SUSAN

LEWIS

Who's Lying Now?



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For the Corona Girls
With love

Jill Lewis, Grace Lewis,
Denise Hastie, Lesley Gittings,
Sonia Gourlay, Pat Cockram,
Fanny Blackburne

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Wednesday 6 January 2021

Jeannie was pacing back and forth in her study, engaged in a lengthy and complicated call, when she realized she was being watched from the garden. She came to a stop, still listening to her assistant's updates, while allowing her eyes to fix on the landscaper's. She experienced a pleasing frisson of their unusual and deepening connection.

She'd come to know many things about this man since he'd taken on the contract to transform the gardens surrounding her home, things that excited and amused her, intrigued and perplexed her. All that dismayed her about him was the fact that he was married to the wrong woman.

He waved and she raised a hand too before he disappeared from view, no doubt to continue his work. She returned to her phone call, feeling irritated by the fact that he'd probably be long gone before she was finished. She hadn't actually been expecting him today; presumably he was just dropping something off, or collecting up what remained of the Christmas lights.

January the sixth already, and here they were, as a country, back in lockdown.

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How fortunate she was to have this beautiful coastal home to work from, with all its wonderfully high ceilings, walk-in fireplaces and large bay windows overlooking the bay. It wasn't unlike the manor she'd grown up in, large, dignified, welcoming and quietly settled into its own place in the world.

Her parents' house didn't exist anymore. It had been destroyed by fire, but that was a firmly closed chapter in her life.

She and her husband, Guy, had been the owners of this rambling old pile – Howarth Hall – for over three years now, but she still hadn't delved into the history of the place. Maybe Guy had and was keeping it to himself.

It was Wednesday lunchtime now, and she knew already that he wasn't going to make it back until Friday. His work often kept him away longer than he'd like to be gone but, though she missed him, she rarely pressured him to try to spend more time here. It wouldn't be fair when so many people's lives depended on him.

After finally finishing her call, Jeannie wandered out of the study and along the wide, wood-panelled hallway to the spacious kitchen-diner that occupied the whole of the east-wing ground floor. Three sets of French doors opened out to a covered terrace where low-rise stone steps descended to the magnificent lawn, a landscaping triumph in such steep and rocky terrain.

She was so deep in thought that she didn't spot the note on the centre island as she went to the Aga and set the kettle to boil. Her mind was still full of the information she'd just received. However, as she waited she raised her head and closed her eyes, inhaled deeply and satisfyingly – and found, not unusually, that even when Guy

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wasn't there, she could catch the scent of him. He might have left only a few minutes ago rather than a few days.

How she missed him.

She wondered what sort of surprise he'd have for her when he came home on Friday. He invariably brought something: chocolates, champagne, a piece of jewellery . . . Her fingers went to the white-gold Chopard pendant he'd given her last summer, an open heart with encrusted diamonds, small, elegant and wickedly expensive. She hadn't taken it off since he'd fastened it at the nape of her neck, his long fingers brushing her skin and sending shivers of pleasure all the way through her.

He was the perfect man for her – complex, fascinating, largely unpredictable, and with a penchant for the kind of mind games that she adored. His latest was perplexing her – a simple phone number that she was certain she'd been meant to find. Since calling it she'd felt uneasy and not quite as sure as she'd like to be of where this might go.

After making herself a cup of tea, she turned around and finally spotted the note. Her heart gave an unsteady beat of surprise. She hadn't heard anyone come in, but her study was far enough away that she wouldn't have.

Unfolding it she read the few words and experienced a bizarre feeling. She wanted to laugh out loud at how welcome the summons was, but there were more serious and troubling thoughts to sober her.

Pouring her tea down the sink, she went to collect up what she would need and, minutes later, she was letting herself quietly out of the door.

Not that anyone was around to hear her – it just seemed the right way to leave.

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PART ONE

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CHAPTER ONE
CARA

Monday 18 January 2021
Twelve days since Jeannie's disappearance

'Cara, we have a bit of a mystery on our hands here that I'd like you to take a look at.'

Cara Jakes, still officially a trainee investigator, composed her naturally sunny features into an expression of alert and sober interest and sat a little straighter in her chair. There were three of them in the room, unmasked, but seated in a suitably distanced fashion at one end of a huge conference table that they were using for this meeting. It was adjacent to the chief superintendent's office; he was someone she'd never spoken to and he was, thankfully, nowhere to be seen.

