said as he sat opposite Jasmine "Listen I knew your uncle for many years. He came to me about the Brethren about six months ago. I was angry at first but he asked me to make sure that you and your mother were alright."

Jasmine looked intrigued as Minister Jaro continued "I spoke with the President this morning about your mother and what to do with the Brethren but it is likely no one will do anything."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine was furious "What do you mean? Paris is ruined and your saying the government won't act."

Minister Jaro sat and sighed "Most of the government is paid for by the Brethren. I raised the issue with the President and senior cabinet members but no one will do anything. I am here to say that you need to get together everyone that you know that is involved with this and to work with me."

Jasmine looked at him warily "Work with you, how do I know that I can trust you?"

Minister Jaro smiled "Who do you think got you that diving equipment for Italy or has been looking after your mum since she disclosed what she knew. Your mothers disclosure started up a hornets nest. Her confessions made her a lot of enemies."

Jasmine acknowledged what he said "She did betray this country."

Minister Jaro sat on a long sofa and looked out onto glowing lights that came from a multitude of ten storey tower blocks in the distance "Maybe but she was honest and brave coming to us like she did. I know your mum to be a good woman. I worked with her in Egypt with your uncle and we became good friends. Right now half the government wants your mum dead and the other half wants her alive to see what else she knows. I came to you because your the only person I know from this mess who has been trying to do something about it."

Jasmine knew she had to act "What can I do?"

Then the phone rang. Jasmine looked towards the minister and picked it up "Hello."

Jasmine recognised the voice instantly "Timothy."

Timothy stood by his table and they both exchanged pleasantries and agreed that they needed to meet.

The phone call ended. Jasmine looked to the minister and she wasn't sure if she could trust him but she had no choice. She disclosed what Timothy had said to her and they needed somewhere to meet that was quiet and a place that wouldn't draw attention to themselves. The Minister smiled knowing that it would be good for his career to bring down the people responsible for the bombings of Paris.

He smiled and said "What do you need?"

## Chapter 62

**Saturday 6th March**

### CHAPTER 62

Two days passed by and Paris was still deep in shock. The government was in disarray and the French people mourned at the loss of thousands of people and the destruction of their capital.

The remaining survivors had agreed to meet in a five bedroom government safe house close to Benodet, Brittany.

Paul sat alone and looked around the room. The meeting had been discussing what to do with the Brethren and the offer Tyson had made. Jasmine disapproved of the idea of working with him. She despised him strongly knowing that he was involved with her uncles death. Paul remained quiet unsure of what to say or how to act.

The meeting had been going on for over three hours and it was beginning to stall. The Minister and Jasmine wanted to carry on fighting. Tim was looking to find a way of negotiating with the Brethren.

At one point everyone looked to Paul who had not contributed anything to the meeting.

Jasmine smiled trying to encourage him to contribute "What do you think?"

Paul was lost in thought "Think about what sorry?"

Jasmine looked at him "About what we were talking about. Have you not been paying attention?"

Paul shook his head "No."

The minister was not impressed "Why did you even come if your not willing to help."

Paul felt claustrophobic being in the room. He looked to everyone and he was eager to leave.

"Excuse me" he said.

He walked outside and the spring was fresh with the scent of the ocean and a warm breeze blew against his face. He felt revived and wondered why he was here. Paul knew that he done everything that had been asked of him and that the people that were meant to help were in the room behind him.

For Paul, leaving and returning to his life was tempting. He thought about letting them fight on their own. He knew that Paris had been destroyed and France was in turmoil but this was no longer his fight and no longer his problem.

The discussion continued in the distance and the flow of conversation continued. Paul left the house and took a short walk into Benodet. He recalled how quiet he was on the seven hour journey to Benodet and how he had barely said a word to Timothy.

The town came into view and he walked a short distance to the shoreline. In front of him seagulls dived bombed into the sea for fish. Salty spray littered the air as the sun shone overhead. As he walked he paused for a moment looking out towards white crested waves rolling in the distance.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

For Paul it felt good to get away from the hustle and bustle of the house and he had been there for three days listening to people discussing about Paris and what to do. He recalled in his mind how he got to the house a short time after the Interior Minister.

