One Under

Graham Hurley

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Extract

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Chapter one

MONDAY, 11 JULY 2005, *07.53*

This time, Faraday knew there'd be no escape.

He'd taken to the water an hour or so earlier, finning slowly out of the bay, scanning the reefs below, enjoying the lazy rise and fall of the incoming swell. An evening with a reference book he'd picked up in Bangkok let him put a name to the shapes that swam into view.

Beneath him, he could see yellow-ringed parrotfish, nosing for food amongst the coral; half a dozen milky white batfish, stately, taking their time, slowly unfurling like banners; even, for a glorious minute of two, the sight of a solitary clownfish drifting over the underwater meadows of softly waving fronds. The head of the clownfish was daubed with a startling shade of scarlet but it was the huge eyes, doleful, disconsolate, that had Faraday blasting water from his snorkel tube. The little fish reminded him of an Inspector he'd once served under in his uniformed days. The same sense of tribulation. The same air of unfathomable regret. Laughing underwater, Faraday discovered, wasn't a great idea.

Further out the colours changed, and with the blues and greens shading ever deeper, Faraday became aware of the schools of fish beginning to thin. He'd never been out this far, not by a long way, and a lift of his head told him that he must have covered nearly a mile since he'd slipped into the water. He could see the tiny wooden bungalow clinging to the rocks above the tideline. A line of washing on the veranda told him that Eadie must have finally surfaced. Shame.

Adjusting the mask and clearing the snorkel again, Faraday ducked his head. It was hard to judge distance underwater but twenty metres down, maybe more, he could just make a tumble of boulders on the seabed. This, he imagined, would be the point where the coral shallows suddenly plunged away into something infinitely deeper. In the beachside bar, only yesterday, he'd heard a couple of French lads describing a dive they'd just made. Faraday was no linguist but his French was adequate enough to understand *profondeur* and *requin*.

The latter word came with a repertoire of gestures and had raised an appreciate shiver in one of the listening women. *Requin* meant shark.

Floating on the surface, barely moving, Faraday was overwhelmed by a sense of sudden chill. A mile was a long way out. There were no lifeguards, no rescue boats. Trying to slow his pulse rate, he scanned the depths below him. A thin drizzle of tiny particles was drifting down through the dapple of surface sunlight, down towards the inky blue nothingness. Then, way off to the right, he caught a flicker of movement, the briefest glimpse of something much, much bigger than the carnival of cartoon fish he'd left in the shallows.

Faraday shut his eyes a moment, squeezed them very hard, fought the temptation to turn in the water, to kick hard, to strike for home. This is exactly what you shouldn't do, he told himself. In situations like these, panic was the shortest cut to disaster.

He opened his eyes again, watched his own pale hand wipe the toughened glass in the facemask. He'd been wrong. Not one of them. Not two. But half a dozen. At least. They were circling now, much closer, sleek, curious, terrifying.

All too aware of the quickening rasp of his own breath, Faraday watched the sharks. Every nerve end told him that something unimaginable was about to happen. He hung in the water, his mouth suddenly dry, feeling utterly helpless. He'd never seen creatures like this, so perfectly evolved for the task in hand, so ready, so close. The water rippled over the gills behind their gaping mouths as they slipped though the shafts of dying sunlight, and as they circled closer and closer he became mesmerised by their eyes. The eyes told him everything. They were cold, unblinking, devoid of anything but the expectation of what would happen next. This was their territory. Their world. Trespass was a capital offence.

Faraday had a sudden vision of blood in the water, his own blood, of pinked strips of torn flesh, of jaws closing on his flailing limbs, of line after line of those savage teeth tearing at the rest of his body until nothing was left but a cloud of chemicals and splinters of white bone sinking slowly out of sight.

One of the biggest sharks made a sudden turn and then came at him, the pale body twisting as it lunged, and Faraday felt himself brace as the huge jaws filled his vision. This is death, he thought. This is what happens when you get it so badly wrong.

Another noise, piercing, insistent, familiar. The shark, he thought numbly. The shark.

His heart pounding, Faraday turned over and groped in the half darkness. The mobile was on the chair beside the bed. For a second or

two, listening to the voice on the other end, he hadn't a clue where he was. Then, immeasurably relieved, he managed a response.

'Sure.' He fumbled for his watch. 'I'll be there in an hour.'