Not only eager to find out more of what this was about – who didn't love a mystery? – she was also proud to be included in this attempt to solve it. At twenty-four, with eight GCSEs, three A levels and some chequered work experience behind her, she knew she was seriously lucky to have this job. The competition had been fierce – dozens, maybe hundreds of applicants had come in from all over – but for some fabulous reason she'd been chosen to work

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alongside Kesterly's CID detectives as a dogsbody, basically, or a backup when they required extra assistance with their cases. From day one she'd been determined to excel in every way possible and this, if she was reading it correctly, could be her big chance, for it seemed Detective Sergeant Natalie Rundle was coming to her first with an issue.

'A woman has disappeared,' DS Rundle continued, her smooth brow puckering in a frown, while her piercing black eyes moved between Cara and the notes in her hand. She was a frightening woman in some ways – fierce, demanding, critical – and quite beautiful in others, with her mixed-race colouring and striking red lipstick.

She hadn't yet been introduced to the third woman in the room, but Cara knew very well who she was. Her name was Andee Lawrence and she'd once been a detective here in Kesterly-on-Sea. She was also a favourite of DCI Gould, a good friend of DS Rundle, and was much beloved by the community at large. She was tall, slender, with a gorgeous tumble of shoulder-length curly hair, stunning aquamarine eyes and the kind of poise that Cara, at five two and a little on the scrawny side, could only dream about.

DS Rundle was speaking again. 'The woman's name is Jeannie Symonds. She's married, no children, high-powered career, and she usually lives in London. Since the summer she's based herself here, at Westleigh Heights, where she has a second home. As you're local you might know the place – Howarth Hall; it's the large house up on the western headland that you can see parts of from Westleigh Bay.'

Cara knew it all right, or at least she'd seen it a thousand times from the beach where she used to go foraging

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as a kid with her sister and dad. Look up and there was this illusion of an amazing mansion at the top of the cliffs – like a fairy-tale castle almost – with acres of woodland sprawling out behind it and a dreamy sort of descent over the cliffs in front of it. She'd never been there, obvs, but she'd driven past the gates plenty of times on the way to the moor. It seemed totally massive to her, although she understood that one person's massive was another's *just a little place on the coast, darling, you must come to stay with us one of these days.*

'This is Andee Lawrence,' DS Rundle continued. 'She's going to fill you in on what she knows about Jeannie Symonds and why she's decided to bring the matter to us.'

Responding to Andee's open smile, Cara produced one of her own with dimples and said, 'Would it be all right to take notes?'

'Of course,' Andee replied.

'And I'll give you what I have when we're done,' the DS added.

Doing her best to remain calm in the face of so much trust, Cara created a new document on her laptop and made ready to type. First up came basic background info on Jeannie, aged fifty-one, and her husband Guy Symonds, aged forty-five. Apparently he was a neurosurgeon working out of St George's Hospital in London, and she was a senior executive at a major publishing house based in South Kensington. They'd been married for seven years and their main home was in Kew, which was where they'd stayed for the first lockdown. After that Jeannie had moved to Westleigh Heights, while Guy had carried on working in London, joining her at weekends. More often if he could.

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'On Friday January the eighth,' Andee said, reading from her own laptop, 'Guy Symonds arrived at Howarth Hall at around five o'clock to find no sign of Jeannie. He searched the house and immediate grounds, tried ringing her, but her phone was either turned off or had run out of battery. He then discovered that her car had gone, so he assumed she'd popped out for something and so didn't think much more about it until another hour had passed and she still wasn't back.'

Cara was typing furiously, picturing it all in her mind as best she could, and not asking any questions yet as she felt sure most of the answers were coming.

'That night, and over the weekend, Guy contacted everyone he could think of who might know where Jeannie was: her colleagues, friends, family; the neighbours both in London as well as those up around Westleigh Heights. By then – three days later – he'd discovered that her handbag and wallet had gone, but her passport was still in her desk at the Hall. Her computer was also still there, along with her work files and calendar of upcoming commitments. Apparently she hasn't made one of them since the morning of January the sixth, when she spoke with her personal assistant, Maurice Bisset, about complications that had arisen in Ireland due to Brexit. That call lasted about forty minutes, according to Bisset, and started at around one p.m. We're pretty certain the call was made from the Hall – we have no phone records as yet, so can't actually confirm that – but she was seen by her landscaper at around that time. He says she was in her study and when she waved out to him he could see she was on the phone.'