It reminded him of being on weekends away in his youth with his family and would often feel like the odd one out and didn't feel apart of what was going on.

Jasmine followed him five minutes later into Benodet. Paul sat a café overlooking the northern side of the Bay of Biscay. He ordered a hot chocolate and it was a nice alternative to drinking coffee. He sighed and began to feel rejuvenated and enjoyed being isolated in his own private world.

In the distance he saw Jasmine approaching him steadily and she sat at Paul's table. They both sat quietly for a moment, Paul was wary and he was expecting her to explode and start another row. Jasmine was the first to speak.

"We've agreed to fight back and to take up Tyson's offer. The minister tells us the Brethren have been located to an island called Ile D'Yeu located near the Loire Valley."

Paul tried to sound enthusiastic but failed "It sounds like you've figured it all out."

Jasmine knew Paul felt excluded "We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you. The records you provided mean we now know who runs the Brethren. I don't know how you got them."

Paul knew that he was cornered "I promised not to say anything but it was your mum who gave them to me."

Jasmine sounded annoyed "My mum. You should have said something."

Paul shrugged his shoulders in resignation "I know I am sorry."

Jasmine looked at passing cars on the street before turning back to Paul "We have all kept secrets through all this. The minister would like you to stay out of things and thinks that you would be a liability."

Paul nodded in agreement "I should head back home and then you can call me when its all over."

Jasmine was indignant "Your giving up just like that?"

Paul continued to sound resigned "You said it yourself. The minister wants me out of things and I have barely contributed anything in the meeting."

Jasmine continued to press Paul "The minister may not want you involved. I was talking with Helena and Tim and they both reckon that you should be with us in this."

Paul sounded reassured and he was convinced "Thanks for the vote of confidence. When do we leave?"

Jasmine got up "Now. We will move to another site but we have to gather some intelligence before the Brethren meet in two days."

Paul was reassured and walked with Jasmine back to the house.

## Chapter 63

### CHAPTER 63

Levette looked out onto the Bay of Biscay and he was smiling. He turned to one of the senior members of the Brethren, Justina Cunard, a British aristocrat in her mid seventies, who was four foot eleven with money and connections. She spoke in a shrilled voice.

"Congratulations, you've sent the whole of France into a panic. We can now strike. Our plans are in place for Italy and Germany."

Levette nodded and sounded cautious "Maybe but we must tread carefully. The Interior Minister has been missing for a few days."

Justina Cunard flippantly dismissed it "He's probably running around Paris trying to get his country back on its feet."

Levette still sounded cautious "Maybe."

He said nothing knowing that whilst they had achieved a great victory with the Paris bombings the enemy was likely to come against them at any time. Yet he worried that his own group was becoming complacent now that victory was in sight.

## Chapter 64

### CHAPTER 64

A large white van drove Jasmine and Paul a few hundred miles to Ile D'Yeu.

They arrived at a small house just out of sight of the island. They arrived late at night.

The house was of a modest size. There was a living room, a kitchen with a dining room and two bedrooms, one single and one double.

The house wasn't luxurious and it was basic with few furnishings. It had no TV and only a radio in the corner of the lounge.

There was one other person that had joined them, Timothy's son Nathan Elmeron, an ex British marine had been drafted to help out.

They all sat in the lounge and they were tired by the long drive. They agreed that a night's sleep was the best thing for them and that they would plan their strategy the following day.

Nathan and Helena were the first to head to bed and they took the only two bedrooms. Paul and Jasmine were left with a sofa bed.

They both sat by each other, there was a tension between them. Jasmine was angry that Paul hadn't said anything about seeing her mother and taking off when he did.

Paul was uneasy with Jasmine and he had learned how prickly she could be and he was eager to avoid confrontation. Sensing his presence was making her uncomfortable he left the room heading into the dining room to sleep on his rollable sleeping bag.

As he was preparing his bedding Jasmine walked into the dining room. This was a conversation Paul was wanting to avoid.

Jasmine leaned on the door frame "We need to talk."

Paul replied and he was eager to send her away "About what?"