Buriton is a picturesque Hampshire village tucked beneath the wooded swell of the South Downs. A street of timbered cottages and a couple of pubs led to a twelfth-century church. There were 4 = 4s everywhere, most of them new, and Faraday slowed to let a harrassed-looking mother load her kids into the back of a Toyota Land Cruiser. Buriton, he thought wearily, is where you'd settle if you still believed in a certain version of England – peaceful, safe, white – and had the money to buy it.

He parked beside the pond at the heart of the village. Already, there was a scatter of other cars, most of them badged with the familiar chequerboard of the British Transport Police. Faraday was still eyeing a couple of BTP officers pulling on their wellington boots, wondering quite why a suicide had attracted so much police attention, when there came a tap at his passenger window.

'Jerry . . . '

Surprised, Faraday got out of the Mondeo and shook the extended hand. DS Jerry Proctor was a Crime Scene Manager, a looming, heavyset individual with a reputation for teasing meticulously presented evidence out of the most chaotic situations. The last couple of years, he'd been seconded to the British effort in Iraq, teaching local police recruits how to become forensic investigators.

'How was the posting?'

'Bloody.'

'Glad to be back?'

'No.' Proctor nodded towards the parked Transport Police cars. 'These guys have been here a couple of hours now. They've got a DI with them and it needs someone to sort him out.'

Faraday looked away for a moment. Proctor had never seen the point of small talk.

'You're telling me the DI's a problem?'

'Not at all, sir. But they haven't got the bodies, not for something like this. You want to come up to the tunnel?'

Proctor was already wearing one of the grey one-piece discardable suits that came with the job. While Faraday pulled on the pair of hiking boots he kept in the back of the car, Proctor brought him up to date.

The driver of the first train out of Pompey had reported hitting a body in the nearby tunnel. The power had been switched off, and control rooms in London alerted. Calls from Transport Police HQ in St James's Park had roused the duty Rail Incident Officer, who'd driven

over from his home in Eastleigh. By then, the batteries on the train were running out of juice and the twenty or so passengers aboard would soon be sitting in the dark.

'No one got them off?'

'No, sir.'

'Why not?'

'The driver didn't think it was appropriate. Young guy. Cluey.'

'Cluey how?'

'He'd taken a good look underneath the train, gone back with a torch, brave lad.'

'And?'

They were walking round the pond by now, following the narrow lane that wound up towards the railway line. Proctor glanced across at Faraday.

'He found the impact spot, or what he assumed was the impact spot. Bits of our man were all over the bottom of the train but the torso and legs were still in one piece.' Proctor touched his own belly. 'Chained to the line.'

'*Chained?*'

'Yeah.' Proctor nodded. 'We're talking serious chain, padlock, the works. Our driver friend thought that was a bit over the top, made another call.' He shot Faraday a bleak smile. 'So here we all are.'

'And the train's still in the tunnel?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Impact point?'

'About fifty metres in. That's from the southern end.'

'How long's the tunnel?'

'Five hundred metres. Transport Police are organising a generator and a lighting unit. Plus they've laid hands on half a dozen or so blokes to check out the tunnel. Don't get me wrong, sir. The DI knows what he's doing. It's just resources. Not his fault.'

Faraday was doing the sums, trying to imagine the size of the challenge that awaited them all. At worst, he'd assumed they were looking at some kind of complicated suicide. The fact that this body had been physically tied to the line changed everything.

'The DI's established a common path?'

'Yes, sir. Down this lane, under the railway bridge, along a little track, then up the embankment and into the tunnel. The train's maybe forty metres in.'

'And that's the way we get the passengers off?'

'Has to be. The Incident Officer tells me the rest of it's fenced miles back in both directions. We've got no option.'

Faraday pulled a face. In these situations, absolute priority lay in

isolating the crime scene. If Proctor was right about access to the track, then whatever evidence awaited them was about to be trampled.

'We need Mr Barrie in on this.' Faraday fumbled for his mobile. Martin Barrie was the new Detective Superintendent in charge of the Major Crimes Team. If it came to any kind of turf war, then Barrie was the man with the ammunition.

Proctor watched while Faraday keyed in a number, then touched him lightly on the arm.

'That's another problem, sir.' He nodded towards the nearby embankment. 'This is a mobile black spot. Either end of the tunnel, there's no signal.'

The train was visible from the mouth of the tunnel. Faraday stood on the track, peering into the darkness, trying to imagine what five carriages would do to flesh, bone and blood. Like every policeman, he'd attended his share of traffic accidents, successful suicide bids and other incidents when misjudgement or desperation had taken a life, but thankfully he'd never witnessed the cooling remains of a human body torn apart by a train.