Cara suppressed the urge to ask one of the many ques-

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tions buzzing around in her head and concentrated on listening to the account.

Andee said, 'No one has seen Jeannie since then – at least no one that Guy, or Jeannie's assistant, Maurice Bisset, have been able to find.'

Cara glanced at DS Rundle, and, receiving a nod, she said, 'So she could have left at any time between one o'clock-ish on January sixth and five p.m. on January eighth when her husband got back?'

Andee nodded. 'As things currently stand, that's correct,' she confirmed.

Cara wrinkled her nose. 'It's January eighteenth now,' she pointed out. 'So it's between ten or twelve days since she disappeared.' *What's taken so long to get here*, she wondered, but didn't add.

Andee said, 'Guy contacted the police on January the eleventh – that's between five and seven days after Jeannie disappeared – but he was told there was nothing anyone could do. No accidents had been reported – we've run a virtual nationwide check – and Jeannie is an adult with no physical or mental health problems. In other words, if she wants to absent herself from the family home, that's her business and no one else's.'

Seeing the point, Cara said, 'Has she ever gone off without telling anyone before?'

'Good question,' DS Rundle commented approvingly.

'Indeed,' Andee agreed, 'and actually, yes she has, but apparently she's usually back within a few days.'

'Do you know where she goes?'

'I think it's best if I let Guy tell you about that.' Andee checked the time on her phone. 'He should be here any minute.'

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Cara's heart gave a flip of nervous excitement. These weren't the sort of people she normally mixed with; it would be interesting to see what he was like.

'I have a list of people he's already spoken to,' Andee told her, 'locally and elsewhere. I'll email it as soon as we've finished here, along with all the notes I've made.'

'Thank you,' Cara responded. 'Do you mind if I ask whether or not you are a friend of the Symondses?'

Andee smiled, seeming to approve of the question. 'I've never met Jeannie, and the first time I was properly introduced to Guy was when Fliss from the Seafront Café called me to ask if I could help with the search.'

'And when was that?' Cara asked.

'On January the twelfth, the day after the police turned him away. He wasn't ready to let it go, so he asked Fliss if she'd mind putting up a photograph of Jeannie in the café in case anyone had seen her. Fliss did so and then she rang me.'

Neat move, Cara was thinking. She'd want Andee on-side too if any of her loved ones did a 404.

'I met with him that same day,' Andee continued, 'and since then I've been following up on all the calls he's made in an effort to try and find his wife. In every case I've received the same response he did. No one knows where she is and no one has stood out for me so far as being someone who needs further questioning. However, I know Natalie here will tell you that you should satisfy yourself of that and I would urge the same.'

Cara was already working out in her mind how she was going to introduce herself when she made the calls. *Hello, I'm Cara Jakes of Kesterly CID* seemed to do it;

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at least it made her sound like a detective, even if she officially wasn't.

Andee was speaking again. 'I've also been pulling together a general picture of what Jeannie is like as a woman, a wife, a boss – and I would say family member, if I'd managed to speak to her brother. He lives in New Zealand – Paul Haines, he's called – and he's divorced with a daughter, Mallory – that's Jeannie's niece, obviously. According to Guy, Jeannie and Paul are not close.'

'For what reason?' Cara asked.

'Nothing that seems immediately relevant,' Andee told her, 'but you'll find everything I know in my notes.'

Happy with that, Cara said, 'No other family?'

Andee shook her head. 'But feel free to double-check with Guy when you talk to him.'

DS Rundle weighed in with another question. 'Did you get the impression she had enemies or business rivals with a grudge, someone from the past who might want to cause her harm?'

Andee shrugged as she said, 'Nothing specific was mentioned during my questioning, but several colleagues referred to her as having a fiery temper, someone you wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of. According to one of her senior editors, her moods can change at lightning speed, and sometimes she can be quite intimidating.'

'Sounds like me,' DS Rundle quipped cheerily.

Cara dutifully laughed, while thinking the DS wasn't wrong there.

'So as yet no concrete reason to think any harm has come to her,' the DS said.

'No,' Andee admitted, 'but the length of time she's been gone is concerning. Obviously, I understand why you're

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reluctant to launch an official investigation when there's no suggestion of a crime being committed, and she's someone who could easily stage her own disappearance if she wanted to. Nevertheless, just in case, I'd really appreciate some help at this stage.'