Jasmine looked at him with a narrow gaze "You know what. Let me spell it out for you. You left me alone in Rouen with only a note. Then you don't say anything about seeing my mum and you have been avoiding me for the past three days?"

Paul tried to play dumb "Avoiding you. What do you mean?"

Jasmine wasn't amused by his antics "There were several times during the meeting in Benodet when you tried to avoid looking at me. You've never done that before. My sister was the first one to point it out. At first I dismissed it, but then I spotted it again and realised that you tried to avoid looking at me."

Paul tried to defend himself "I had to leave because your mum rang me."

Jasmine continued to sound irritated "You've already explained that. But I am still angry. "

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul said nothing knowing that they were talking in circles.

Jasmine turned off the light and walked back into the lounge and pulled out the sofa bed. She knew she was angry but it wasn't to do with Paul. Paul had to leave her and had to do what he did and she would have done the same if she was in his shoes.

The anger in her wasn't about Paul but the destruction of her city and the terror that swept the streets. Her mind raced with images of the panic she saw on peoples faces from the TV.

For Jasmine their was a deep sense of pain as most of her colleagues that she had fought by had been killed. She hadn't been back to Paris since the bombings and she had heard reports the city was in chaos and Jasmine wanted to be there helping. But Minister Jaro had wanted her in Benodet and had said their was no job to go back to with her offices being destroyed.

Paul however lay in his duvet as his eyes were wide open and stared at the ceiling. He was angry for not being with Jasmine when she had found about Paris and the things she had been through. Paul could see her scars though not physical were etched in her mind, experiences he wished he could have taken for her.

He turned his face to a narrow window which was lit by the orange glow of an outside street light. He wasn't sure what he was feeling was it love, concern or a desire to end this and get back to his own life. Emotions was something he wasn't good at recognising and this was one time he wished that he knew what he felt.

The room was pitch black and was furnished with a small wooden table and two benches set on smooth grey stone flooring. He noticed that the room was cool. Paul looked at his surroundings and he couldn't make much out and could barely see beyond his own hands in front of him.

Paul prayed that they would all be safe and that they would get through this situation. He hadn't been to church in years. He believed that there was a God and that we were more than just the descendants of a primordial soup. Yet he knew that what he was in was beyond his capability and he needed help.

He prayed a quick prayer

Keep us safe in the trials we are about to face. Amen.

Jasmine got up and walked to the dining room door turning on the light and saw Paul lying on his back. Paul heard the footsteps and turned to see Jasmine standing at the doorway. She was dressed in a body length black night dress and she stared at him.

Paul turned to look at her.

"Can't sleep?" he said.

Jasmine said "No."

Paul dragged himself and his sleeping bag against the wall. Jasmine sat on the floor next to Paul.

"I am sorry for getting upset with you. Its been a rough few weeks for me." Jasmine sighed.

Paul sounded sympathetic "Same here. I wanted to keep in touch."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine looked to him "You have nothing to apologise for. I would have done the same thing if I was you. You had to see my mum and Tim. None of us would be here without your help."

Jasmine smiled and said "Can we at least be friends?"

Paul nodded "I would like that."

They looked to each other and smiled.

Jasmine got up satisfied that they had sorted out their differences "Good night."

Paul got into his sleeping bag "Good night."

The door closed and Paul laid his head on the pillow getting up quickly to turn off the dining room lights. Jasmine sat on the edge of the sofa and she bit her lip. She got up and walked to the kitchen door and it creaked as it opened.

Jasmine looked at Paul as she turned back on the dining room lights "Are you still awake?"

Paul turned his head towards her "Yes I thought that you would be asleep by now."

Jasmine leaned on the doorway and she frowned.

"Not really I am in need of a friend could you come into the lounge with me?"

Paul nodded and walked with Jasmine into the lounge and he saw a large roaring fire. The orange warmth lit his face and he could smell burning logs. It was an evocative smell and Paul loved the smell of burning logs on an open fire. He laid his sleeping bag on the floor.

Jasmine looked to him on the floor.

"Comfortable?"

Paul nodded as he placed his pillow on the floor "Yes."