Other men, less lucky, spoke of unrecognisable parcels of flesh, of entrails scattered beside the track, of the way that the impact – like the suck of high explosive – could rip the clothes from a man and toss them aside before dismembering him

The image made Faraday pause. Only days ago, three Tube trains had been ripped apart by terrorist bombs in London and some of the media coverage of the consequences had been unusually candid. Was this incident, in some strange way, a twist on that theme? He let the thought settle for a moment, then he was struck by another image, altogether more personal, and he found himself fighting a hot gust of nausea, remembering the oncoming shark of his nightmare and that moment before consciousness when he knew for certain that he, too, was a dead man.

'Sir?'

It was Proctor again. He'd fetched an Airwave radio to replace Faraday's mobile. The Transport Police DI wanted a meet as soon as possible. He was waiting back at the cars.

'Best not go in, sir.' Proctor nodded towards the tunnel. 'Not until we've had a sort-out, eh?'

Faraday favoured him with a thin smile, the taste of bile still in his mouth, then turned away.

The DI from the British Transport Police turned out to be an ex-Met copper with a realistic grasp of the shape of the coming days. Sure, his guys had jurisdiction on railway property but now wasn't the time to

be throwing their toys out of the pram. There was a procedure here, boxes to be ticked, and – to be frank – he didn't care a toss who held the pencil.

He already had a bus on standby, ready to be called forward when the passengers were detrained. In the meantime came the business of putting a team together. Getting the right people in the right places, properly briefed, would take hours. Amongst them would undoubtedly be the Home Office pathologist, who'd need a decent run at whatever remained of the body. Only after he'd finished would the search teams start trawling through the tunnel, hands and knees, looking for every shred of evidence, human or otherwise. All that, he concluded, was best handled at county level.

'You've been inside yourself?' Faraday nodded in the direction of the tunnel.

The DI shook his head.

'The Incident Officer briefed me. Not pretty.'

'ID?'

'Nothing we've found yet. His clothing was in a pile at the side of the track. Jeans, trainers jacket, T-shirt – normal clobber.'

'You're telling me he was naked?'

'Apparently. Excuse me.'

He broke off to confer briefly with a colleague who'd just arrived, then threw a glance at Faraday and hurried away. Bit of a crisis with South West Trains. He'd be back as soon as he could.

The DI gone, Faraday settled down with the Airwave radio, sitting in his Mondeo with the door open, still thinking about the implications of a naked body in the tunnel. By now, nearly nine o'clock, the new Detective Superintendent should be at his desk in the Major Crimes Suite.

After Geoff Willard, who had moved on to become force Head of CID, Martin Barrie had come as something of a surprise. He had none of Willard's physical presence, none of his style, none of his bullish determination to steamroller any obstacle en route to court. On the contrary, Barrie was a slight man, thin to the point of emaciation, and seemed to have absolutely no interest in self-image. But the flat Essex accent and the nicotine stains from a lifetime of roll-ups masked an intelligence so acute and so subtle that it took someone in his own league to recognise it. From the start, Faraday had liked him a great deal.

On the airwave radio, Faraday summarised progress to date. Thanks to the Transport Police DI, there were no turf issues. And thanks to Jerry Proctor, a decent team should have assembled by lunchtime. The search in the tunnel should be well underway by close of play and if

Barrie was happy to carry the overtime, the lads could press on into the evening. With luck, a proper trawl would recover documentation and establish an ID, and if that didn't happen then there might be prints or DNA from the post-mortem that would raise a ping from the usual databases. As ever in these situations, it would be a name that turned the key in the investigative lock.

'You'll need to fire up the MIR.'

'Of course, sir.'

'Leave it to me. I'll get it organised.'

The MIR was the Major Incident Room, the beating heart of any enquiry, with plenty of space for the data-inputters and specialist officers who would drive the investigation forward. There was a long silence. Barrie was evidently deep in thought. When he came back on the line, he wanted to know who Faraday had in mind to head the Intelligence Cell – the officer who would try to tease an ID, a timeline and some shadowy first guess at a motive from the flood of incoming information.

Faraday was gazing down at the pond, watching a family of mallards emerging from the water.

'DC Winter,' he said at once. 'Please.'

Paul Winter was still in his pyjamas when the call came through. He'd been up for hours, circling the roomy apartment with mug after mug of tea, enjoying the sheer busyness of the scene that unfolded daily beyond the big picture windows. Just now, one of the huge P&O ferries was rumbling towards the harbour mouth. Purposeful and unlovely, it seemed to catch the essence of the city.