'And that's where you come in, Cara,' DS Rundle announced grandly. 'You'll have all our resources at your disposal, which is what Andee needs to further the search, so you'll work closely with her from here on in, without anything being official unless it becomes necessary. And I can't think of anyone better for you to learn from than Andee.'

Thinking exactly the same, Cara felt warmth in her cheeks as Andee smiled in her direction.

DS Rundle was saying, '. . . so you'll start by duplicating much of what Andee's already done – speaking to all the main players, mainly to see if you get the same answers she did. There could be a lot of ground to cover, Andee will guide you, and you know where to find me if anything interesting turns up, such as the woman herself.'

Cara felt terrible for hoping that didn't happen – it hardly made her a good citizen to wish someone kidnapped or dead, which, for all anyone knew, was where this was heading. But it was such a great opportunity for her as a newbie investigator, it would be a disaster if it got solved before she even got started.

'Is there anything else you'd like to ask before we go on?' Andee prompted gently.

There was, so Cara said, 'The landscaper who saw her on the phone on January sixth. I guess you've spoken to him yourself?'

'I have. His name's Neil Roberts and I know he'll be more than happy to talk to you when you call.'

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'Is there anyone else who works at the Hall?' Cara asked.

'Yes, they have a regular housekeeper, Magda Kaminska, but she was self-isolating around the time Jeannie disappeared, so she hasn't been able to throw much light on things. You'll find her number, and Neil's, in my notes.' She checked her phone as it pinged and broke into a smile.

'Great! Fliss from the café is here,' she declared. 'I asked her to bring coffee and pastries if she could. I don't know about you, but I say better late than never.'

'Absolutely,' DS Rundle agreed. 'I was about to leave you to it, but I'm not passing up on Fliss's elevenses.'

'Shall I go and get her?' Cara offered, her mouth already watering at the prospect of an almond croissant.

'Someone's bringing her,' Andee replied. 'And Guy should be here by now. I'll just text to make sure he hasn't been held up.'

A few minutes later, they all looked up as the door banged open and Fliss, carrying an enormous tray of flasks, covered dishes and cardboard mugs, eased her way in, helped by a uniformed PC.

Cara beamed; Fliss always had that sort of effect on people, especially when her mask had a great big smile sewn on the front of it. She had thick, glossy blonde hair, high cheekbones and large, slanty blue eyes. Cara's mum always said that if she could be anyone else it would be Fliss, and not just because she was so gorgeous and outgoing and friendly, but because she had the sweetest soul. Cara's crabby old nan used to say, don't be deceived, everyone has a dark side, even that sexpot Fliss and I know what I'm talking about. Well, crabby-nan would know all about dark sides, given it was where she'd spent

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most of her sorry little life; even her own son, Cara's dad, used to say that about her.

'Sorry I'm late,' Fliss declared, hurrying to the table before her arms gave out. 'It's been hectic this morning, people queuing right along the Promenade, all thanks to the sun showing its face for half an hour.'

Knowing that she could only allow a single customer at a time into her brand-new café – the alterations had happened just prior to the first lockdown and then she'd been unable to open up – Cara wanted to ask how things really were for her, but didn't quite have the nerve. It wasn't as if she actually knew Fliss; she just felt as though she did, which was probably the same for everyone in town.

'It's Cara, isn't it?' Fliss asked. 'How do you take your coffee?' She got ready to pour, while massaging the bottom of her back. Cara almost said, *however you take yours*. Luckily she rescued herself from the idiocy and said, 'White, no sugar, thanks.'

'Help yourself to something wicked,' Fliss encouraged, as she passed the coffee over and indicated the pastries. 'That's right, Natalie, don't hold back. I'm not taking them home with me.'

Andee was pouring her own coffee. 'Did you happen to see Guy outside?' she asked, taking a moment to select a Danish.

'Yes, he was just parking up,' Fliss replied. To Natalie she said, 'I'm so glad you've decided to give Andee some help with this. It's been a terrible couple of weeks for Guy.'

'It's not an official search,' Natalie warned, 'and it won't be unless I'm convinced some harm has come to her. As yet, no one's been able to say that it has. So for now, you

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have my best investigator on it, who will be reporting to Andee and obviously to me.'

Cara blushed to the roots of her hair to be described so glowingly.

Turning to her, Fliss said, 'Ever since I heard you'd got the job here I've been waiting for you to come into the café so I could give you a cupcake and coffee to say well done. Your mum must be thrilled. You will say hi to her when you get home, won't you?'