Later in the night as they both slept the fire barely kept the room warm. The house was draughty and a raging wind blew harshly outside.

Jasmine shuddered in her thin blanket trying not to admit that she was cold.

Paul could see that Jasmine was freezing and he felt guilty. He was warm and comfortable, she wasn't.

Jasmine was curled up in a ball trying to sleep. Yet she was wide awake and cold. Paul walked over to her and sat at a chair close to where she was sleeping.

Paul knew Jasmine was trying to put on a brave face and said sarcastically with a wry smile on his face "Cold are we?"

Jasmine tried to pretend that she was alright and look towards Paul "What makes you say that?"

Paul continued to be amused "Your shuddering."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine smiled in the orange glow of the fire "You got me. I am cold, this blanket is so thin you could see through it."

Paul put his hands on the blanket and it was thin. His sleeping bag was on the other side of the lounge. He walked around and placed it over Jasmine.

Jasmine felt instantly that the coldness had gone and it was replaced with a deep warmth "Thank you. Where are you going to sleep?"

Paul tried to put on a brave face "Their's another blanket nearby."

"No you don't" she said and she was insistent.

Jasmine opened up the sleeping bag "There is room for two in here."

Paul nodded and walked over and placed his pillow next to Jasmynes. The idea of spending a cold night on the floor wasn't appealing. He took off his dressing gown and got under the covers. He got in and zipped up the sleeping bag and rested his head on the pillow.

Jasmine giggled which surprised Paul.

Paul asked "What are you laughing about?"

Jasmine responded and she tried to contain her laughter "Being in bed with you."

Paul could see what she was giggling about and laughed in response.

"It is pretty funny."

They both turned to face each other.

Jasmine looked into Paul's eyes "I feel so comfortable with you. I normally am so closed and protective."

Paul was about to speak but Jasmine placed her fingers on his lips.

"I know you are the same way and you try to protect yourself. I see the difficulties you have but you have a good heart."

Paul moved away Jasmynes fingers and he said "It can be difficult. Being a journalist I have a natural confidence when interviewing one or two people but I still can find it difficult dealing with people."

Jasmine nodded in agreement and said "I see that but you look at things in depth. You want to know things and you explore the world through questions and curiosity."

Paul nodded knowing and agreed with what Jasmine had said. He stared into Jasmynes eyes.

After a moment Paul broke the silence "What do you want to do now?"

Jasmine stroked his cheek "Nothing. Just being here is enough. I want to make love to you but I don't want to rush."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Paul held her hand "This is fine. Being next to you is enough."

Jasmine moved closer and lay her head on Paul's chest and she fell asleep.

Paul lay still on the pillow with his arms around Jasmine. His breath synchronised with Jasmines as they both drifted off to sleep.

## Chapter 65

**Sunday 7th March**

### **CHAPTER 65**

At ten o'clock the following day Minister Jaro rang Tyson from his office to let him know that they had discussed his proposal on a secure line.

Minister Jaro said insistently "How do I know I can trust you?"

Tyson sat in his office with the door closed "The Brethren are growing too powerful. The taking of civilian life is wrong."

Minister Jaro played him "What about the people you've killed?"

Tyson smiled "Nice try. Have your people ready. Once this is over I will hand myself in and tell you everything."

Minister Jaro sat at Charles de Gaulle airport looking outwards as aircraft took off on a cloudy winters day "So you get a nice comfortable prison cell."

Tyson responded sarcastically "I hear Corsica's nice."

Tyson ended the phone call and looked onto the Atlantic Ocean knowing that his plan was under way. Minister Jaro stared out of the window unsure if he could trust him but knew there was few other options and knew that everything was out of his hands.

## Chapter 66

### CHAPTER 66

The following morning the fire was stone cold. The stormy wind of the previous night had been replaced with a gentle breeze and a grey overcast sky. Helena walked down through the main corridor and she saw Jasmine and Paul together.

Helena walked over and sat on a chair and saw that her sister was awake "You both look like you had a good night."

Jasmine knew she couldn't hide anything and said "Yes."

Helena studied Paul for a moment as he slept obliviously "I can see that he's cute."