Winter bent to the phone. Conversations with Faraday were becoming a habit.

'Boss?'

Faraday apologised for intruding on a rest day but something had come up.

'Like what?' Winter's interest quickened at once. His attention had strayed to a woman on the promenade below, waving at someone on the fast-disappearing P&O.

Faraday explained briefly about the body chained to the line in the Buriton Tunnel. Barrie was throwing serious resources at what was obviously a suspicious death. Operation *Coppice* was going to need a beefed-up Intelligence Cell. Given Winter's new job on Major Crimes, Faraday wanted him involved from the start.

'No problem.' Winter took a sip of tea. The woman had turned round now. Nice figure.

'You're OK for today?'

Winter glanced at his watch. 'Give me half an hour,' he told Faraday, 'and I'll take a cab in.'

'No need. I've briefed Suttle already. He'll drop by and pick you up in fifteen minutes.'

'Sure, boss.'

Winter at last turned away from the window, enjoying that little tickle of anticipation that conversations like these had always stirred in him. As a detective on division for more years than he cared to remember, he'd lost count of the mornings he'd answered a phone call or eased into a conversation in a holding cell, and found himself up to his neck in the wreckage of someone else's life. These chance opportunities, cleverly exploited, had become meat and drink to him, the essence of his busy life, and it was only recently, after the diagnosis and everything else that had gone with it, that he'd recognised how much he relied on them. The limitless capacity of most of the human race to land themselves in the shit had never failed to delight him – and here, it seemed, was yet another example. Some bloke chained to a railway line? A sitting duck for the first train through? How promising was that?

He wandered into the bathroom and began to lather his face, warmed by the thought of the days and weeks to come. He'd been on Major Crimes for nearly three months now, occupying the empty desk in the Intelligence Cell. As a posting after lengthy convalescence, it had seemed a dream job. Normally, Occupational Health found you something cosy and safe, put you out to grass with the muppet statisticians or the Road Safety fascists, then hauled you in every week to make sure you hadn't blown a fuse with all the excitement, but for reasons Winter still didn't fully understand he'd managed to avoid all that. Given the seriousness of the brain operation, the DVLA were still withholding his driving licence, a measure which definitely cramped his investigative style, but so far he'd managed to cope by spending a small fortune on cab fares.

Newly shaved, he went through to the master bedroom, still thinking about the body in the tunnel. To be honest, he'd been slightly disappointed by the calibre of jobs that had so far crossed his desk. In three months he'd been involved in two murders, a linked series of rapes and a kidnapping. Both homicides were three-day events – the first a domestic, the second a Southsea club brawl that had got out of hand. The linked series of rapes had been binned after the woman admitted keeping open house for anyone her boyfriend owed, while the kidnapping had turned into an obscure generations-long feud between two branches of the same Kosovan family.

In every case Winter had done his level best to complicate the

obvious, to impart some class to this dross, but one of the lessons he'd quickly learned was that the Major Crimes Team were as starved of decent jobs as every other bunch of detectives in the city. Now though, he told himself, it might be different. A body chained to a railway line sounded very promising indeed.

By the time DC Jimmy Suttle rang the entryphone, Winter was contemplating breakfast. Suttle took the lift to the third floor and pushed at the open door. The lad's transfer onto Major Crimes, nearly a year back, had come as no surprise to Winter. He'd worked with Suttle on a number of jobs on the Pompey Crime Squad, and had been impressed. Unlike most of the kids on the force these days, Suttle was prepared to take a risk or two. He shared Winter's hatred of paperwork yet he was never shy of making a stand when he thought the older man was going over the top. More important still, it had been Suttle who'd kept an eye on Winter when the brain tumour began to make life truly miserable. Marriage to Joannie had never blessed Winter with kids of his own but with a couple of Scotches inside him he occasionally viewed Suttle as a decent enough substitute.

Now, Suttle stood in the kitchen, staring at the pile of plates in the sink. Thanks to a training course in the West Midlands, he hadn't seen Winter for a couple of weeks.

'You're an old dosser,' he said. 'You see that thing next to the fridge? It's a dishwasher.'

Winter shrugged, rescuing his toast. It was true. He'd been in the apartment for the best part of six months and still hadn't bothered to sort out all the gadgets that went with the fitted kitchen. A couple of years ago, before the tumour, this would have been inconceivable. Now, it was just another chore that just didn't seem to matter.