'Oh, of course and she says hi too. Or she will when I tell her, you know my mum.'

As Fliss smiled, the door opened again and Cara put down her almond croissant for a moment as a tall, dark-haired bloke came in. From what she could see of him, thanks to the mask, he was more like a movie star than a surgeon. Her mum would be having hot flushes for a week if she ever saw those eyes.

'Guy, I'm glad you made it,' Andee said warmly, keeping her distance, because everyone had to, of course. Fliss did a Namaste and Cara couldn't help noticing the way he kept his eyes on her a moment longer than seemed necessary. He liked her, Cara decided, and from the way Fliss reacted she reckoned the feeling was mutual. Well, who wouldn't like Fliss? And who wouldn't like him too? He seemed so . . . friendly.

'This is Natalie Rundle,' Andee said, directing him to the DS, 'and this is Cara Jakes. I've already told you about her.'

Cara watched him adjust his mask slightly while saying to the DS, 'I'm grateful to you for giving this some time. To be honest, I'm not sure what else to do. I've tried everything and everyone I can think of.'

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'Cara will organize a check on the phone and credit card logs,' the DS assured him, 'and there should be a way of tracking the car.'

'Would you like some coffee?' Fliss offered.

'I'd love some, thanks,' he said, and again Cara picked up on the warmth between them. She knew Fliss wasn't married; in fact, come to think of it, she'd never seen her with a bloke. Guy Symonds was definitely not single, though; unless he was but didn't know it yet. That was a grim thought. Realizing her brain was shooting off in too many directions at once, she deliberately shut it down and watched him take the chair the DS was pointing him to – distant, but not so far along the table that he'd have to shout to be heard.

'I should leave you to it,' Fliss said, checking the time. 'I'll come back later for the tray.'

Guy Symonds rose to his feet. 'Thanks for coming,' he said. 'Thanks for everything.'

'We'll find her,' Fliss assured him softly, and leaving them to it, she let herself out of the room.

'Jeannie and I don't know many people around here,' he said as he sat down again, 'so I'm not sure what I'd have done without Fliss, and now Andee.'

'And now Cara,' Rundle added. 'I'm sorry the police weren't able to help when you came to us before, and I regret to say not much has changed on that front. Cara will of course do her best, but I'm afraid it's not possible to commit this Force's resources to a full-scale search when – as far as we're aware – no crime has been committed. Added to that, your wife isn't from this region and this isn't your main home, so she could be anywhere. She's also, I believe, of sound mind and in good health.'

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'She is,' he confirmed. 'And I understand everything you're saying – and please know how much I appreciate the help you are prepared to give.' He looked at Cara, a smile visible in his eyes. 'I'm guessing,' he said, 'that you think she was having an affair and has decided to run off with whoever it is.'

Since it had very definitely crossed her mind, Cara was keen to know the answer.

'If she was involved with anyone else,' he said, 'I knew nothing about it, and presuming her friends and colleagues are being truthful, nor did they. Actually, if anyone knows her secrets it would be Maurice, her assistant, but he swears there wasn't anyone, and right now I'm inclined to believe him.'

DS Rundle nodded slowly as she took this in. 'So do you have any theories at all?' she prompted.

'I wish I did. I'm completely at a loss . . .'

'Did you argue before she disappeared? You say you last spoke to her on . . .'

'January the fifth,' Cara provided.

'Was anything said then that might have prompted her to leave? Or even before that?'

He shook his head slowly. 'We had words the weekend before, but it was just a spat that didn't actually amount to anything.'

'What was it about?'

His tone was wry. 'I told her she worked too hard, she accused me of the same. I said we should retire and travel the world. She said I wouldn't do it even if she were prepared to, and she wasn't. It was a pointless argument – actually, I wouldn't even call it that. We were both tired and sometimes we snipe at each other, the way married couples do.'

'And what happened after?'

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'About that? Nothing. It was just forgotten. I returned to London the following day and the next time I spoke to her was on January the fifth, as Cara says, although not for long. I'd just finished a Gamma knife procedure and I wanted to talk it over with my team so I said I'd call again later.'

Gamma knife. What was that? Cara wondered.

'And did you?' Rundle prompted.

'Yes, but she texted to say she was tied up in a meeting with her American colleagues that was likely to drag on, so she'd call me back the next day.'

'But she didn't?'