Jasmine was eager to change subject "Where's Nathan?"

Helena flashed her eyes "Still asleep."

Jasmine knew the look in her sisters eyes "You didn't"?

Helena smiled "We both went to bed. I was brushing my teeth. Nathan came in we started talking and then one thing led to another."

Her face went red with embarrassment.

Jasmine got her answer and put on Paul's dressing gown "Kitchen."

Helena nodded and followed her sister to the kitchen. The kitchen was well stocked with coffee and food.

Jasmine looked to Helena. It had gone just after seven and the house was silent.

Helena's eyes narrowed as the kettle boiled on the stove "When do we leave?"

Jasmine sat on a bench "We have to leave at ten. We have to make a quick assessment of the island. A plane is waiting for us."

Helena was intrigued and said "This is going to be fun?"

Jasmine responded "It is. You both know what you've got to do."

Helena poured herself a drink and turned back to her sister "Look at the shore line for points of attack. Meet here at two. I will work with Nathan on this."

Jasmine nodded and could see her sister digressing "You like him?"

Helena shrugged her shoulders and sat next to her sister "I don't know. I first met him only a few days ago. At first I couldn't stand him and I thought he was to arrogant."

Helena turned the tables and looked at Jasmine "Are you in love with Paul?"

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine put down her cup of coffee and she looked at her sister seriously "You know my mum asked me that. I still don't know but I do like having him around."

Helena responded "Your not sure. That I can understand. These things don't always make sense."

Paul got up and the sun was shining through the window and he was woken up by Nathan walking into the lounge as he creaked on a wooden floor board.

Nathan looked to Paul "Have you seen Helena?"

Paul shrugged his shoulders and said "No".

They both heard laughter coming from the direction of the kitchen.

Paul got up and quickly got showered and changed. He cleared away his sleeping bag before joining Jasmine in the kitchen. He walked to see all three of them drinking coffee and laughing. Jasmine moved up on a small bench and motioned for him to come over. There was light hearted banter going on. Paul felt apart of what was going on for the first time in days. He sat and ate some of the warm croissants.

Paul could see that everyone was content and looked to Jasmine but he looked at her differently and he stared at her for a moment before returning his gaze to the conversation. Jasmine had noticed it. When Paul turned his head towards Helena. Jasmine turned to Paul and she saw things that she hadn't seen before such as his ears being low set and blonde streaks in his brown hair that looked natural.

Helena was talking about how she chased a dangerous drugs baron through the twisting back streets of New Delhi and caught him as he tripped into a pit used for human waste and then she followed him straight into the lake of human waste. Then she explained how she handed him into the Indian authorities covered in human poo. She used hand gestures to illustrate the pong that came off her. They all laughed.

Yet ten o'clock was approaching quickly and they both cleared the table and got ready for their missions. The house buzzed with activity and preparation. Jasmine and Paul departed for the plane. Helena and Nathan used the van that had brought them there from Bendoet to scout for possible landing sights so that troops could land and make ready their assault on the Brethrens lair.

## Chapter 67

### CHAPTER 67

The plane buffeted gently as thermals rose above the Atlantic Ocean and the mornings overcast sky had partially cleared leaving clear patches of blue sky. Paul sat still and watched as they flew over the island. Jasmine looked with her binoculars to the island below and looked at the green foliage and stone castle perched on a hilltop and concluded that an aerial assault would be difficult but not impossible. She turned around to get her camera out of the bag.

"No" she shouted as she searched in desperation.

Paul looked to her as he sat in on a rear bench and looked at Jasmine desperately trying to find something "What's wrong?"

Jasmine responded sounding annoyed "I've left the camera at the house."

The pilot looked towards her and said "Do you want to go back?"

Jasmine shook her head "We have no time."

Paul noticed that the pilot had a pen and sketch pad.

"We can sort this."

Jasmine was surprised at what he said "How?"

Paul took Jasmines binoculars and he scanned the island below. He made a quick sketch of the island and the coast line. Five minutes passed by and he handed his sketch back to Jasmine.

She was impressed "Nice work. You never said you could draw."

Paul tried to sound modest "Its just a hobby."