'Slice of toast, son?'

'No thanks.' Suttle glanced up at the kitchen clock. 'We're out of here in three minutes.'

By mid-morning, with the help of Jerry Proctor, Faraday had managed to impose some order on the constant trickle of arriving vehicles that turned the long curve of gravel outside the village church into a car park.

A command post had been established at one corner of the nearby pond. A line of blue and white POLICE tape marked an outer cordon, with a local uniform on hand to explain crime scene etiquette to anxious villagers. Up the lane, beyond the railway bridge, a second line of tape barred access to anyone but essential personnel. Through here, an hour or so ago, had trooped the weary passengers from the train itself. Most had long abandoned any thoughts of a normal working

day. One of them, meeting a reporter beside the pond, described his first sight of the masked and suited detectives as 'surreal'.

'You think you're off to London,' he'd said, 'and you end up in a film set.'

Now, the tunnel awaited the attentions of the search teams, the photographer and the woman whose job it was to transfer every scrap of recovered evidence onto a scale map of the area. Only when Faraday was satisfied with their work would he release the tunnel back to South West Trains, a decision that he already sensed was days away.

First, though, everything had to wait for the pathologist. Proctor had put the calls in after his initial meet with Faraday. Thanks to holiday and other commitments, only two on the regional Home Office list were available. The nearest lived in Bristol. Bristol to Buriton was a two-and-a-half-hour drive. God willing, the pathologist should be with them around midday.

With an hour to kill and Proctor available to take the pathologist into the tunnel, Faraday decided to scout the area, looking for access points to the railway, enlisting the help of the Transport Police Incident Officer with his sheaf of maps. They left the outer cordon, drove back through the village, and then turned south on a road that wound up the wooded face of the Down. At the top of the climb, the Incident Officer braked before hauling the Astra left. He'd already shared what little else he'd picked up from his brief visit to the tunnel. The train, he said, appeared to have sliced the body virtually in two. It was a sight he never wanted to see again.

Faraday sat back, following the route on the map, his finger tracing the narrowing track until the tarmac disappeared and they were bumping along a rutted path between fields of grass ready for mowing. Ahead, he could see a corn bunting perched on a strand of barbed wire and, for a moment, through the open window, he caught the signature call of this stout little creature. The *jangle-jangle* of keys, he thought, remembering hot summer days spent birding on the dusty Spanish steppes, his ear cupped for this same halting song.

'Empty, isn't it?' The Incident Officer gestured off to the right, where the ground dipped away. 'Can't make your job any the easier.'

Faraday nodded, forcing himself to concentrate. So far, on the way up from the village, they must have passed no more than half a dozen properties. All of these people, while memories were still fresh, would require a visit from the enquiry team. Did they have dogs or a CCTV camera? Had they heard anything suspicious last night? Headlights at two in the morning? Strange cars? Any other disturbance?

Faraday looked down at the map, aware of the familiar drumbeat of questions in his brain. Had the Detective Superintendent managed to

lay hands on the small army of specialists that would make the Major Incident Room tick? Had he – Faraday – thought hard enough about a form of words to keep the press happy? Was it too early to draw up a specific set of Time and Scene Parameters?

The latter question deserved special attention. The time frame seemed relatively straightforward. Already – on the basis of information from the Transport Police boys – he'd calculated a three-hour window between the last train through the tunnel on Sunday and next morning's London-bound service that had turned 500 metres of darkness into a crime scene. But the physical issue of Scene Parameters – quite how widely he should cast his investigative net – was partly dependent on the recce they were undertaking. Maps were always invaluable but nothing beat a first-hand feel for the shape of the terrain.

The car came to a sudden halt and Faraday glanced up to find himself looking at a locked gate barring a gap in the hedge. The Incident Officer got out and Faraday followed him as he clambered over the gate. Beyond, a track plunged down between encroaching hedgerows. At the end, explained the Incident Officer, was the deep cutting that funnelled into the southern mouth of the tunnel.

They walked down the path, single file, Faraday looking for signs of recent disturbance. Had the victim stumbled down this way, dragged by God knows who, maybe roped, maybe injured? Maybe he was already dead? At the bottom, the path turned sharply right, offering a sudden view of a new-looking chain-link fence. Beyond the fence, on the bed of the cutting, lay two sets of railway tracks.