'No. And before you ask, yes, I've already checked to find out if the meeting was real and it was. It ended at ten forty-five in the evening, UK time, and there were eight of them on screen.'

Rundle nodded thoughtfully.

'Excuse me,' Guy said as his mobile rang. 'I need to take this.' As he clicked on, he drew a notebook out of an inside pocket and began to jot down whatever he was being told. At the end he said, 'Thanks for this, Ed. Yes, it will be a craniotomy, but I'm in a meeting right now. I'll call him as soon as I'm free.'

As he rang off, he apologized and put his phone and notebook on the table in front of him.

'The world keeps turning,' DS Rundle commented by way of understanding, and turning to Cara said, 'It might be a good idea for you to review everything Andee's sending your way before you and Mr Symonds have a chat. Does that work for you?' she asked Symonds.

'I'm happy to play it any way that works for you,' he assured her.

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'OK, is there anything you'd like to ask now, Cara, before we break this up?'

Swallowing, Cara said, 'Yes, just a couple of things, and I expect Andee's already covered them, but first of all, can you tell if any of her clothes are missing?'

Symonds seemed troubled as he said, 'There are a few empty hangers in her dressing room, but I can't honestly say whether they were empty before, as we have separate dressing rooms. As for shoes and boots, maybe some have gone, but again I couldn't tell you for certain. She has a lot to choose from.'

'Suitcases, holdalls?' Cara prompted.

'She has a large navy Mulberry bag that I can't find either at the Hall or in London.'

After noting this down, Cara said, 'Do you know if she has a second phone, one she uses for personal calls, maybe?'

'Not that I've ever been aware of. Again you could try asking Maurice, but I'm sure he'd have mentioned it by now if he knew of one.'

Sensing how closely she was being watched by Andee and the DS, Cara pressed on. 'Have you contacted her doctor at all?'

'Yes, I have,' he replied. 'She hasn't seen him for over a year, so no undisclosed health issues that we know of.'

She glanced down at her notes. 'My last question is about the landscaper,' she said. 'Do you know how close he was to the window that day when he saw her? I mean, could he tell whether she seemed upset or in a hurry, or anything at all that stood out for him?'

Frowning, he said, 'I didn't ask, but I'm sure if he had noticed anything unusual he'd have said so right away.'

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'Do you know if he spotted anyone else at the Hall that day? Was there another car, maybe, that he hadn't seen before?'

'Again, he hasn't mentioned anything like that, but I think he was only there for about half an hour.'

'What was he doing there?'

'He was dropping off some materials for a wall we're planning to extend, and I believe he replaced a couple of fleeces that had been torn off by the wind.'

'Fleeces?' Rundle queried.

'It's what he wraps around the large plant pots to help protect the roots from the frost.'

Nodding, she turned to Cara. 'Is that it for now?' she asked.

In spite of having loads more she wanted to ask, Cara said, 'I think so, but it shouldn't take me long to go through Andee's notes. Can we speak again later today?'

'Of course,' he replied, and he might have smiled, but thanks to the mask she couldn't know for sure. 'I have quite a lot of administrative work to catch up on,' he said, 'so I'll go to Howarth Hall. Let me know when you're ready and perhaps we could connect by video-link?'

'That sounds a good idea.' Rundle started getting to her feet. 'Thanks for coming in, Mr Symonds, it helps a lot to meet someone in person before enquiries get under way. And of course, if you hear anything at all, you'll get in touch with us right away.'

'Of course,' he confirmed. He was on his feet too and checking his phone as it rang again. 'I'm sorry,' he said. 'It's another call I have to take. As you said, the world keeps turning.'

'I'll go downstairs with him,' Andee said as he made

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for the door. To Cara, she added, 'I've already emailed everything including my number. Call if there's anything and I'll join you later when you speak to Guy on video-link.'

As Andee left, Cara turned to the DS, glad to be alone with her for a moment. 'I was thinking,' she began, 'I don't actually have a proper desk—'

'Don't worry about that,' Rundle interrupted, 'you can set yourself up in the second-floor incident room. It's not being used at the moment. Obviously you'll have to move out if something comes in, but for now it has everything you'll need – phones, computers, whiteboards, video screens. Remember to record every interview, won't you, either on your phone or the computer, so you can share it with me and Andee, if she's not actively involved in it herself. This means you'll have to start each one with a caution, so don't forget that. Just try to make it sound chatty, not too official, because as far as we know no one's done anything wrong.'

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