The plane flew back. They had got the information that they needed and they arrived back at the house at two o'clock in the afternoon.

They all sat around the table where that morning they had been drinking coffee and eating croissants. Helena looked to Paul and Jasmine and she said.

"We scouted the area as you flew overhead. Their is a strong possibility for an assault from the sea as well as the air".

They all agreed that two of them would have to be on the island to direct the plane for an aerial assault and also that two of them would be needed to go to the troops waiting on the ground and give them the photographs and details they had uncovered. Nathan brought out the maps they had with them and the developed pictures they had put together with chemistry using the bathroom down the corridor. The pictures showed in black and white landing sites across the island from beaches to small coves that where dotted across different parts of the island.

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Nathan concluded that two of them would need to speak to the commander on the ground in charge of the operation in order to help determine the best possible landing sight.

The equipment that Paul and Jasmine needed was ready and prepared by her sister before they arrived back from their flight. Helena and Nathan already had their bags packed and had previously been waiting in the house before Jasmine and Paul arrived back from their flight. They said their goodbyes. Jasmine and Paul were then alone and they returned inside the house. The time was getting on for late afternoon and they wouldn't be needed till the following morning.

It dawned on Paul that two bedrooms were spare. He grabbed the sleeping bag from the lounge and moved quickly down the corridor to claim one of the beds for himself.

Jasmine followed him surprised. Paul was already placing his sleeping bag on the single bed. Jasmine looked to him with an amused expression.

Paul looked to Jasmine and said "Where are you going to sleep?"

Jasmines face quickly turned to anguish as she winced in pain. Paul spotted it.

Jasmine knew she couldn't hide her discomfort as she rested her hands on her back "I have had backache all day."

The pain had developed since they encountered some turbulence on their flight back from Ile D'Yeu.

Paul walked over to her and knew what to do "May I?"

Jasmine looked at him surprised "You want to massage my back?"

Paul nodded "If your comfortable with it."

Jasmine nodded and Paul massaged the middle of her back and the pain disappeared. Paul stepped back as Jasmine looked at him astonished and surprised.

Jasmine said "Where did you learn to do that?"

Paul said as he looked to her as he placed his pillow on the bed "It was a course I took a while a go. I fancied trying it out."

Jasmine shook her head and smiled "An excuse to meet pretty girls?"

Paul smiled back and said "Something like that."

Jasmine continued "Well you learned a good skill."

As Paul laid his sleeping bag on the bed Jasmine stared at him for a moment.

"What do you want to do?"

Paul knew what he wanted to do "I bought some pencils and papers on the way back from our trip. There is a garden outside full of things to draw."

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

Jasmine nodded and she liked the idea "Sounds good. I have done a little sketching doing fashion designs. Maybe we can draw together."

## Chapter 68

**Monday 8th March**

### CHAPTER 68

At Nantes Atlantique Airport close to Ile D'Yeu the time had gone six o'clock in the morning. It was pitch black and the troops were ready to go as they finished preparing their weapons. In charge was Commander Lusson an army veteran of thirty years, who was five foot seven with thick matted hair and he had scars on his right cheek and a nasty temper if pushed.

Timothy heard in the background their Famas machine guns being readied. He walked to the commander and said "Good luck?"

Commander Lusson responded and smiled "Thanks."

The commander left the hanger and his troops headed into the aircraft and they were some of France's finest and all were eager to avenge the destruction of Paris.

Tim, Nathan and Helena watched as the two Transall C-160 aircraft left.

Commander Lusson looked down the aircraft and out of the window at the other aeroplane. He had been given fifty men and he wished that he had twice as many troops but he knew he had to make do with what he had knowing most of the army had been deployed to Paris to rebuild and protect the city.

The plan was for the two Transall C-160 aircraft to fly close to the island before the troops parachuted under the cover of darkness.

The sun had yet to come up as the two Transall C-160 aircraft flew the short distance to the shores of the Bay of Biscay before banking sharply to the left and the troops parachuted onto the island.

As they landed they were met by an additional fifty troops that had come from miles out from the sea using small craft to land on Ile D'Yeu.