Faraday gazed down for a moment or two, aware of the gathering heat of the day. It was quiet on the edge of the embankment. Insects hummed and buzzed in the undergrowth. Far away, he could hear the lowing of cattle. Then came the sudden flap of disturbed wood pigeons and the cackle of a pheasant, before peace returned to the surrounding woodland.

The Incident Officer was explaining that the railway was fenced on both sides for miles north and south. From time to time there were bridges and level crossings, both of which gave access to the track. The only way of physically checking the fence itself was to walk the path beside the clinker.

Faraday nodded, adding another note to his checklist. The fence was substantial, at least six feet high, and as far as he could see looked intact, no sign of intruders; but the Incident Officer was right – every trackside metre had to be checked. Faraday found himself calculating the man hours involved in an exercise like this. Then he heard a distant purring noise that called attention to itself above the busy symphony of high summer. Turtle doves, he thought, with a sudden jolt of pleasure.

Minutes later, toiling back up the path towards the Astra, Faraday took a call on his Airwave. It was Proctor. The pathologist had arrived earlier than expected; he'd got himself kitted up and they were about to enter the tunnel. Was it safe to assume they could go ahead without Faraday?

Faraday found the transmit button.

'That's a yes,' he said.

Major Crimes occupied a suite of offices at the back of Kingston Crescent police station, a stone's throw from the city's Commercial Docks. On the second floor, Winter's perch commanded a fine view of the rooftops of nearby Stamshaw, framed in the distance by the chalk-gashed swell of Portsdown Hill. Out of breath after climbing the back stairs from the car park, Winter found DC Tracy Barber sitting at his desk.

Barber was a relatively recent addition to the Major Crimes team, a tall, handsome-looking woman with a big, square face, lesbian tastes in relationships and a fondness for tailored suits. Years of service in Special Branch had quickly drawn Winter's attention, and the fact that her sheer competence had won Faraday's confidence made her a doubly useful ally.

'Kicking off, isn't it?' Barber was already on her feet, surrendering Winter's chair. Winter motioned her down again, squeezing his bulk behind the other desk.

'Dead right, love.' Winter grinned. Footsteps down the long central corridor. The non-stop ringing of phones. Shouted questions. Muttered answers. An occasional thump as someone kicked an office door shut. Winter loved all this: the buzz, the urgency, the sense of a machine – complex and voraciously demanding – shaking itself into gear.

'Where's the boss?'

'Barrie's in his office, preparing for the DCI interviews. Faraday's out at the tunnel. He called in a couple of minutes ago. Here . . . '

Winter took the proffered scrap of paper. The Major Crimes Detective Chief Inspector had recently left for pastures new. Normally, his replacement would be Senior Investigating Officer on a job like this. Except the hunt was still on for a suitable candidate.

'So who's in charge?'

'Faraday, as far as I can gather. Barrie's due for leave.'

'So Faraday runs it?'

Barber caught the inflection at once. 'Yes. You really don't like him, do you?'

'You're wrong, love. Believe it or not, we go back a long way. He's different, that's all.'

'You're telling me that's a crime?'

'Christ, no. It's just that I've never quite sussed what makes him tick. He's had some decent jobs; he's done well, but you'd never know it, not the way he behaves. Most bosses I've come across can't resist a little boast. They're in it for the medals, the glory, all that bollocks that comes with the rank. Faraday . . . ?' Winter shrugged, glancing down at the message. 'Most days you'd never take him for a copper.'

'He thinks you're extremely effective.' Barber was watching him closely. 'Did you know that?'

'No.'

'Well, he does.'

'I'm flattered.'

'And bloody dangerous, too. That's the bad news.'

'Really?' Winter dismissed the comment with a shrug. Dangerous, he thought, means nothing until you've lain on a hospital trolley, wondering whether you'll ever see the light of day again.

There was a brief silence while Winter tried to decipher Barber's scrawl. He seemed to be looking at a list of names. She helped him out.

'That's a first run at the Mispers. Faraday wants something on paper by tonight's meeting. Six o'clock, whole squad.' She gestured down the corridor in the direction of the Major Incident Room.

Winter nodded. Missing Persons were tallied on a national database. Anyone reasonably local fitting the victim's description was an obvious starting point in an enquiry like this. There were five names on Barber's list. Winter tucked the paper into his jacket pocket.

'What do we know so far?' he asked. 'Age? Sex? Colour?'

'White and probably male. That's about it. You know what happens with trains. They'll run out of bags. They always do. Faraday's pushing for a post-mortem late tonight.' She got to her feet and glanced at her watch. 'You can imagine what a treat that's going to be.'