Commander Lusson's number two, Lieutenant Jameson was the first to speak and he was pleased to see that there were more troops and he said "The men are ready. The castle is less than a mile from here."

Commander Lusson looked toward Lieutenant Jameson.

The commander was hungry for action "We wait here for the flares and then we attack."

## Chapter 69

### CHAPTER 69

It had gone five to eight the following morning and there was a thick grey overcast sky that covered the whole horizon. Jasmine and Paul sat on the front of a wooden pier as they waited for the boat to take them to the island of Ile D'Yeu. They were both tense and nervous and they could see it in each other.

The La Fayette came into view. On board was the fisherman and he motioned them on and said nothing and ferried them the short distance to the island. The distance to the island was short and it took forty minutes to arrive. The sea was choppy with large waves bouncing off the ships hull. There was no sign of birds or other wildlife. The only sign of life was the chug of the La Fayette's diesel engine.

Waiting for them on the shore line was Tyson. As they both got off Jasmine recognised him from Monaco and the sight of him made her feel disgusted. They saw the single bridge leading to the main entrance of the castle as all three of them headed a few hundred metres to a secret entrance at the base of the rock that supported the castle that towered over them.

Jasmine and Paul said very little to each other. Their minds were intensely focused and they arrived at a small cave on a stony beach located at the base of the castle which soared upwards more than a hundred feet into the air. By the time they arrived it had gone nine o'clock. Tyson looked to them both and he was as nervous as they were, knowing that everything hinged on what they did next over the next two hours. He looked to them coldly and said.

"The meeting has been brought forward to nine thirty. Stay here till ten, then light up your flares and get out."

They both nodded acknowledging what he said and they knew that troops would be on a nearby beach waiting for their signal.

Paul and Jasmine sat and waited at the mouth of the cave as Tyson left. Tyson headed up the stairs and went into the meeting and prepared documents for their meeting. The room was long and thin with high stoned walls with narrow stained glass windows. On one of the walls was armour and antlers high up on the wall. In the middle of the room was a long table that would seat the thirty people expected to arrive and would be here for only a few hours. Tyson knew that this would be their most important meeting and the Brethren would put in place their final plans.

Oliver walked in and looked curiously towards Tyson asking "You've been gone a while."

Tyson was eager to deflect Oliver's attention "I had to go out and sort out some business."

Tyson could see that Oliver was suspicious but he said nothing further. Oliver nodded and moved away.

## Chapter 70

### CHAPTER 70

Levette sat with his Brethren counterparts knowing that this would be their most important meeting in the groups history.

Everything he had been working for more than fifty years had come together. France was on its knees and plans were in place for Italy and Germany. Nothing could go wrong Levette thought and he had been seduced by victory.

Tyson sat across from him as the meeting began. His palms were sweaty and he was tense. He scanned the room as he knew what was about to happen to them.

Paul continued to sit at the edge of the cave and looked to Jasmine who had the flare gun ready.

Paul looked at her coolly "Ready to go?"

Jasmine nodded and smiled "Everything is good. Its coming on for ten o'clock now."

Paul looked anxiously towards the cliff tops "We need to get to a higher position."

Jasmine looked to him as waves crashed in the distance "The thought had crossed my mind. We are to low for anyone to see us."

Paul scanned around for a solution "The only way is through the castle."

Jasmine looked to him "I agree but we must be careful."

Jasmine looked to the staircase that was near to them that went through a natural cave before emerging into the castle. The thought of storming the castle and firing the flare gun without getting caught made her tense.

She looked to Paul and handed him a second flare gun "Stay here. If I don't return in ten minutes fire this from higher ground."

Paul got hold of the flare gun and was about to say something but Jasmine had gone.

She cautiously worked her way up the steep staircase and got to an unlocked entrance. Jasmine opened the door and looked around and saw that no one was present and she walked through treading carefully. Jasmine had little idea of where she was going and continued to walk down the corridor but it led to a dead end. There was only a small window with a view of the Atlantic Ocean and the jagged rocks beneath.

As she turned back she heard distant voices muttering. She dived into an adjacent room that turned out to be a small study. The voices grew louder and entered the room she was in. Jasmine hid herself behind a thick green velvet curtain and she heard two men talking. One of them Jasmine recognised as Levette. She kept still until the voices left. Jasmine crept silently back into the corridor retracing her steps and saw a tower through one of the windows and saw a door linking the castle staircase with one of the towers.

Jasmine moved silently and swiftly up the stairs and she looked at her surroundings as she ascended the winding stairs. A few minutes later she had reached a window close to the top of the tower and she was high

## AWARENESS BY SAMSON KING

enough to fire a flare. She steadied her footing and opened the window firing the flare high into the air. She let out a second and she looked back to the way she had come in. In the distance the orange flares rose high and lit up the surrounding countryside. Jasmine knew she had to leave quickly.

Troops on a nearby beach saw the two flares. The commander gave the order to go and they quickly arrived at the castle.

Tyson and the other Brethren members had seen the flares go up. Levette look anxiously with terror in his eyes and he could see it in the other members of the Brethren.

Jasmine ran down the stairs as quickly as possible. Levette was in the hallway and he spotted Jasmine running down the corridor and chased after her as the large main wooden door of the castle blew open as one hundred and fifty troops stormed through and fanned out into the main hall as they secured the rest of the castle. Commander Luson rounded up all the senior members of the Brethren in the dining hall. He saw on the long wooden table plans and sketches of their operations.

Paul was at the bottom of the staircase and he was relieved to see Jasmine running down the stairs and she motioned for him to come up.

"Its alright" she said.

Paul followed Jasmynes voice to the top of the stairs and he could hear commotion in the distance. Levette saw the two in the distance. Anger seethed in him and walked towards them. Neither Jasmine and Paul saw him coming. Levette walked behind Jasmine and he grabbed her before pointing a gun at Paul.

"Don't try anything or she's dead."

Paul said nothing for a moment frozen in terror and unsure of how to act. As Levette stood holding a gun. Tyson came up from behind Levette and struck him down.

Tyson surrendered as Commander Luson followed close behind and he recognised Jasmine and Paul from a briefing.

Commander Luson looked relieved "It is good to see that your both still alive."

Paul nodded in agreement and said "Thank you."

Jasmine queried "Is everything secured?"

Commander Luson nodded "Everything is. The group put up little resistance. The good thing is we have the paperwork on their operations and a list of their weaponry and who was responsible for the bombings of Paris. I have given instructions that all Brethren agents should be seized and I have faxed details of their plans to our friends in Germany, Italy and the UK."

## Chapter 71

**Saturday 7th August 1982**

### CHAPTER 71

Four months had passed since the Brethren were defeated. All across Europe politicians, police and corrupt businesses had been arrested but there were many still on the run.

Paris was being rebuilt and the last of the bodies had been buried but there were many places that were heavily radioactive and could never be resettled.

In Britain the country was still in high spirits after winning the Falklands War. Paul sat on a bench in West Bay Dorset. He looked at the last article he had printed for the Southampton Tribune and he was pleased with it. The article had been a feature going into depth going from Giovanni's death, to Paris and the trial of Isabella Rosinni and the defeat of a two hundred year old organisation.

For Paul landscape photography was his new job, an old hobby now a profession and he had quit journalism. He was now his own boss, the way he liked it.

Jasmine sat next to him on the bench as she grabbed hold of the cross on his neck. she read Paul's last article and sighed asking "What was it all about?"

Paul put down his flask of coffee as he sat next to Jasmine "Money, power, greed."

Jasmine nodded in agreement as her emerald eyes sparkled in the summer sun "But all those people. My uncle is dead and my mum is now in jail for fifteen years for treason."

Paul shrugged his shoulders and said "Then I don't know. What I do know is that I am where I want to be which is here with you. In this place and in this time."

Jasmine said "I agree. All I want to do is be here with you and to never lose this moment."

She laid her head on Paul's lap as he stroked her hair. The sun shone brightly overhead without a cloud in sight. Jasmine laid her head on Paul's shoulder as they both stared out to the English Channel with small white fishing boats bobbing on the distant horizon.

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2013-05-26 05:28:51